

Session 7

Indigeneity in New Settings, II: Indigenous Transnationalism New Routes for Roots: Indigenous Transnationalism



A delegation from the Six Nations (Haudenosaunee Confederacy) brought attention to the plight of indigenous peoples when they traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1977 to speak before the United Nations. They sought recognition of indigenous peoples' identities and relief from the violation of their rights. (*Indian Country Today*)



“I hope that the **common history** and **shared values** that we discovered in each other are only the seeds from which some kind of lasting framework can grow for a **common alliance** of Native Peoples”—*Chief George Manuel*, after visiting Aboriginal Australians and Maoris, 1971.

Transnational Indigenous “Resurgence”?

The Transnational Indigenous Peoples Movement

Landmarks in the Development of Indigenous Transnationalism

Colonial Protection

→ Dominicans, Jesuits, Aborigines Protection Society (Britain, 19th c.)

Western Advocacy

→ Cultural Survival Inc., Survival International, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

Early Indigenous Appeals to Colonial Crowns

→ New Zealand Maori delegations to Britain:

1882, 1884, 1914 and 1924

→ 3 BC Chiefs travel in 1906 meet King Edward VII, again in 1909. A second delegation from BC followed in 1909

→ Iroquois Confederacy traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, 1920s, League of Nations

North American Indian Brotherhood

→ sent a delegation to the UN Assembly in New York

World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP)

→ 1975 (Guyana) Chief George Manuel, chief of the Shuswap Nation of British Columbia, first president of the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada

→ Manuel, President of WCIP to 1981

→ “Fourth World”

The United Nations

- International Year for the World's Indigenous People (1993)
- First International Decade for the World's Indigenous People (1994-2004) for Indigenous
- Second International Decade for the World's Indigenous People starting in 2005
- August 9, UN's Day for the World's Indigenous Peoples
- "strengthening cultural identity"
- networks of indigenous communities and organizations for sharing information & experience
- international "trade fairs"
- the "right to be different," the "right to development," and the "right to revitalize"
- Principle 22, UN's "Rio Declaration"
- Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- ILO Convention 169
- UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

1992

→ 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus;
Nobel peace prize to Guatemalan Maya activist Rigoberta Menchú

Regional Federations

→ Council of South American Indians (CISA); Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), Central Coordinator of Amazonian Indian Nations (COICA); Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP)

North American Preeminence

- (1) greater public visibility
- (2) greater financial resources
- (3) the Internet

Free-Floating Homogeneous Culture?

- generic images of indigenous identity at the international level
vs. local diversity

Elites and Grass Roots?

Everyday Transnationalism?

Conclusion:

José Barreiro, An Indigenous Perspective on the Real Gains of the Transnational Indigenous Peoples' Movement



“There were two points of unity, and one was the shared history of oppression that everybody could sense; but the deeper, more foundational one occurred when the elders began to conduct early morning ceremonies and the unifying element of the indigenous world became more obvious....I remember the scene. Chief Corbett Sundown, a [Seneca] elder who has since passed away, invited the delegation to a tobacco burning one early morning and intoned the Thanksgiving Address of the Haudenosaunee, and in the pattern of that very traditional oration that’s to be done in the Native

languages of the Iroquois were elements that Hopi brought with them as well, and Maya could recognize, so the various people from very distinct cultures increasingly realized that they shared a worldview.”