



1992

500 AÑOS DE LA CONQUISTA DE AMERICA

WGIP 87/UNI/20

We thank the UN Working Group and especially the organizations of indigenous peoples present here, who has given us this important opportunity to present a working Project in the name of the International League for the Rights of Peoples and the Lelio Basso International Foundation for the Right of Peoples asking you for observations and suggestions and fundamentally to propose that you become promoters, together with us, of the Project itself, whose realization is only possible with your active participation at all levels of organization.

"1992: 500 Years of the Conquest" is the theme around which we are asking you to work together for the next five years, coordinating the efforts of all those who, in and out of the indigenous world, are already working to make a different anniversary from that of the American and European governments.

The initiative was born in Europe because it is precisely here, while Spain and the majority of American governments which have responded to its call are preparing to celebrate with pomp and ceremony this date as a shining symbol of western civilization, that is indispensable to deepen the process of critical revision of these last 500 years, beginning to bear witness to another history, that of the Conquest which began only 500 years ago.

Conquest and not "Discovery" or "Encounter", terms used by the apologist of this "enterprise", because the word "conquest" is the best symbol of the history of the American continent of these last 500 years: organized genocide, the birth of colonialism which would later extend to Asia, Africa and Oceania, the destruction of hundreds of cultures, the imposition of a certain means of production, a culture, religions which have nothing to do with the natural evolution of the people of the continent

Finally, the birth of structures which to this day condition the development of the sovereignty of the majority of the countries of the Americas.

The real history of America prevents us from being able to take part in the celebrations of the official organizations of the commemorations of that date, beginning with the choice of the word itself used as a symbol: "Discovery". It is futile to argue over what it was that was discovered, what is incredible for us is that on the eve of the year 2000 there is still an attempt to ignore the existence of a people (the Indian people) who have lived in America for thousands of years and that paid with its life and with the loss of its own rights and lands the invasion of the continent in a process of genocide that we can characterize as the most terrible in the history of humanity.

We also reject the term "encounter" because an encounter is a mutual acquaintance between 2 or more realities in which there is no relation of domination, violence or expropriation, as it was in the case of the history of America.

The project is articulated in 5 sectors: history, religion, indigenous communities, culture and philosophy and science.

Trough our common work, we will try to find, "the keys to change the present" and trough the militant work of all people sensitive to the issue of the rights of peoples, we will try to "take the streets" to give testimony that in 1992 we should not celebrate happily the arrival of Columbus to America, but rather think about the origins of the forms of oppression conditioned by the "entrance" of America into the world known by the Europeans, and that determined the current urgent situation in which millions of persons live.

Two of the main objectives of the project are to counterbalance the information produced by the official committees and to write the real history of America, which pre-supposes an effort to rewrite and reinterpret what has occurred in this period so that this new vision (which is being manifested more and more clearly) is transformed into an arm which can help in the search for common solutions.

Who is interested in receiving more information may request us the global project.

Thank you for your attention