

A Basic Call to Consciousness

The Hau de no sau nee Address to the Western World

Geneva, Switzerland, Autumn 1977

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The following comprises a very powerful message given by the Hau de no sau nee (or traditional Six nations council at Onondaga) also called the Iroquois Confederacy "to the Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in September, 1977. The Non-governmental Organizations had called for papers which describe the conditions of oppression suffered by Native people under three subject headings, with supportive oral statements to be given to the commissions. The Hau de no sau nee, the traditional Six nations council at Onondaga, sent forth three papers which constitute an abbreviated analysis of Western history, and which call for a consciousness of the Sacred Web of Life in the Universe."

This was published in Akwesasne Notes in 1978 and sent out on the net some time ago.

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Contents

Introduction	4
Spiritualism: The highest form of political consciousness	7
The obvious fact of our continuing existence: Legal history of the Hau De No Sau Nee	13
Policies of oppression in the name of “democracy”: Economic history of the Hau De No Sau Nee	21
Appendix	33
Footnotes	33
Bibliography	34
Self Interest	35

Introduction

It was not long ago that the Hau de no sau nee, or Six Nations, were a powerful people, occupying a vast territory stretching from Vermont to Ohio, and from present day Quebec to Tennessee. At the period of first contact early during the 17th century, the Hau de no sau nee occupied hundreds of towns and villages throughout the country.

"Hau de no sau nee" is a word which means "people who build," and is the proper name of the people of the Longhouse. The early history, history before the Indo-Europeans came, explains that there was a time when the peoples of the North American forest experienced war and strife. It was during such a time that there came into this land one who carried words of peace. That one would come to be called the Peacemaker.

The Peacemaker came to the people with a message that human beings should cease abusing one another. He stated that humans are capable of reason, that through that power of reason all men desire peace, and that it is necessary that the people organize to ensure that peace will be possible among the people who walk about on the earth. That was the original word about laws – laws were originally made to prevent the abuse of humans by other humans.

The Peacemaker travelled among the people, going from nation to nation, seeking those who would take up this way of peace, offering with it a way of reason and power. He journeyed first among the Ganienkegaga – the People of the Flint Stone – (Mohawks) where he sought to speak to the most dangerous of these people, offering them his message.

He travelled for a long time among the Mohawks; the People of Standing Stone (the Oneidas), the People of the Hills (Onondagas), the People of the Swamp (Cayugas), and the People of the Great Hills (Senecas). Eventually, those five nations were the initial ones to take up the offer of peace. The nations gathered together in council, and there they set down the principles of what is called the Gayaneshakgowa, or the Great Law of Peace.

It is impossible to overstate the power of thought that emerges from that document. Today, it is almost impossible for us to recreate the scene of its birth. But centuries ago, a natural world people gathered together at the head of a lake in the center of North America's then virgin forest, and there, they counseled. The principles that emerged are unequalled in any political document which has yet emerged in the event – they evolved a law which recognized that vertical hierarchy creates conflicts, and they dedicated the superbly complex organization of their society to function to prevent the rise internally of hierarchy.

Introduction

Secondly, they looked into their own histories to discover the things which cause conflict among people. They saw, for example, that peoples sometimes struggle over hunting territories, and they did a curious thing. They abolished the significance of such territories, and guaranteed the safety of anyone entering the country of the Hau de no sau nee. And they established universal laws about the treatment and taking of game, because the taking of game sometimes caused conflicts. In the country of the Hau de no sau nee, all people were free, all had a right to protection under what the Peacemaker called the Great Tree of Peace.

The basic principles of peace went further than the simple absence of conflict. An ordered society which has the capability of protecting people against abuse and which is, at the same time, dedicated to a containment of hierarchy, is a complex society. The People of the Longhouse sought to carry the principles of peace far from the council fires, into every dwelling in the country of the Hau de no sau nee. Thus does the Great Law establish more than a code of conduct – it is also the beginning point for the modern clans. It embodies the foundations of all the customs of holding meetings, of exchanging messages on wampums, and of assigning titles to leaders.

The Hau de no sau nee raised their children from the cradleboard to be participants in the culture. The ways of the People of the Longhouse have always been powerfully spiritual in nature, and it is true that the government, the economy, everything that is Hau de no sau nee has deep spiritual roots.

The papers which follow are position papers which were presented by the Hau de no sau nee to the Non-governmental Organizations of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in September, 1977. The Non-governmental Organizations had called for papers which describe the conditions of oppression suffered by Native people under three subject headings, with supportive oral statements to be given to the commissions. The Hau de no sau nee, the traditional Six nations council at Onondaga, sent forth three papers which constitute an abbreviated analysis of Western history, and which call for a consciousness of the Sacred Web of Life in the Universe.

It is a call which can be expected to be both ignored and misunderstood for some period of time. But the position papers themselves are absolutely unique – they constitute a political statement, presented to a representative world body, pointing to the destruction of the Natural World and the Natural World peoples as the clearest indicator that human beings are in trouble on this planet. It is a call to a basic consciousness which has ancient roots and ultra-modern, even futuristic, manifestations.

It is a statement which points to the fact that humans are abusing one another, that they are abusing the planet they live on, that they are even abusing themselves. It is a message, certainly the first ever delivered to a world body, which identifies the process of that abuse as Western Civilization – as a whole way of life – and which acknowledges the immense complexity which that statement implies.

Introduction

What is presented here is nothing less audacious than a cosmogony of the Industrialized World presented by the most politically powerful and independent non-Western political body surviving in North America. It is, in a way, the modern world through Pleistocene eyes.

Scholars and casual readers alike should question the significance, in the age of the Neutron bomb, Watergate, and nuclear energy plant proliferation, of a statement by a North American Indian people. But there is probably some argument to be made for the appropriateness of such a statement at this time. Most of the world's professed traditions are fairly recent in origin. Islam is perhaps 1500 years old, Christianity claims a 2000-year history, Judaism is perhaps 2000 years older than Christianity.

But the Native people can probably lay claim to a tradition which reaches back to at least the end of the Pleistocene, and which, in all probability, goes back much further than that.

There is some evidence that humanoid creatures have been present on the earth for at least two million years, and that humans who looked very much like us were in evidence in the Northern Hemisphere at least as long as the second interglacial period. People who are familiar with the Hau de no sau nee beliefs will recognize that modern scientific evidence shows that the Native customs of today are not markedly different from those practiced by ancient peoples at least 70000 years ago. Indeed, if an Iroquois traditionalist were to seek a career in the study of Pleistocene Man, he may find that he already knows more about the most ancient belief systems than do the modern scholars.

Be that as it may, the Hau de no see nee position is derived from a philosophy which sees The People with historical roots which extend back tens of thousands of years. It is a geological kind of perspective, which sees modern man as an infant, occupying a very short space of time in an incredibly long spectrum. It is the perspective of the oldest elder looking into the affairs of a young child and seeing that he is committing incredibly destructive folly. It is, in short, the statement of a people who are ageless but who trace their history as a people to the very beginning of time. And they are speaking, in this instance, to a world which dates its existence from a little over 500 years ago, and perhaps, in many cases, much more recently than that.

And it is, to our knowledge, the very first statement to be issued by a Native nation. What follows are not the research products of psychologists, historians, or anthropologists. The papers which follow are the first authentic analyses of the modern world ever committed to writing by an official body of Native people.

Spiritualism: The highest form of political consciousness

The Hau de no sau nee, or the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, has existed on this land since the beginning of human memory. Our culture is among the most ancient continuously existing cultures in the world. We still remember the earliest doings of human beings. We remember the original instructions of the Creators of Life on this place we call Etenoha – Mother Earth. We are the spiritual guardians of this place. We are the Ongwhehonwhe – the Real People.

In the beginning, we were told that the human beings who walk about the Earth have been provided with all the things necessary for life. We were instructed to carry a love for one another, and to show a great respect for all the beings of this Earth. We are shown that our life exists with the tree life, that our well-being depends on the well-being of the Vegetable Life, that we are close relatives of the four-legged beings. In our ways, spiritual consciousness is the highest form of politics.

Ours is a Way of Life. We believe that all living things are spiritual beings. Spirits can be expressed as energy forms manifested in matter. A blade of grass is an energy form manifested in matter – grass matter. The spirit of the grass is that unseen force which produces the species of grass, and it is manifest to us in the form of real grass.

All things of the world are real, material things. The Creation is a true, material phenomenon, and the Creation manifests itself to us through reality. The spiritual universe, then, is manifest to Man as the Creation, the Creation which supports life. We believe that man is real, a part of the Creation, and that his duty is to support Life in conjunction with the other beings. That is why we call ourselves Ongwhehonwhe – Real People.

The original instructions direct that we who walk about on the Earth are to express a great respect, an affection, and a gratitude toward all the spirits which create and support Life. We give a greeting and thanksgiving to the many supporters of our own lives – the corn, beans, squash, the winds, the sun. When people cease to respect and express gratitude for these many things, then all life will be destroyed, and human life on this planet will come to an end.

Our roots are deep in the lands where we live. We have great love for our country, for our birthplace is there. The soil is rich from the bones of thousands of our generations. Each of us were created in those lands, and it is our duty to take great care of them, because

from these lands will spring the future generations of the Ongwhehonwhe. We walk about with a great respect, for the Earth is a very sacred place.

We are not a people who demand, or ask anything of the Creators of Life, but instead, we give greetings and thanksgiving that all the forces of Life are still at work. We deeply understand our relationship to all living things. To this day, the territories we still hold are filled with trees, animals, and the other gifts of the Creation. In these places we still receive our nourishment from our Mother Earth.

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

Around ten thousand years ago, peoples who spoke Indo-European languages lived in the area which today we know as the Steppes of Russia. At that time, they were a Natural World people who lived off the land. They had developed agriculture, and it is said that they had begun the practice of animal domestication. It is not known that they were the first people in the world to practice animal domestication. The hunters and gatherers who roamed the area probably acquired animals from the agricultural people, and adopted an economy, based on the herding and breeding of animals.

Herding and breeding of animals signaled a basic alteration in the relationship of humans to other life forms. It set into motion one of the true revolutions in human history. Until herding, humans depended on nature for the reproductive powers of the animal world. With the advent of herding, humans assumed the functions which had for all time been the functions of the spirits of the animals. Sometime after this happened, history records the first appearance of the social organization known as "patriarchy."

The area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers was the homeland, in ancient times, of various peoples, many of whom spoke Semitic languages. The Semitic people were among the first in the world to develop irrigation technology. This development led to the early development of towns, and eventually cities. The manipulation of the waters, another form of spirit life, represented another way in which humans developed a technology which reproduced a function of Nature.

Within these cultures, stratified hierarchical social organization crystallized. The ancient civilizations developed imperialism, partly because of the very nature of cities. Cities are obviously population concentrations. Most importantly though, they are places which must import the material needs of this concentration from the countryside. This means that the Natural World must be subjugated, extracted from, and exploited in the interest of the city. To give order to this process, the Semitic world developed early codes of law. They also developed the idea of monotheism to serve as a spiritual model for their material and political organization.

Spiritualism: The highest form of political consciousness

Much of the history of the ancient world recounts the struggles between the Indo-Europeans and the Semitic peoples. Over a period of several millenia, the two cultures clashed and blended. By the second millenia B.C., some Indo-Europeans, most specifically the Greeks, had adopted the practice of building cities, thus becoming involved in the process which they named "Civilization."

Both cultures developed technologies peculiar to civilizations. The Semitic peoples invented kilns which enabled the creation of pottery for trade, and storage of surpluses. These early kilns eventually evolved into ovens which could generate enough heat to smelt metals, notably copper, tin and bronze. The Indo-Europeans developed a way of smelting iron.

Rome fell heir to these two cultures, and became the place where the final meshing occurs. Rome is also the true birthplace of Christianity. The process that has become the culture of the West is historically and linguistically a Semitic/Indo-European culture, but has been commonly termed the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Christianity was an absolutely essential element in the early development of this kind of technology. Christianity advocated only one God. It was a religion which imposed itself exclusively of all other beliefs. The local people of the European forests were a people who believed in the spirits of the forests, waters, hills and the land; Christianity attacked those beliefs, and effectively de-spiritualized the European world. The Christian peoples, who possessed superior weaponry and a need for expansion, were able to militarily subjugate the tribal peoples of Europe.

The availability of iron led to the development of tools which could cut down the forest, the source of charcoal to make more tools. The newly cleared land was then turned by the newly developed iron plow, which was, for the first time, pulled by horses. With that technology many fewer people would work much more land, and many other people were effectively displaced to become soldiers and landless peasants. The rise of that technology ushered in the Feudal Age and made possible, eventually, the rise of new cities and growing trade. It also spelled the beginning of the end of the European forest, although that process took a long time to complete.

The eventual rise of cities and the concurrent rise of the European state created the thrust of expansion and search for markets which led men, such as Columbus, to set sail across the Atlantic. The development of sailing vessels and navigation technologies made the European "discovery" of the Americas inevitable.

The Americas provided Europeans a vast new area for expansion and material exploitation. Initially, the Americas provided new materials and even finished materials for the developing world economy which was based on the Indo-European technologies. European civilization has a history of rising and falling as its technologies reach their material and cultural limits. The finite Natural world has always provided a kind of built-in contradiction to Western expansion.

The Indo-Europeans attacked every aspect of North America with unparalleled zeal. The

Spiritualism: The highest form of political consciousness

Native people were ruthlessly destroyed because they were an unassimilable element to the civilizations of the West. The forests provided materials for larger ships, and some areas provided sources of slave labor for the conquering invaders. By the time of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-Nineteenth Century, North America was already a leader in the area of the development of extractive technology.

The hardwood forests of the Northeast were not cleared for the purpose of providing farmlands. Those forests were destroyed to create charcoal for the forges of the iron smelters and blacksmiths. By the 1890's, the West had turned to coal, a fossil fuel, to provide the energy necessary for the many new forms of machinery which had been developed. During the first half of the Twentieth Century, oil had replaced coal as a source of energy.

The Western culture has been horribly exploitative and destructive of the Natural World. Over 140 species of birds and animals were utterly destroyed since the European arrival in the Americas, largely because they were unusable in the eyes of the invaders. The forests were leveled, the waters polluted, the Native people subjected to genocide. The vast herds of herbivores were reduced to mere handfuls, the buffalo nearly became extinct. Western technology and the people who have employed it have been the most amazingly destructive forces in all of human history. No natural disaster has ever destroyed as much. Not even the Ice Ages counted as many victims.

But like the hardwood forests, the fossil fuels are also finite resources. As the second half of the Twentieth Century has progressed, the people of the West have begun looking to other forms of energy to motivate their technology. Their eyes have settled on atomic energy, a form of energy production which has by-products which are the most poisonous substances ever known to Man.

Today the species of Man is facing a question of the very survival of the species. The way of life known as Western Civilization is on a death path on which their own culture has no viable answers. When faced with the reality of their own destructiveness, they can only go forward into areas of more efficient destruction. The appearance of Plutonium on this planet is the clearest of signals that our species is in trouble. It is a signal which most Westerners have chosen to ignore.

The air is foul, the waters poisoned, the trees dying, the animals are disappearing. We think even the systems of weather are changing. Our ancient teaching warned us that if Man interfered with the Natural Laws, these things would come to be. When the last of the Natural Way of Life is gone, all hope for human survival will be gone with it. And our Way of Life is fast disappearing, a victim of the destructive processes.

The other position papers of the Hau de no sau nee have outlined our analysis of economic and legal oppression. But our essential message to the world is a basic call to consciousness. The destruction of the Native cultures and people is the same process which has destroyed and is destroying life on this planet. The technologies and social systems which have destroyed the animal and plant life are also destroying the Native people. And that process is Western Civilization.

Spiritualism: The highest form of political consciousness

We know that there are many people in the world who can quickly grasp the intent of our message. But experience has taught us that there are few who are willing to seek out a method for moving toward any real change. But, if there is to be a future for all beings on this planet, we must begin to seek the avenues of change.

The processes of colonialism and imperialism which have affected the Hau de no sau nee are but a microcosm of the processes affecting the world. The system of reservations employed against our people is a microcosm of the system of exploitation used against the whole world. Since the time of Marco Polo, the West has been refining a process that mystified the peoples of the Earth.

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

It is necessary, at this time, that we begin a process of critical analysis of the West's historical processes, to seek out the actual nature of the roots of the exploitative and oppressive conditions which are forced upon humanity. At the same time, as we gain understanding of those processes, we must reinterpret that history to the people of the world. It is the people of the West, ultimately, who are the most oppressed and exploited. They are burdened by the weight of centuries of racism, sexism, and ignorance which has rendered their people insensitive to the true nature of their lives.

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

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

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

We know that this is a very difficult task. Many nation states may feel threatened by the position that the protection and liberation of Natural World peoples and cultures represents, a progressive direction which must be integrated into the political strategies of people who

Spiritualism: The highest form of political consciousness

seek to uphold the dignity of Man. But that position is growing in strength, and it represents a necessary strategy in the evolution of progressive thought.

The traditional Native peoples hold the key to the reversal of the processes in Western Civilization which hold the promise of unimaginable future suffering and destruction. Spiritualism is the highest form of political consciousness. And we, the native peoples of the Western Hemisphere, are among the world's surviving proprietors of that kind of consciousness. We are here to impart that message.

The obvious fact of our continuing existence: Legal history of the Hau De No Sau Nee

Since the beginning of human time, the Hau de no sau nee have occupied the distinct territories that we call our homelands. That occupation has been both organized and continuous. We have long defined the borders of our country, have long maintained the exclusive use-right of the areas within those borders, and have used those territories as the economic and cultural definitions of our nation.

The Hau de no sau nee are a distinct people, with our own laws and customs, territories, political organization and economy. In short, the Hau de no sau nee, or Six Nations, fits in every way every definition of nationhood.

Ours is one of the most complex social/political structures still functioning in the world. The Hau de no sau nee council is also one of the most ancient continuously functioning governments anywhere on this planet. Our society is one of the most complex anywhere. From our social and political institutions has come inspiration for some of the most vital institutions and political philosophies of the modern world.

The Hau de no sau nee is governed by a constitution known among Europeans as the Constitution of the Six Nations and to the Hau de no sau nee as the Gayanashakgowah, or the Great Law of Peace. It is the oldest functioning document in the world which has contained a recognition of the freedoms the Western democracies recently claim as their own: the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the rights of women to participate in government. The concept of separation of powers in government and of checks and balances of power within governments are traceable to our constitution. They are ideas learned by the colonists as the result of contact with North American Native people, specifically the Hau de no sau nee.

The philosophies of the Socialist World, too, are to some extent traceable to European contact with the Hau de no sau nee. Lewis Henry Morgan noted the economic structure of the Hau de no sau nee, which he termed both primitive and communistic. Karl Marx used Morgan's observations for the development of a model for classless, post-capitalist society. The modern world has been greatly influenced by the fact of our existence.

It may seem strange, at this time, that we are here, asserting the obvious fact of our continuing existence. For countless centuries, the fact of our existence was unquestioned,

and for all honest human beings, it remains unquestioned today. We have existed since time immemorial. We have always conducted our own affairs from our territories, under our own laws and customs. We have never, under those laws and customs, willingly or fairly surrendered either our territories or our freedoms. Never, in the history of the Hau de no sau nee, have the People or the government sworn allegiance to a European sovereign. In that simple fact lies the roots of our oppression as a people, and the purpose of our journey here, before the world community.

The problems incurred in the recent "legal history" of the Hau de no sau nee began long before European contact with Native people. It began, at least, with the rise of a system called feudalism in Europe, for the only law which the colonizing countries of Europe ever recognized was feudal law, a fact which they have obscured from their own people as well as from Native people for many centuries. That fact, however, remains the essential reality of the legal relationships which exist between Native peoples and Indo-European societies.

Feudal society in Europe appears to have arisen as the result of a number of conditions which existed following the dissolution of the Roman Empire. It was based on a system by which rulers of warrior castes became strong enough to demand and extract fealty from warriors. There arose, generally, an administrative center, usually a castle, and around these were agricultural people who were usually protected from outside aggression by their "lord," the sovereign of the manor. It appears likely that new technologies arose which created economies which made the feudal society both possible and perhaps even inevitable in Europe.

The feudal lord often held dictatorial power over his "subjects," especially the peasants. Military protection was necessary because of the continuous state of "feuding," among the various lords. The "peaceful people," or peasants, were caught in the middle. The land, and everything on it, including the animals, plants, and people, was under the domination or dominion of the feudal "lord." This lord demanded loyalty and a part of the peasant's crops as well as some of his/her labor. Feudalism could be far more brutal and humiliating than is outlined in many histories. Some feudal lords exercised what was called "the right of the first night," a custom which referred to the right of a lord to the peasant's bride.

Prior to the rise of feudalism, it is fair to state that most of the agricultural people of Europe were local tribesmen of various kinds. Feudalism imposed the concept of sovereign, dictatorial rules whose rule was imposed by military might, and gave rise to the true European peasantry.

The crystallization of centralized executive power serves to separate civilized societies from primitive societies. It is immaterial whether such controls are located in a feudal castle or in the executive offices of the capitals of nation states. The appearance of the hierarchical state marks the transition of food cultivators in general to the more specific definition contained in the concepts of peasantry. When the cultivator becomes dependent upon and integrated in a society in which he is subject to demands of people who are defined by a

class other than his own, he becomes appropriately termed a peasant. ¹

The state of a medieval European peasant was not a pleasant one. Peasants have no rights, save those granted by their lord. They cannot own the land as a people. Only the Sovereign owns or possesses sovereignty. Peasants were often treated as chattel. They were bought, sold, and inherited with the land. They were a people who had been dispossessed of their freedom. At some points in history, the tribal peoples of Europe became peasants through a combination of forces, the most direct being military pressure.

A peasant is not a member of a true community of people. His society is incomplete without the town or city. It is trade with the town or city, an economic relationship, which defines the early stages of peasantry. As trade becomes more necessary, for whatever reasons, the tribesman becomes increasingly less of a tribesman and more of a peasant. The process is neither immediate nor is it necessarily absolute, but to the degree that a tribesman becomes dependent, he becomes less of a tribesman. ²

To a great extent, the process by which people lost their freedom in Europe was economic in nature. The medieval castles were military forts and functioned as kinds of storehouses, but they also developed into trade centers and eventually towns. In the early stages of feudalism, the agricultural worker "traded" his freedom for security from military aggression. But increasingly, over the centuries, a primary function of the medieval town became that of the marketplace.

"It is the market, in one form or another, that pulls out from the compact social relations of self-contained primitive communities some parts of men's doings and puts people into fields of economic activity that are increasingly independent of the rest of what goes on in local life. The local traditional and moral world and the wider and more impersonal world of the market are in principle distinct, and opposed to each other. . . ." ³

The European "discovery" of North America led to the transposition of European medieval law and customs to the Americas. To be sure, Spanish medieval law differed in some respects from that of France, and both differed in some respects from that of England, but an understanding of Medieval Europe is essential to an analysis of European – Hau de no sau nee legal history and also to any analysis of the process of colonialism. Medieval Europe is the period of the rise of growing centralization and consolidation of power by the ruling kingships (kings) over vast territories which is specific to the North American experience. It is also the period of the rise and growth of European cities as centers of trade and sources of political power. The European laws of nations, as they were applied to the Americas, were medieval laws.

¹Eric R. Wolf Peasants, Foundations of Modern Anthropology Series (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966), p. 11; see Belshaw, Cyril S., Traditional Exchange and Modern Markets, Modernization of Traditional Societies Series (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965), pp. 53-54.

²Kroeber, A.L. Anthropology, Rev. Ed. (New York, 1948), p. 284; see Redfield, Margaret Park, ed. Human Nature and the Study of Society: The Papers of Robert Redfield (Chicago, 1962-3) I, p. 287.

³Robert Redfield Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization (Chicago, 1956), p. 45-6.

"Europeans used a great variety of means to attain mastery, of which armed combat was only one. Five principles were available to a European sovereignty for laying claim to legitimate jurisdiction over an American territory and its people: Papal donation, first discovery, sustained possession, voluntary self-subjugation by the natives, and armed conquest successfully maintained. The colony was the means of translating a formal claim to the effective actuality of government, and it was "colonial" in both senses of that ambiguous word. The huddled villages of Europeans were colonies in the sense of being offshoots or reproductions of their parent societies, and these villages exerted power over larger native populations in the sense more clearly implied by the word colonialism."⁴

The European invaders, from the first, attempted to claim Indians as their subjects. Where the Indian people resisted, as in the case of the Hau de no sau nee, the Europeans rationalized that resistance to be an incapacity for civilization. The incapacity for civilization rationale became the basis for the phenomenon in the West which is known today as racism.

The Europeans landed on the shores of the Americas and immediately claimed the territories for their sovereigns. They then attempted, especially in the case of France and Spain, to make peasants of the Indians. The English, who had already experimented with the enclosure system and who thus colonized North America with landless peasants which were driven by a desperation rooted in their own history, at first simply drove the Indians off the land by force.

The European legal systems had, and apparently have developed, no machinery to recognize the rights of peoples, other than dictators or sovereigns, to land. When the Europeans came to North America, they attempted to simply make vassals of the Native leaders. When that failed, they resorted to other means. The essential thrust of European powers has been an attempt to convert ". . . the Indian person from membership in an unassimilable caste to membership in a social class integrated into Euro-American institutions." (Ibid.)

The dispossession of the Native people was accomplished by the Europeans in the bloodiest and most brutal chapter of human history. They were acts committed, seemingly, by a people without conscience or standards of behavior. To this day, the United States and Canada deny the existence of the lawful governments of the Hau de no sau nee and other Native nations, a continuation of the policy of genocide which has marked the process known as colonialism. In the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, both governments and the governments of Latin America deny the commission of genocide, either physical or cultural.

Their reasoning is patently medieval and racist: ". . . Civilization is that quality possessed by people with civil governments, civil government is Europe's kind of government; Indians did not have Europe's kind of government, therefore Indians were not civilized. Uncivilized people live in wild anarchy; therefore Indians did not have government at all. And THEREFORE Europeans could not have been doing anything wrong – were in fact performing a

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

noble mission – by bringing government and civilization to the poor savages." ⁵ Today, as in medieval times, the Indo-European government follows a might makes right policy. Colonialism is a process often misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is a policy which has long survived the medieval period in which it was born. Many Western institutions are in fact colonial institutions of Western culture. The churches, for example, operate in virtually the same manner as did the feudal lords. First, they identify a people whose loyalty they wish to secure in an expansionist effort. Then they charter a group to conduct a "mission." If that group is successful, they become, in effect, the spiritual sovereigns or dictators of those whose loyalty they command. That process in organized Christianity may actually be more ancient than the process of political colonialism described here.

Modern multi-national corporations operate in much the same way. They identify a market or an area which has the resources they want. They then obtain a charter, or some form of sanction from a Western government, and they send what amounts to a colonizing force into the area. If they successfully penetrate the area, that area becomes a sort of economic colony of the multi-national. The greatest resistance to that form of penetration has been mounted by local nationalists.

In North America, educational institutions operate under the same colonial process. Schools are chartered by a sovereign (such as the state, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs,) to penetrate the Native community. The purpose in doing so is to integrate the Native people into society as workers and consumers, the Industrial Society's version of peasants. The sovereign recognizes, and practically allows, no other form of socializing institution for the young. As in the days of the medieval castle, the sovereign demands absolute fealty. Under this peculiar legal system, the Western sovereign denies the existence of those whose allegiance he cannot obtain. Some become, by this rationale, illegitimate.

This concept of illegitimacy is then interpreted into official government policy. In the United States, the colonizer has created two categories of Native peoples: Federally recognized and non-Federally recognized. In more recent years, the government has taken to a policy of non-recognition of an entity entitled "Urban Indians." In Canada there exist four legal definitions of Native people. They are divided into Status, Non-status, Metis, and Enfranchised. Both countries carry on the policy of consistently referring to "Indians and Eskimos," as though Eskimos were separate and not a Native people of the Western Hemisphere.

The United States and Canada practice blatant colonialism in the areas affecting political institutions of the Native peoples. In 1924, Canada's new Indian Act established the legal sanction for the imposition of neo-colonial "elective system" governments within the Native peoples' territories. In the United States, the same goal was accomplished with passage of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). Both pieces of legislation provided compulsive chartered political colonies among Native people. These "elective systems" owe their existence and fealty to the United States and Canada, and not to the Native peoples. They are, by definition, colonies which create classes of political peasants. They are governments

⁵Jennings, p. 127.

only to the degree an external social caste allows them to be governments. They are, in most places in native peoples' territories, the only forms of government recognized by the colonizers.

The Hau de no sau nee have also been subjected to the many forms of colonialism of the Western governments. Our first contact with a Western people came in 1609 when a French military expedition under Samuel deChamplain murdered some Mohawk people along the lake which now bears his name. Later, when the Dutch came, the first treaty (or agreement) which we made with a European power was the Two Row Treaty in which we clarified our position – that we are a distinct, free and sovereign people. The Dutch accepted that agreement.

But the European nations have never honored the agreement. Many times, France attempted to dominate the Hau de no sau nee through conquest. England often 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 has ignored virtually each and every provision of the treaties which guarantee our rights as a separate nation. Only the sections of the treaties which refer to land cessions, sections which often were fraudulently obtained, have validity in the eyes of the United States courts or governments.

The mechanism for the colonization of the Hau de no sau nee territory is found, in legal fiction, in the United States Constitution. That document purports to give Congress power to "regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States, and with Indian tribes." Contrary to every principle of international law, Congress has expanded that section to an assertion of "plenary" power, a doctrine which asserts authority over our territories. This assertion has been repeatedly urged upon our people, although we have never agreed to that relationship, and we have never been conquered in warfare. The Hau de no sau nee are vassals to no people – we are a free nation, and we have never surrendered our rights as a free people.

From the beginning of its existence, the United States has conducted a reign of terror in the Hau de no sau nee territory. Colonial agents entered our country between 1784 and 1842 and returned to Washington with treaties for cessions of land fraudulently obtained with persons not authorized to make land transfers. The Hau de no sau nee council, which is the only legitimate body authorized to conduct land transactions, never signed any agreements surrendering the territories.

The United States occupied the lands under threats of war, although there were no acts which justified war measures. When the Hau de no sau nee gathered evidence to prove that the treaties were fraudulent and therefore illegal under any interpretation of law, the United States courts countered by inventing the Political Question Doctrine. This doctrine basically asserts that Congress cannot commit fraud and that the courts cannot question

Congress' political judgment, although United States courts find congressional acts in other areas of law to be unconstitutional regularly.

Because the Hau de no sau nee refused to sell the land, the United States simply refused to recognize our government. Instead, they recognized those colonized individuals who would agree to sell the land and whose loyalties lie with Washington. In 1848, the United States simply recognized an "elective system" on the Seneca Nation lands, creating a colonial government on the largest of our remaining territories in what is called by the colonizers "New York State."

There followed a long list of moves by the United States to exterminate the Hau de no sau nee. There were treaties which entirely dispossessed, for all practical purposes, the Cayuga and Oneida nations in their ancestral lands. There were treaties, such as the Treaty of 1797, which recognized the sale by individuals of the territory of the Kanienkehaka, an area of nine million acres of land exchanged for the sum of one thousand dollars. There were attempts from 1821 to 1842 to remove the Hau de no sau nee from the territories called by the colonists "New York" to other areas now called Wisconsin and Kansas. These efforts resulted in the displacement of some of our people to those areas. In 1851, there was an attempt to evict the Seneca people from their lands at Tonawanda.

In 1886, there was an attempt to divide the Hau de no sau nee lands into severalty under the Dawes Act, an attempt which was not entirely successful. In 1924, the United States passed a Citizenship Act which attempted to give United States citizenship to all Native people. The Hau de no sau nee strongly rejected the concept that we could ever be United States citizens. We are Hau de no sau nee citizens. But the feudal laws of the colonizers have been relentless.

Also in 1924, Canada militarily invaded our territories on the Grand River and forcibly installed a colonial government there. The episode was repeated by Canada in 1934 on our territories at the Thames River community of Oneida.

In 1948 and 1950, Congress passed laws giving civil and criminal jurisdiction to New York State, although Congress was never given such jurisdiction by the Hau de no sau nee. In 1958, Congress passed Public Law 88-533, the Kinzua Dam Act, which resulted in the flooding of almost all of the inhabitable lands of the Seneca at Alleghany, and virtually destroyed the Native communities and culture there. That act also provided for the termination of the Seneca Nation, a process which would have ended even the colonial government there, and which would have moved the denial of our existence a little closer to reality.

In addition to these legal kinds of colonization, the Hau de no sau nee have been subjected to every other kind of colonization imaginable. Churches, school systems, and every form of Western penetration have made political, economic, and cultural peasants of some of our populations. The continuing denial of our political existence has been accomplished by an almost overwhelming psychological, economic and spiritual attack by the colonial institutions of the West.

The obvious fact of our continuing existence: Legal history of the Hau De No Sau Nee

For over 300 years, our people have been under a virtual state of siege. During this entire time we have never once given up our struggle. Our strategies have, of necessity, changed. But the will and determination to continue on remains the same. Throughout these years, European historians have recorded the position of the Hau de no sau nee.

During the 1920s, one of our leaders, a man named Deskaheh, came to this city to seek help for his people. At that time, the international body which existed did not truly represent the world community. Many cultures and nations were not recognized. Now, fifty years later, we have returned, and our message remains the same.

Our elders have watched the rebirth of this international institution. In 1949, a delegation of the Hau de no sau nee attended the foundation ceremony for the United Nations building in New York City. In 1974, our people journeyed to Sweden to take part in an international conference on the Environment and Ecology. All through these times we have taken notice of the changes which have occurred within this institution.

Now we find ourselves in Geneva, Switzerland, once again. For those of us present, and the many at home, we have assumed the duty of carrying on our peoples' struggle. Invested in the names we carry today are the lives of thousands of generations of both the past and the future. On their behalf, also, we ask that the Non-Governmental Organizations join us in our struggle to obtain our full rights and protection under the rules of international law and the World Community.

Policies 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, who are known to many Europeans as the Six nations Iroquois, have inhabited their territories since time immemorial. During the time prior to the coming of the Europeans, it is said that ours were a happy and prosperous people. Our lands provided abundantly for our needs. Our people lived long, healthy, and productive lives. Before the Europeans came, we were an affluent people, rich in the gifts of our country. We were a strong people in both our minds and bodies. Throughout most of that time, we lived in peace.

Prior to the arrival of the colonists, we were a people who lived by hunting and gathering, and practiced a form of agriculture which was not labor intensive. The economy of the people was an extremely healthful Way of Life, and our peoples were very healthy – among the finest athletes in the world. There were some, in those times, who lived to be 120 years and more, and our runners were unexcelled for speed and endurance.

Among our people we refer to our culture as "OngweHonwekah." This refers to a Way of Life that is peculiar to the Hau de no sau nee. It is virtually impossible for us to recount, specifically, the history of "Hau de no sau nee economics." As will become evident, our economy, that way in which our people manage their resources, and the relationship of that management to the total organization of our society, are processes completely bound together. The distribution of goods, in our traditional society, was accomplished through institutions which are not readily identified as economic institutions by other societies. The Hau de no sau nee do not have specific economic institutions. Rather, what European people identify as institutions of one classification or another serve many different purposes among the Hau de no sau nee.

We were a people of a great forest. That forest was a source of great wealth. It was a place in which was to be found huge hardwoods and an almost unimaginable abundance and variety of nuts, berries, roots, and herbs. In addition to these, the rivers teemed with fish and the forest and its meadows abounded with game. It was, in fact, a kind of Utopia, a place where no one went hungry, a place where the people were happy and healthy.

Our traditions were such that we were careful not to allow our populations to rise in numbers that would overtax the other forms of life. We practiced strict forms of conservation. Our

culture is based on a principle that directs us to constantly think about the welfare of seven generations into the future. Our belief in this principle acts as a restraint to the development of practices which would cause suffering in the future. To this end, our people took only as many animals as were needed to meet our needs. Not until the arrival of the colonists did the wholesale slaughter of animals occur.

We feel that many people will be confused when we say that ours is a Way of Life, that our economy cannot be separated from the many aspects of our culture. Our economy is unlike that of Western peoples. We believe that all things in the world were created by what the English language forces us to call "Spiritual Beings," including one that we call the Great Creator. All things in this world belong to the Creator and the spirits of the world. We also believe that we are required to honor these beings, in respect of the gift of Life.

In accordance with our ways, we are required to hold many kinds of feasts and ceremonies which can best be described as "give-aways." It is said that among our people, our leaders, those whom the Anglo people insist on calling "chiefs," are the poorest of us. By the laws of our culture, our leaders are both political and spiritual leaders. They are leaders of many ceremonies which require the distribution of great wealth. As spiritual/political leaders, they provide a kind of economic conduit. To become a political leader, a person is required to be a spiritual leader, and to become a spiritual leader a person must be extraordinarily generous in terms of material goods.

Our leaders, in fact, are leaders of categories of large extended families. Those large extended families function as economic units in a Way of Life which has as its base the Domestic Mode of Production. Before the colonists came, we had our own means of production and distribution adequate to meet all the peoples' needs. We would have been unable to exist as nations were it not so.

Our basic economic unit is the family. The means of distribution, aside from simple trade, consists of a kind of spiritual tradition manifested in the functions of the religious/civic leaders in a highly complex religious, governmental, and social structure.

The Hau de no sau nee have no concept of private property. This concept would be a contradiction to a people who believe that the Earth belongs to the Creator. Property is an idea by which people can be excluded from having access to lands, or other means of producing a livelihood. That idea would destroy our culture, which requires that every individual live in service to the Spiritual Ways and the People. That idea (property) would produce slavery. The acceptance of the idea of property would produce leaders whose functions would favor excluding people from access to property, and they would cease to perform their functions as leaders of our societies and distributors of goods.

Before the colonists came, we had no consciousness about a concept of commodities. Everything, even the things we make, belong to the Creators of Life and are to be returned ceremonially, and in reality, to the owners. Our people live a simple life, one unencumbered by the need of endless material commodities. The fact that their needs are few means that

all the peoples' needs are easily met. It is also true that our means of distribution is an eminently fair process, one in which all of the people share in all the material wealth all of the time.

Our Domestic Mode of Production has a number of definitions which are culturally specific. Our peoples' economy requires a community of people and is not intended to define an economy based on the self-sufficient nuclear family. Some modern economists estimate that in most parts of the world, the isolated nuclear family cannot produce enough to survive in a Domestic Mode of Production. In any case, that particular mode of subsistence, by our cultural definition, is not an economy at all.

Ours was a wealthy society. No one suffered from want. All had the right to food, clothing, and shelter. All shared in the bounty of the spiritual ceremonies and the Natural World. No one stood in any material relationship of power over anyone else. No one could deny anyone access to the things they needed. All in all, before the colonists came, ours was a beautiful and rewarding Way of Life.

The colonists arrived with many institutions and strategies designed to destroy the Way of Life of the People of the Longhouse. In 1609, Samuel deChamplain led a French military expedition that attacked a party of Mohawk people on the lake now named "Lake Champlain." Champlain arrived in search of wealth and was specifically interested in generating some kind of trade in beaver pelts with the Algonquin people of the area. He demonstrated his firearms to them, letting them see, for the first time, the power of guns.

Champlain, accompanied by his newly-found business partners, marched into the center of Mohawk territory. This war party encountered a party of about 200 Mohawks. The first volley of gunfire killed three men, and the second created such confusion that the Mohawks retreated, leaving twelve men who were taken captive.

The period of warfare which followed this incident has come to be known as the "Beaver Wars." The introduction of trade in beaver pelts inevitably triggered a long series of colonial wars. It represented the escalation of disputes among neighbors into a full-scale struggle for survival in the forests of the Native people of North America.

The European penetration affected every facet of the Native Way of Life from the very moment of contact. The natural economies, cultures, politics, and military affairs became totally altered. Nations learned that to be without firearms meant physical annihilation. To be without access to beaver pelts mean no means to buy firearms.

The trade in beaver pelts, and the now necessary weaponry, introduced factors never before encountered by the Native people. Trade meant that long routes over which goods were to be transported had to be secured. The only way that was possible was for the entire area to be in friendly hands. Any potential disruptor of the trade routes must either be pacified or eliminated.

With the introduction of firearms, war became a deadly business. It was made more deadly because the European strategy of economic penetration was to stimulate warfare among

the Native nations over which would have the goods for trade. Out of necessity, to protect themselves from annihilation, the People of the Longhouse entered the beaver trade. The pelts were used to buy more firearms and goods that made it possible for more men to trap more beaver more efficiently. The marketplaces of France, Holland, and England were eager for the "New World" merchandise.

Shortly after the encounter on Lake Champlain, the Hau de no sau nee began trading with Holland, which had established posts along the Hudson River. A large part of the trade involved firearms. French historians recount that the People of the Longhouse were very skillful at the strategies of battle, and within a short time, the Algonquin people were defeated. Their defeat was aided by the fact that the French had not taken seriously their pledges of aid to the Algonquin.

So intense became the need for European goods, especially firearms, that by 1640 the beaver were becoming scarce in the Hau de no sau nee territories. Pressure from the newly created European frontiers was steadily increasing. Warfare was also common between the various colonizers. The Hau de no sau nee were well aware of what was occurring to the East. The Dutch, shortly after their arrival, began a series of genocidal wars that ended in the utter annihilation of the Native peoples of the Lower Hudson River Valley. In New England, the Pequot nation was nearly obliterated by the Puritan and English colonists there.

Knowledge of these massacres greatly influenced Hau de no sau nee defense policy. To the East were the Dutch and English, whose presence was necessary as a source of firearms. Yet, they represented a constant potential of movement of their frontiers westward into the Longhouse. To the North was the colony of France, which was supplying arms to the Western Native nations. France also threatened to gain a monopoly over the beaver trade which was increasingly centered to the north and west of Lakes Erie and Ontario.

France made repeated attempts to send missionaries, especially Jesuits, among the nations of the Hau de no sau nee. These missions were the major tool of propaganda for the European nations. Missionaries then, as today, are expected to carry more than the message of Christianity. They serve as lay ambassadors of their culture, splitting off individuals from families, families from villages, villages from nations, one by one. Some priests even served as the leaders of troops going into battle.

The missionaries made persistent attacks on the economic structures of the People of the Longhouse. They specifically attacked the spiritual ceremonies as "pagan," and thereby sought to end the practice of give-aways and public feasts. In addition, they sought to break the power of the clans by causing division which would split the people into nuclear households.

European churches, especially in colonial practice, take on their feudal roles as economic institutions. Among natural world people, they are the most dangerous agents of destruction. They invariably seek to destroy the spiritual/economic bonds of the people to the forests, land and animals. They spread both ideologies and technologies which make people slaves to the extractive system which defines colonialism.

In 1704, the first Anglican missionaries were sent, by England, to the Mohawks living along the Mohawk River. In 1710, a delegation of Mohawk chiefs received an invitation to visit England. They returned bearing four bibles, a prayer book and a communion plate for the Anglican chapel, gifts from Queen Anne. But the missionaries also brought behind them a long, long tail. To house themselves they needed a mission, to protect the mission they needed a fort, and to propagate the faith, they needed a school. Missionaries spread more than the word of God. The British Empire was fast entering the Hau de no sau nee territories, and there was more to come.

The warlike European kingdoms were constantly fighting among themselves. There were three wars during the 18th Century just between France and England: Queen Anne's War (1701 to 1713,) King George's War (1744 to 1748), and the "French and Indian War," known to the European world as the "War of the Spanish Succession," (1754 to 1763). It is clear from the records of the time that the People of the Longhouse remained neutral throughout these conflicts. Although individuals on the road to assimilation, such as the Anglicized Mohawks, who had been coerced into roles as British peasants, could be counted on to aid the colonizers.

If France was unsuccessful in her attempts at military penetration of the territory of the Longhouse, England was far more successful in her social and religious colonization of the Eastern part of our territories. William Johnson was an Irish immigrant who became famous for his influence over certain Mohawks. As an agent of the British Crown, he maintained an embassy as an operational base close to the Mohawk country. He took several Native women as concubines and had several children by them, none of which he ever recognized as heirs. His position was known as "British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department." He is widely credited, by European historians, as a successful manipulator of events and developments on the frontier during his tenure. In today's context, Johnson would be working as an ambassador to a Third World country, executing simultaneously diplomatic, military, intelligence, and foreign aid operations.

During his tenure he engineered the establishment of a beachhead from which immigrants could move Westward to broaden the colony. Mohawk lands along the Susquehanna and Mohawk Rivers were increasingly encroached upon by British settlers, including Johnson himself. By the Spring of 1765, the carefully managed Longhouse environment was in trouble as ignorant and destructive peasant settlers almost eradicated the deer herds.

There was so much trouble with the peasant settlers that the Mohawks, who had so generously allowed them to share their lands, were actually considering moving Westward into Oneida territories to gain some more peace. By the Spring of 1765, many Mohawks had already been displaced and were living as refugees among the other nations.

William Johnson was a master public relations man for the King. He would, on the one hand, apologize for the behavior of the frontiersmen and urge the Mohawks to be patient, and on the other hand encourage more settlers to move into the Mohawk lands. He would make a great show of protecting Hau de no sau nee interests, and in that way encourage the

People of the Longhouse to seek a resolution at the bargaining table where they invariably ended up trading land to gain a temporary peace.

Throughout this period many other Native peoples had been moving into our territories to gain some respite from the colonial onslaught. Far to the South, in the colonized area known as the Carolinas, the Tuscarora were faced with imminent destruction. In their drive to gain some more land and economic advantage, English colonizers were using the same techniques which were being employed in the Northeast. In 1713, the dispossessed Tuscaroras withdrew from their homelands and sought protection in the territories of the Hau de no sau nee. They were not the only people who were displaced. Delawares, Tuteloes, Shawnees and others fled to the Hau de no sau nee lands seeking peace.

Peace, however, was not to be. At the approach of the American revolution, the Hau de no sau nee did everything possible to remain neutral. With the decline of France, and the increasing decline in the importance of trade, the settler bourgeoisie of the Anglo colonies cast an increasingly envious eye on the lands of the Longhouse. Still our military power was formidable, and our resolve was to remain neutral.

The policy of England, however, was to involve the Hau de no sau nee in the war. To accomplish this goal, they resorted to bribery, trickery, false propaganda, and the emotional appeal. The Hau de no sau nee continued its policy of neutrality throughout. Both the colonists and the "Loyalists" entered our territories in search of mercenaries. The loyalist strategy was the more successful. They were able to draw out some of our people into a battle with the revolting colonists.

The Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, made no provision, at least in writing, for the Native nations, which the British Crown had solemnly promised to protect. Thus the representatives of the People of the Longhouse held an international treaty meeting with the new federation called the United States of America in September of 1784. The U.S. demanded huge cessions of territory, especially from the Senecas. The warriors who had been delegated to the meeting eventually signed the treaty. However, they had not been authorized to commit the Hau de no sau nee without consulting them. For a time, the terms of the treaty were not known, as the U.S. would not provide the Hau de no sau nee with a copy of the document. As many Native people knew, to their regrets, signing a treaty and the ratification of a treaty are two separate acts, each necessary before a treaty becomes valid. Although the U.S. Congress ratified the treaty, the legislative council of the Hau de no sau nee met at Buffalo Creek and renounced the agreement.

Somehow the United States takes the position that the Hau de no sau nee ceased to exist by the year 1784, although the Longhouse has continued to this day. There is ample evidence that all the nations continued to participate in the matters of the Great Council, the legislative body of the Confederacy. None of the nations of the league has ever declared themselves separate from the Confederation. The Oneidas, whose reputed allegiance to the United States was based on the existence of Oneida mercenaries, continued to send their delegates to the council, and the Tuscarora remain firmly attached to the League. The

Onondagas, Senecas, Cayugas and Mohawks continue to hold their positions within the League. Although the Hau de no sau nee have been severely disrupted by the Westward expansion of the United States, the subsequent surrounding of their lands, and the attempts to devour its people, the Six Nations Confederacy continues to function. Indeed, today its strength continues to be increasing.

By pretending that the Hau de no sau nee government no longer exists, both the U.S. and Britain illegally took Hau de no sau nee territories by simply saying the territories belong to them. To this day, Canada, the former colony of England, has never made a treaty for the lands in the St. Lawrence River Valley. But the truth continues to remain and plague officials yet today. The Hau de no sau nee territories are not and have never been part of the U.S. or Canada. The citizens of the Hau de no sau nee are a separate people, distinct from either Canada or the United States. Because of this, the Hau de no sau nee refuses to recognize a border drawn by a foreign people through our lands.

The policy of the dispossession of North American Native peoples, first by the European kingdoms, and later by the settler regimes, began with the first contact. Dispossession took a number of approaches: the so-called "just warfare" was a strategy by which Native nations were deemed to have offended the Crown and their elimination by fire and sword was justified. That was followed by the Treaty Period in which Native nations were "induced" to sell their lands and move westward. The Treaty Period was in full swing at the beginning of the 19th Century. By 1815, the governor of New York was agitating for the removal of all Native people from the state for "their own good."

While the infamous Trail of Tears was removing Native peoples from the Southeast to Oklahoma, New York State was lobbying for a treaty in 1838 which was intended to remove the Hau de no sau nee, who were on lands that the state wanted, away to an area of Kansas. The principal victims were to be the Senecas.

Like the Termination Policy a century later, the Removal Policy was eventually abandoned due in part to the bad press received during the Cherokee Removal in 1832. During the process of the Cherokee removal, thousands of Cherokee men, women, children and elders were subjected to conditions which caused them to die of exposure, starvation and neglect.

In 1871, the U.S. Congress passed an Act which included a clause that treaties would no longer be made with "Indian Nations." It was at this time that official United States policy toward Native people began to shift to a new strategy. Reports to Congress began to urge that the Native people be assimilated into U.S. society as quickly as possible. The policy of fire and sword, simply began to become less popular among an increasingly significant percentage of the United States population. The principle hindrance to the assimilation of the Native people, according to its most vocal adherents, was the Indian land base. The Native land base was held in common and this was perceived as an uncivilized and unAmerican practice. The assimilationists urged that, if every Indian family owned its own farmstead, they could more readily acquire "civilized" traits. Thus the Dawes Act of 1886

ordered the Native nations stripped of their land base, resulting in the transfer of millions of acres to European hands.

There was consistent pressure in the New York Legislature to "civilize" the Hau de no sau nee. To accomplish this, all vestiges of Hau de no sau nee nationality needed to be destroyed. This is the 19th Century origin of the policy to "educate" the Indian to be culturally European. It was thought that when the Indian was successfully Europeanized, he would no longer be distinct and separate, and that there would no longer be an indigenous people with their own customs and economy. At that point, the Indian could be simply declared to have assimilated into the United States or Canadian society. The net effect would dispense with the entire concept of Native nations, and that would extinguish the claims of those nations to their lands. The report of the Whipple Committee to the New York Legislature in 1888 was clear: "Exterminate the Tribe."

In 1924, the Canadian government "abolished" Hau de no sau nee government at the Grand River territory. The Oneida and Akwesasne territories were invaded and occupied by Canadian troops in order to establish neo-colonial "elective systems" in the name of democracy. Also in 1924, the United States government passed legislation declaring all American Indians to be United States citizens. The 1924 Citizenship Act was an attempt to deny the existence of Native nations, and the rights of these Native nations to their lands. The denial of the existence of Native nations is a way of legitimizing the colonists' claims to the lands. This concept is furthered by the imposition of non-Native forms of government. This also serves to fulfill the colonizer's need to destroy any semblance of sovereignty. The actual process for taking lands can be accomplished when the Native nation no longer exists in its original context – when it is less of a nation.

With all semblance of a Native nation's original context destroyed, Canada and the United States can rationalize that integration has occurred. With this rationale in hand, both governments have set out to enact their final solutions to the "Indian Problem."

The Hau de no sau nee vigorously objected to the Citizenship Act and maintains to this day that the People of the Longhouse are not citizens of Canada or the United States, but are citizens of their own nations of the League.

The Terminations Act of the 1950s were efforts to simply declare that the Native nations no longer exist and to appropriate their lands. The acts were so disastrous that they caused something of a national scandal. "St. Regis," the European name for Akwesasne, was one of our territories targeted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as "ready for integration."

The BIA based its recommendation on the fact that many Mohawks had acquired at least some of the material conditions which made their community outwardly indistinguishable from the white communities. In fact, however, Akwesasne was, and is, very different from the small towns in the area surrounding it.

Termination submerged as an official policy in the late 1960s. But Termination is simply a means to an end. The objective is the economic exploitation of a people and their lands.

The taking of lands and the denial and destruction of Native nations are concrete and undeniable elements in the colonization process as it is applied to Native people surrounded by a settler state. Tools to accomplish this end include guns, disease, revised histories, repressive missionaries, indoctrinating teachers, and these things are often cloaked in codes of law. In the Twentieth Century, the taking of land and the destruction of the culture and Native economy serve to force the Native people into roles as industrial workers, just as in the 19th Century the same processes forced Native people in the U.S. and Canada into roles as landless peasants.

The Hau de no sau nee has, over a period of 375 years, met every definition of an oppressed nation. It has been subjected to raids of extermination from France, England, and the United States. Its people have been driven from their lands, impoverished, and persecuted for their Hau de no sau nee customs. It has been the victim of fraudulent dealings from three European governments which have openly expressed the goal of extermination of the Hau de no sau nee. Our children have been taught to despise their ancestors, their culture, their religion, and their traditional ceremony. Recently, it has been a government-sponsored fad to have bi-lingual/bi-cultural programs in the schools. These programs are not a sincere effort to revitalize the Hau de no sau nee, but exist as an integrationists' ploy to imply "acceptance" from the dominating culture.

Revisionist United States and British historians have cloaked the past in a veil of lies. The national and local governments of the Hau de no sau nee have been suppressed and usurped by the colonial authorities, and their neo-colonial Indian helpers, to carry out policies of repression in the name of "democracy." Generation after generation has seen the Hau de no sau nee land base, and therefore its economic base, shrink under the expansionist policies of the United States, Great Britain, and Canada.

The world is told by colonial government propaganda machines that the Hau de no sau nee are simply "victims of civilization and progress." The truth is that they are the victims of a conscious and persistent effort of destruction directed at them by the European governments and their heirs in North America. The Hau de no sau nee is not suffering a terminal illness of natural causes – it is being deliberately strangled to death by those who would benefit from its death.

Although treaties may often have been bad deals for the Native nations, the United States and Canada chose not to honor those which exist because to do so would require the return of much of the economic base and sovereignty to the Hau de no sau nee. The treaties contain the potential for independent survival of the Native people. The dishonoring of treaties is essential to the goal of the U.S. and Canadian vested interests which are organized to remove any and all obstacles to their exploitation of the Earth and her peoples.

The European nations of the Western Hemisphere continue to wage war against the Hau de no sau nee. The weapons have changed somewhat – Indian Education programs and social workers, neo-colonial Indian officials and racist laws are used first. If these methods fail, the guns are still ready, as recent history at Akwesasne and South Dakota have shown.

The effect of all these policies has been the destruction of the culture and therefore the economy of the People of the Longhouse. The traditional ceremony has been largely replaced by the colonial ceremony which serves multinational corporate interests. The colonial ceremony is one that extracts labor and materials from the people of the Hau de no sau nee for the benefit of the colonizers. The Christian religions, the school systems, the neo-colonial elective systems, all work toward these goals.

We are an economically poor people today. Few of us can afford to support the spiritual ceremonies which form the foundations of our traditional economies. The money economy is not adaptable to the real economy of our people. Few of our peoples participate in the Domestic Mode of Production which defines the traditional economy. This is largely because of the colonizer's education system, and also more systematic and brutal attempts at acculturation, have placed neo-colonial governments on our territories. On some of the Hau de no sau nee lands, the Canadian and United States government moneys employ one-third of all employable workers, creating an economic dependence among potential leadership of the Hau de no sau nee, and actively recruiting people away from the Domestic Mode of Production. The traditional economy is under heavy attack from many directions, and all else is an economy of exploitation. The political oppression, the social oppression, the economic oppression, all have the same face. These are the tools of Genocide in North America.

Genocide is alive and well in the territory of the Hau de no sau nee. Its technicians are in Washington, Ottawa, and Albany, and its agents control the schools, the churches, and the neo-colonial "elective system" offices found in our territories. This oppression of the Hau de no sau nee has taken its toll – but the Hau de no sau nee continues to meet in council, and its members are on the rise. The Hau de no sau nee, the People of the Longhouse, still have a long history ahead. We have developed strategies to resist the economic effects of the conditions we face. But, those strategies require that we revitalize our social and political institutions. This can only be accomplished on sufficient lands within the ancient boundaries of our territories.

We are living in a period of time in which we expect to see great changes in the economy of the colonizers. The imperial powers of the world appear to be facing successful resistance to 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 that will greatly change the face of the world.

For the moment, there is more wealth, more goods and services, more automation than has ever existed in the history of mankind. The world is living in an age of manufactured affluence. But the people of the world have rarely been told the costs in terms of peoples' lives and suffering, that this affluence has extracted from each of us. Even the people in North America, who seemingly benefit from all these "advances" seem to be unaware of the destruction they are experiencing. The "Modern Age," and its consumer values, has altered, in very basic ways, the very structure of human society, and the basic conditions

of the Natural World.

The modern family is an institution which is presently under a great deal of stress. The family in Western society has undergone great changes over the last century. As the Westernization of the world continues, all peoples will be faced with similar stresses and turmoils.

We, the Hau de no sau nee, have clear choices about the future. One of the choices which we have faced is whether to become Westernized, or to remain true to the Way of Life our forefathers developed for us. We have stated our understanding of the history of the changes that have created the present conditions. We have chosen to remain Hau de no sau nee, and within the context of our Way of Life, to set a course of liberation for ourselves and the future generations.

Our liberation process is not one that is exclusive to us as Humans, but also includes the other life forms that coexist and are as oppressed as we. The liberation of the Natural World is a process which is being undertaken in a most difficult environment. The people surrounding us seem to be intent on destroying themselves and every living thing.

Throughout the past four hundred years, the Hau de no sau nee have exerted a great influence on the lives of millions of people. Theories about democracy and classless society have been developed from inadequate interpretations of the true nature of those ideals. This conference may be the time which begins a process which moves toward more real definitions of these concepts.

In our homelands, our people are still struggling and developing strategies for survival. In the Mohawk country, our people have re-occupied lands for the purpose of revitalizing our culture and economy. This settlement, known as Ganienkeh, has been successfully held for more than three years. The Oneida people have been waging a court battle for several years to regain 265,000 acres illegally taken in the 1700s. The Cayugas have also been engaged in an effort to regain 100,000 acres taken during the same period as the theft from the Oneidas. The Onondagas and Tuscaroras have been carrying on an unceasing battle to gain control of the education that their children receive. The Senecas have been forced into a long struggle to protect the last pieces of their land still under traditional government, the lands at the Tonawanda territory. Every day of our lives finds us defending ourselves from some form of intrusion by the State of New York or the United States or Canadian governments.

If we are to continue to survive, we need the help of the international community. We need external presence to bring some sort of stability to the situation of our people. We have learned, too frequently, that what is good law today can rapidly be changed into bad law. Both Canada and the United States have taught us that their legal systems are part of the political machinery which effects the oppression of our peoples.

We are nations by every definition of the term. We have been unable to obtain any semblance of justice in the court systems of the United States or Canada, and we suffer horrible legal injustices which have terrible economic and social consequences for our people. Many

of our legal problems involve land and sovereignty over land, and land is the basis of our economy. We are seeking our rights in those areas under International Law.

Lastly, we require economic assistance in the forms of economic aid and technical assistance. We are aware that there exist various international figures who have technical expertise and who are conscious of the development in the context of specific cultures. Our case is appropriate to 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 goal alone and unaided.

For centuries we have known that each individual’s action creates conditions and situations that affect the world. For centuries we have been careful to avoid any action unless it carried a long-range prospect of promoting harmony and peace in the world. In that context, with our brothers and sisters of the Western Hemisphere, we have journeyed here to discuss these important matters with the other members of the Family of Man.

Appendix

Footnotes

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Self Interest

Self-interest hides in many ways, hides under every stone and every act – hides in prayer, in worship, in having a successful profession, great knowledge, a special reputation, like the speaker. When there is a guru who says, 'I know all about it. I will tell you all about it' - is there not self-interest there? This seed of self-interest has been with us for a million years. Our brain is conditioned to self-interest. If one is aware of that, just aware of it, not saying, 'I am not self-interested' or 'How can one live without self-interest?' but just be aware, then how far can one go, how far can one investigate into oneself to find out for ourselves, each one of us, how in action, in daily activity, in our behaviour, how deeply one can live without a sense of self-interest?

So, if we will, we will examine all that. Self-interest divides, self-interest is the greatest corruption (the word corruption means to break things apart) and where there is self-interest there is fragmentation - your interest as opposed to my interest, my desire opposed to your desire, my urgency to climb the ladder of success opposed to yours. Just observe this; you can't do anything about it – you understand? - but just observe it, stay with it and see what is taking place.

– Krishnamurti, Last Talks At Saanen, 1985, pp. 84-85.