

# BIG MOUNTAIN Aktionsgruppe

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## STATEMENT TO THE

### WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

#### EIGHTH SESSION

23 JULY - 3 AUGUST 1990

#### ITEM 7: OTHER MATTERS

#### CONCERNING THE 6TH EUROPEAN MEETING OF NORTH AMERICAN

#### INDIAN SUPPORT GROUPS

(MUNICH, 24 - 27 JULY 1990)---

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Madame Chair, members of the working group, dear indigenous delegates,

first I like to thank the members of the working group on indigenous populations and their chairman, Madame Daes, for their dedication to indigenous affairs and for giving me the opportunity to speak here today.

Though I am not directly involved in the United Nations work as far as any position is concerned, I am now attending UN meetings for the third time. We have always considered it of crucial importance that people come together to find solutions to the problems of indigenous nations today, and within this context we have meetings where North American Indians and their supporters work together.

In this tradition the Big Mountain Aktionsgruppe organized the 6th European Meeting of North American Indian Support Groups, held in Munich, Federal Republic of Germany 24 to 27 of July this year, where 100 people from 30 organizations from 16 European countries, including eastern countries like Poland and the USSR, as well as from the <sup>United States</sup> ~~United States~~ and Canada participated. This was not a single event, but - as the name indicates - the 6th of its kind, once started in Berlin in 1983, and has since taken place each year in a different country of Europe.

Unfortunately the situation of the Indian nations in the United States and Canada is often neglected by the public and the media, and therefore one of the aims is to draw attention to their problems and requests. We all know that despite the governments' of Canada and the US claim to be humanitarian and civilized countries the rights of indigenous nations have been violated since almost 500 years, and the indigenous people are still confronted with racism and injustice, their land and sovereignty taken away.

Especially as Germans we have to be aware of our responsibility to prevent all forms of genocide and repression of peoples, and we should recognize the right of self-determination of sovereign nations, which has yet been denied to indigenous nations by our European governments.

The aim of the annual meeting of European support groups with North American Indians is to find methods in order to improve their situation by closely working together. This year we had the pleasure to welcome 12 Indian delegates to report on recent developments and ways to respond to them. On this basis we develop plans and elaborate concepts to make their issues known to the world and influence government to recognize indigenous rights, and as citizens of our various countries we have the possibility to inform our governments and force them to deal with

matters concerning indigenous nations and themselves, as for example in Germany

by a parliamentary query on uranium mining, because uranium needed to fuel our nuclear power plants is mined on indigenous lands as in Saskatchewan, Canada, on Cree land. We furthermore work on direct actions to support indigenous nations, like we participated in a blockade by the Lubicon Cree Nation in 1986. or actions such as peaceful demonstrations on the Nevada Test Site, where the US-government conducts its nuclear tests on Western Shoshone land. But one of our major goals is to help raising funds, so that indigenous nations can continue their fight for their rights and their survival, and correspondingly we paid the travel costs for the Indian delegates participating at our conference in Munich.

We are sitting here in a building of long traditions and the League of Nations always stressed the importance of the right of self-determination of peoples and therefore it is a special honour for me to talk to you, but the work of the United Nation is of rather formal nature, whereas we as support groups can work on a more direct structure. To close this gap it is necessary to join forces and cooperate with each other.

The Annual Meeting of European Support Groups for North American Indians is a very important forum, and we like to invite all indigenous delegates <sup>from the time up to</sup> to come to those meetings, and we will be glad to help with more detailed informations. In two years we are facing the worldwide celebrations of the so-called discovery of America, and therefore the Meeting will be held in Genua, Italy, the birth-place of Columbus. In our endeavours for justice for indigenous nations we have to extend our contacts and our possibilities.

Finally I like to thank all indigenous delegates represented here who through their efforts made it possible to establish this Working Group and I hope that after the Universal Declaration on Indigenous Rights will be passed this Working Group will continue to support the rights of indigenous nations.

Thank you very much