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JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE
SCARBORO FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY
2685 KINGSTON ROAD
SCARBOROUGH . ONTARIO . CANADA
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M E M O

18 September 1989

TO: Colleagues & Friends with Concerns for Brazil Amazon
FROM: Dan Gennarelli, Director/Justice and Peace Office
RE: Copy of 18 May '89 Update on Balbina Dam Destruction
and Misery along the Uatuma River - **AMAZON, BRAZIL**

1. Thank you for receiving our "urgent action request and update" of 29 June '89 on the situation along the banks of the Uatuma River flowing below the Balbina Dam (central Amazon/Brazil). The Canadian Embassy/Brasilia and External Affairs/Ottawa have expressed a readiness to review relief project proposals submitted to the CANADA FUND (administered by the Embassy) aimed at alleviating the misery caused to the nearly 2000 families disaffected by the contaminated waters of the Uatuma.
2. However, political remedies affecting the invasion of indigenous lands and destruction of the Waimiri-Atroari together with claims for indemnification of displaced river communities and rural farmers still go unheeded.
3. On the reverse is a list of documents compiled by the Justice and Peace Office containing both background on the specific case of the Balbina Hydroelectric complex and an overview of the vast destruction and dislocation to be expected as another 70 (seventy) dams are slated for completion in the Amazon by the year 2010. All the documents are available in a single packet or individually upon request from our office.
4. We see several links between Canada and this "development" of the Amazon:
 - the future shape of a Canadian policy on development projects and programmes in tropical rainforests
 - the vote of the Canadian governor to the World Bank on Power Sector Loans to Brazil, ultimately financing Eletrobras/ Eletronorte hydroelectric projects slated for the Amazon region. (On one of these links please refer to Probe International's letter to the director of the Brazil Dept./World Bank, 23 Aug '89, enclosed.)
 - the interests of Canadian mining investments in the Amazon, specifically those on indigenous lands.
5. Lastly is a brief article based upon an interview with Fr. Ron MacDonnell, S.F.M., who works in the region. It was published in the **Sunday Star** (Toronto) 27 Aug '89 (on reverse of Balbina article).
6. Please keep us informed of any actions, initiatives or information on the above.

JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE

SCARBORO FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY

2685 KINGSTON ROAD
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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

September 1989

RE: BALBINA DAM/INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS SUPPORT BRAZIL'S ECOLOGICAL TRAGEDY

- L.1 Brief Trip Report/Brazil by Dan Gennarelli, 08 Dec '88
- invasion of the lands of the Waimiri-Atroari Native Peoples/Amazon
- L.2 Letter to Dr. David Suzuki re collaboration, 09 Jan '89
(NB his brief reply, 15 January '89)
- L.3 Letter to Finance Minister Michael Wilson re World Bank, 14 Dec '88
- Canada's role supports destruction in the Amazon
- L.4 Letter to same from SFM Superior General, 09 Dec '88
- L.5 Letter from Finance Minister Michael Wilson, 16 Feb '89
- World Bank Power Sector Loan to Brazil
- Canadian Proposals for Enhanced World Bank Support for Sustainable Development (Sept '88).
- L.6 Call for Urgent Action from JPO on Uatuma river-dwellers, 29 June '89
- Telegrams to Brazilian Officials and Canadian Ambassador/Brasilia
- Articles A.8, A.9 (below)
- Letter to International Rivers Network (San Francisco/USA),
27 June '89
- L.7 SFM Press Release on Balbina/2000 Downriver Families, 06 July '89
- Contamination of the Uatuma River
- L.8 Letter from Probe International/Toronto to World Bank, 23 Aug '89
- Compensation claims settled before renewing Power Sector Loans
- L.9 **Toronto Star** interview with Fr. Ron MacDonnell, SFM, 27 Aug '89
- "Nova Scotia priest in Amazon to help villagers fight for life"
by Olivia Ward
- on Balbina and Uatuma River contamination
- L.10 Letter to International Water Tribunal (Netherlands), 06 Sept '89
- to consider Balbina as a case study for IWT

- ARTICLES/**
- A.1 Egydio Schwade: Rainforest Researcher Expelled, 21 Dec '86
 - A.2 Article **BALBINA: CATASTROPHY AND DESTRUCTION IN THE AMAZON**, Oct '87
 - A.3 Article **Update on the Balbina Dam Project**, 29 June '88
 - A.4 Inauguration of Turbines, Balbina Dam: 15 Feb '89
 - A.5 Altamira Event/**Globe & Mail**, 21, 22 Feb '89
 - A.6 "The Amazon's Savvy Indians"/**New York Times**, 26 Feb '89
 - A.7 "Brazil Want's Its Dams, but At What Cost?"/**New York Times**, 12 Mar '89
 - A.8 "Attempt Made on Life of CPT Lawyer"/**Paneiro** (Manaus), Apr '89
- claims for victims of the Uatuma River ecological tragedy
 - A.9 "**Balbina Dam: Uatuma Contamination and loss of Livelihood**"/09 Apr '89
- letter from Bishop Jorge Marskell, SFM (Itacoatiara, Amazonas)
- testimonies from local people living on the banks of the
contaminated Uatuma River
 - A.10 "**Balbina: Massive Destruction of Amazonian Life**"/An Update, 18 May '89

- REPORTS/**
- By Amnesty International
 - BRAZIL: Briefing, Sept '88
 - BRAZIL: Authorized Violence in Rural Areas, Sept '88
 - BRAZIL: Cases of Killings and Ill Treatment of Indigenous People,
Nov '88
 - By North American Congress on Latin America, (NACLA)
 - "War in the Amazon" (vol 23/no.1), May '89



PROBE international

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RECEIVED AUG 25 1989

225 Brunswick Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2M6
(416) 978-7014
Fax (416) 978-3824

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

August 23, 1989

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Mr. Armeane M. Choksi
Director, Brazil Department
The World Bank
1818 H St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20433
U.S.A.

Max Allen
Producer, IDEAS
CBC Radio

Arthur Bielfeld
Rabbi,
Temple Emanu El

Georges Erasmus
National Chief,
Assembly of First Nations

Dear Mr. Choksi:

Margherita Howe
Chairman,
Operation Clean Niagara

We were appalled to hear of the plight of the rural farmers who live on the Uatuma River down-stream from the Balbina dam in Brazil. Reports from pastoral workers who work in 35 communities along the river, indicate that the Uatuma is now a river of poison.

Jane Jacobs
Writer

Leonard Johnson
Major-General (Ret.)

Decomposing vegetation in the Balbina reservoir, combined with the long residence time of water in the reservoir (14.6 months if measured discharge values are used, according to Philip Fearnside's study: "Brazil's Balbina Dam: Environment Versus the Legacy of the Pharaohs in Amazonia") causes the water to become acidic and anoxic. When the poisonous water flows through the turbines and out of the reservoir it wreaks tremendous environmental damage and social harm to downstream residents.

Alex Kisin
President,
Neutron Inc.

Gail Regan
President,
Cara Holdings Ltd

Andrew Roman
General Counsel,
Public Interest
Advocacy Centre

David Suzuki
Scientist

The toxic water is totally unfit to drink, and has killed all fishlife - the main source of protein for rural families - and driven away game animals, a supplementary source of protein. Bereft of clean water and protein, and plagued by skinrashes from the water, down-stream communities face severe health hazards.

Eletronorte, the regional utility responsible for building Balbina, promised down-stream residents that they would be compensated for the loss of fish and potable water during the filling phase. But, according to Fearnside's report, "Eletronorte only completed about one-third of the 100 wells before the dam was closed. Eletronorte promised to supply water from tank trucks to those who had not received wells...only one delivery of water was actually made".

Furthermore, now that the filling phase is over, Eletronorte appears to be taking no responsibility whatsoever for the ongoing plight of the hundreds of affected families. And to make matters worse, the wells that Eletronorte did drill have dried up with the onset of the dry season.

.../2

3

According to pastoral workers in the area, Eletronorte is telling the residents that the fish will return and the water will be clean again in just a few months. But a study by INPA (National Institute for Research in the Amazon) has shown that at least ten years will be required before all the toxic vegetation has fully decomposed and the water is safe. (A copy of the study will be sent to you under separate cover.)

This desperate situation is truly unacceptable and must be rectified immediately, which is why we are writing to you at this time.

The World Bank has been associated with Balbina ever since the dam got completed after the Bank's Power Sector Loan to Brazil (\$500 million loan in 1986).

The point of this letter is not to debate the Bank's role in Balbina but rather to show that the Bank should not lend any more money to Brazilian electrical utilities (Eletrobras or regional utilities like Eletronorte) until Eletronorte has fully compensated all residents along the Uatuma River who were affected by the Balbina dam.

Until Eletronorte accepts full responsibility for the welfare of communities affected by their operations, and until they are prepared to consult with communities affected by Balbina to work out a compensation/restitution plan which meets the residents' approval, the electrical utilities in Brazil should not get a penny more from the World Bank. To continue to lend money to the power sector would be irresponsible of the Bank and it would make a mockery of the victims of Balbina.

We propose therefore, that the World Bank make the upcoming loans for Eletrobras - the \$350 million Electric Transmission and Conservation loan and the \$350 million Electric Distribution and Conservation loan - conditional on an acceptable compensation package for communities affected by the Balbina dam.

The compensation package must be worked out in consultation with the affected communities, and it must, at a minimum, compensate them for loss of livelihood, health costs, other costs incurred in their struggle to present their case and hardship, and restore them to their original level of welfare.

Furthermore, all the communities affected by the poisonous waters from the Balbina reservoir must be included in the compensation package, and not just those immediately downstream from the dam who were totally without water during the filling phase. According to pastoral workers, fishing communities far downstream have also been affected.

If there is any undue delay in the power loans being presented to the Board for approval - or if they are withdrawn - then we urge you to make the compensation package for the Balbina victims a loan condition for a more timely loan.

We look forward to your reply on this serious and urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Peggy Hallward
Director, Forestry Research

cc. Mr. Barber Conable, President, The World Bank
The Honourable Michael Wilson, Minister of Finance, Canada
Mr. Frank Potter, Executive Director, The World Bank

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U R G E N T A C T I O N

~~JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE~~

REQUEST & UPDATE

SCARBORO FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY
 2685 KINGSTON ROAD
 SCARBOROUGH - ONTARIO - CANADA
 M1M 1M4

M E M O

29 June '89

TO: Inter-Church Colleagues; Collaborators with Brazil Concerns

FROM: Dan Gennarelli

RE: Update on Situation in Brazil Amazon's Ecological Catastrophe
 The Balbina Dam's Contamination of Downstream River Communities

- 1) We received a telephone report yesterday from Urucara, Amazonas (in the prelicity of Itacoatiara, served by SFM personnel) relaying the continuing news of 1900-2000 families living in communities downstream from the Balbina Dam. (See map on reverse.) Their livelihood, entirely dependent upon the Uatuma River system, has again been threatened. Since early February '89 when the turbine plant was inaugurated, toxic-laden waters from the reservoir behind the dam have been released steadily into the Uatuma River. Fish stocks, small game animals near the river's edge and drinking wells have all been severely affected by the contaminated water. The phone call was made to confirm the desperateness of the situation faced by these families and their needs for medical and food supplies now generated by these circumstances.
- 2) Copies of the Justice & Peace Office's action to Brazilian officials and the Canadian ambassador are enclosed. Would you consider a similar solidarity action and send us copies of your message? (See Items I, II).
- 3) Recently a lawyer was sent into the area where these communities reside. He survived an attempted assassination carried out in Manaus. Among the documents attached is notice of this (Item III).
- 4) Bishop Jorge Marskell, SFM, in a letter to the communities, called attention to the ecological catastrophe manufactured by the designers of the Balbina Dam. He quotes a number of popular testimonies delivered against the effects of the dam. His theological reflection on resurrection and new life is most appropriate (Item IV).
- 5) Some of you have already received a folder of documents with detailed reports, trip accounts and documents on the Balbina catastrophe. Please add the enclosed. If you'd like the full folder please request from us.
- 6) A World Bank meeting is scheduled for upcoming September in Washington (see Item V). It provides us with another opportunity to challenge their lack of any serious application of a human and environmental criteria to rainforest-based projects. These "development" schemes provoke serious human rights violations (attested to by Amnesty International's three 1988 reports on Brazil) against indigenous, rural farmers, riverside dwellers, human rights advocates and church agents. What do we need to do to organize a strategic, structural fight for change at the World Bank and in the Canadian Government in order to have an effective rainforest policy? Let's keep in touch.

SEE MAP ON REVERSE



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Scarboro Foreign Mission Society
2685 Kingston Road
Scarborough Ontario Canada M1M 1M4

ITEM I

TELEGRAM

SENT TO: EXMO. SR. AMAZONINO MENDES
GOV. ESTADO DO AMAZONAS
PALACIO RIO NEGRO
MANAUS, 69.000
AMAZONAS, BRASIL

TO: SR. CEL. DOLY BOUCINHO
ELETRONORTE
RUA 10 DE JULHO
MANAUS, 69.000
AMAZONAS, BRASIL

WE ARE AWARE OF THE URGENT NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITIES ALONG THE UATUMA RIVER BETWEEN SAO SEBASTIAO AND BALBINA. WE URGE YOU TO RESPOND WITHOUT DELAY TO THE COMMUNITIES' REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL AND FOOD SUPPLIES. THE INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS OF BRASIL STRONGLY SUPPORT THE WORK AND DEMANDS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE UATUMA. THE BALBINA DAM IS CREATING HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL MISERY. OFFICIALS MUST NOW FULLY ACCEPT THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND PROVIDE IMMEDIATELY THE MEDICAL AND FOOD SUPPLIES REQUESTED BY THE UATUMA COMMUNITIES.

GENERAL COUNCIL
SCARBORO FOREIGN MISSIONS
TORONTO/CANADA
28 JUNE 1989

(PORTUGUESE TEXT ON REVERSE)

CABLE ADDRESS: "CHINASEM" TORONTO CANADA TEL. (416) 261-7135



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Scarboro Foreign Mission Society
2685 Kingston Road
Scarborough Ontario Canada M1M 1M4

TELEGRAM

SENT TO: EXMO. SR. AMAZONINO MENDES
GOV. ESTADO DO AMAZONAS
PALACIO RIO NEGRO
MANAUS, 69.000
AMAZONAS, BRASIL

TO: SR. CEL. DOLY BOUCINHO
ELETRONORTE
RUA 10 DE JULHO
MANAUS, 69.000
AMAZONAS, BRASIL

FICAMOS SABENDO DA NECESSIDADE URGENTE DO POVO NAS
BEIRAS DO RIO UATUMÁ ENTRE SÃO SEBASTIÃO E BALBINA,
NO AMAZONAS.

PEDIMOS QUE O SENHOR RESPONDA SEM DEMORA AOS PEDIDOS
DAS COMUNIDADES PARA ASSISTÊNCIA ALIMENTAR E MÉDICA.
OS AMIGOS INTERNACIONAIS DO BRASIL APOIAM TOTALMENTE
OS TRABALHOS E REIVINDICAÇÕES DA COMITÉ PARA A
DEFESA DO UATUMÁ.

A BARRAGEM DO BALBINA ESTÁ CRIANDO MISÉRIA PARA GENTE
E PARA O MEIO-AMBIENTE.

AS AUTORIDADES TEM QUE ASSUMIR AGORA SUAS RESPONSABILIDADES
E PROVIDENCIAR OS RECURSOS DE COMIDA E MEDICAMENTOS
NECESSÁRIOS PARA AS COMUNIDADES DO RIO UATUMÁ.

(REV.) ALAN KING, S.F.M.
PARA O CONSELHO GERAL
SOCIEDADE MISSIONARIO DE SCARBORO
TORONTO/CANADA.
28 JUNE 1989

(ENGLISH TEXT ON REVERSE)



Scarboro Foreign Mission Society
2685 Kingston Road
Scarborough Ontario Canada M1M 1M4

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

T E L E G R A M

SENT TO: AMBASSADOR JOHN P. BELL
CANADIAN EMBASSY
AVE. DAS NACOES, 16
SETOR DAS EMBAXADAS, SUL
70.410, DF BRASILIA
BRAZIL

WE WISH TO APPRISE YOU OF AN URGENT SITUATION IN BRAZIL. OUR MISSIONERS IN URUCARA IN AMAZONAS STATE, BRAZIL HAVE CONVEYED TO US THE DREADFUL CIRCUMSTANCES BEING FACED BY THE 1900-2000 FAMILIES ALONG THE UATUMA RIO BETWEEN SAO SEBASTIAO AND BALBINA. THE OPERATION OF THE BALBINA HYDRO-ELECTRIC FACILITY IS RELEASING CONTAMINATED WATER INTO THE RIVER. THESE DOWNSTREAM COMMUNITIES ARE EXPERIENCING WATER-RELATED SICKNESSES AND A SHORTAGE OF FOOD--DUE TO LOSS OF FISH AND SMALL GAME BY THE RIVER'S EDGE--AT A RATE NEVER BEFORE FELT. CALLS FOR RELIEF ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF MEDICAL AND FOOD SUPPLIES HAVE GONE UNHEEDED BY THE STATE GOVERNOR AND THE REGIONAL PRESIDENT OF ELETRONORTE. OUR MISSIONERS ARE COOPERATING WITH THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE UATUMA, WHO ARE ORGANIZING THESE COMMUNITIES AND PRESENTING THEIR NEEDS TO THE OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BALBINA CATASTROPHE. CANADIAN FATHER RON MACDONNELL IN URUCARA (TEL 92-571-1204) CAN VERIFY THE CONDITIONS FACED BY THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITIES ALONG THE UATUMA AS WELL AS THE LEGITIMACY OF THEIR REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL AND FOOD RELIEF.

GENERAL COUNCIL/SCARBORO FOREIGN MISSION
TORONTO/CANADA
28 JUNE 1989

Attempt Made on Life of Lawyer for Land Pastoral Committee

News Update taken from Paneiro, the publication of the Land Pastoral Commission (CPT/Brazilian Catholic Bishops' Conference)
April 1989/Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil
Translated by Justin MacInnis, S.F.M.
Circulated by Justice & Peace Office, Scarboro Foreign Missions

"Information Bulletin"

The lawyer Antonio Eder John de Souza Coelho was victim of a cowardly attempt on his life. In the early morning of March 29 when he was returning to the house where he was staying as a guest in the sector Praca 14 de Janeiro in Manaus, was caught by surprise by a shot fired by persons inside a black car of Gol make. After firing the shot at the lawyer, attackers sped away. The victim's abdomen was perforated by the projectile, managing even in this state to arrive at the house of his sister on 1332 Duque de Caxias Street from where he was immediately taken to the Emergency Department of Getulio Vargas Hospital, where he underwent delicate surgery.

Antonio Eder is the lawyer for the Land Pastoral Committee for the States of Amazonas and of Roraima and of some Rural Workers Unions of the State of Para. He was in Manaus to give juridical assistance to the victims of the Uatuma River ecological tragedy provoked with the commencement of operation of the turbines of the Balbina Hydro Plant.

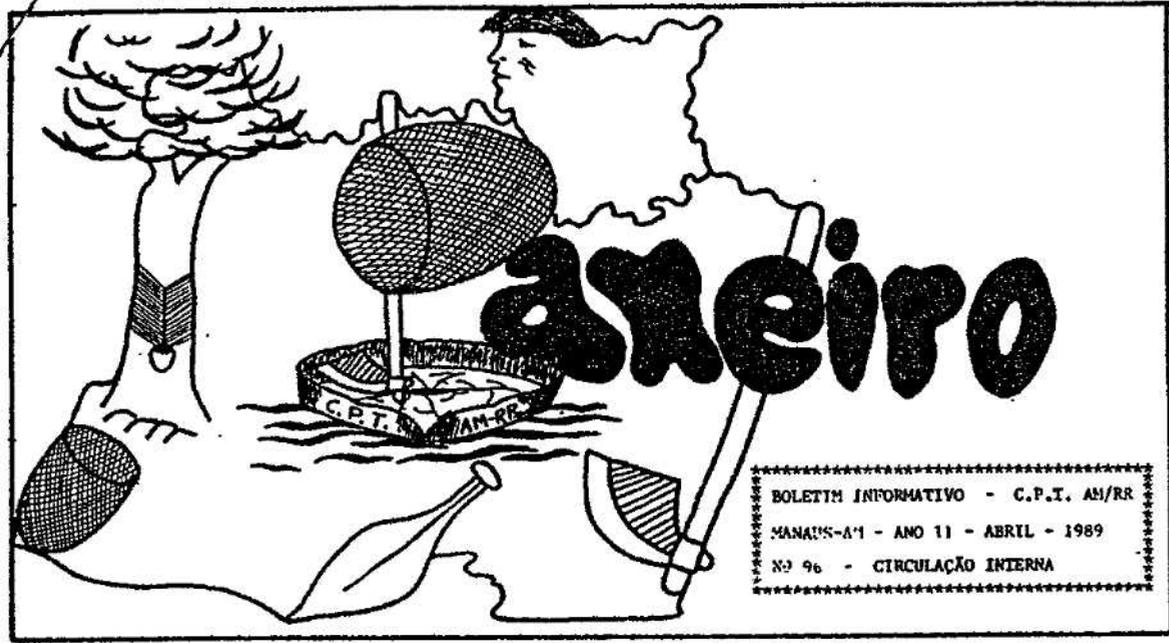
On March 31 Luiz Marcos Cavalcante, lawyer for the Centre for the Defence of Human Rights (CDDH) and Lenda Coelho gave witness to the fact at the local police station. On this occasion the deputy of the local police station solicited the Secretary for Public Security to apprehend all cars that are of Gol make and black in colour and to identify the owners. With evident interest she sent an investigator that instant to the place of the attempt to identify witnesses.

Until noon of April 04, no police authority has taken a statement from Antonio Eder John de Souza Coelho. Likewise no doctor with experience in legal medicine has yet made the examination of the body of the victim (corpus delicti).

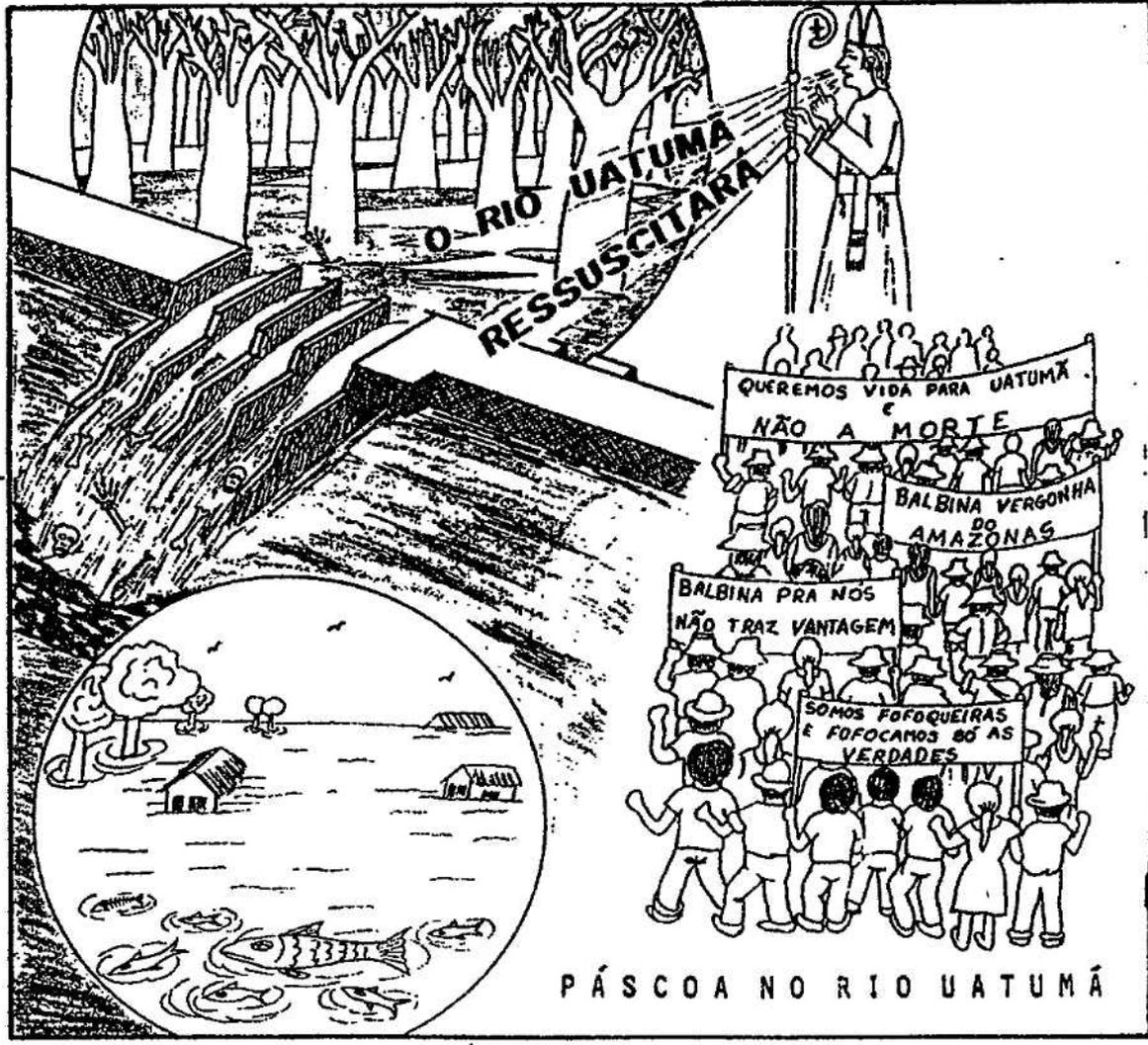
This attempt on the life of one who is trying to defend the poor people of Amazonia who are the victims of a continuing process of violence unmask and reveals clearly the interests involved and the methods of intimidation employed by the enemies of Amazonia.

We hope that this cowardly and arbitrary act will not remain as well on the lists of unpunished crimes. The assassins of the Ticuna massacre, of Chico Mendes and of many indians, rubber tappers, riverside dwellers (peasant farmers) and their defenders continue to live freely among us unpunished.

The defence of Amazonia will only be possible if those responsible for the violence against the natural world and the human person (the ecology) be punished in an exemplary way.



BOLETIM INFORMATIVO - C.P.T. AM/RR
 MANAUS-A1 - ANO 11 - ABRIL - 1989
 Nº 96 - CIRCULAÇÃO INTERNA



PÁSCOA NO RIO UATUMÃ

Update on the Balbina Dam and Down-River Complaints, 02 April 1989
Letter from Bishop Jorge Marskell, S.F.M., Prelacy of Itacoatiara
Itacoatiara, AMAZONAS, BRAZIL
Translated by Justin MacInnis, S.F.M.
Circulated by Justice & Peace Office, Scarboro Foreign Missions

Letter to the Communities, to Friends and to All of Good Will!

ANOTHER BROTHER THEY KILLED

In the month of February (1989) the first news arrived that there had been a huge dying off of fish in the Uatuma River as a result of putting into operation the first turbine of the Hydroelectric Plant of Balbina. The waters of the Balbina Dam were stagnant now for more than a year. This contaminated water now passes through the turbines downriver killing the fish, destroying the life of the river and extinguishing the life of the river-dwellers in its foul onrush.

THIS RIVER IS NOT OURS

Holy Thursday, late in the afternoon, Maildo and Manuel of the Missionary Brotherhood, Sister Joana, Antonio Paladar, Bosco and myself arrived at the mouth of the river inlet of Jacarequara at the little community of Santa Luzia, which is about four hours by boat above Sao Sebastiao on the Uatuma River. Senhor Antenor, his wife, children and grandchildren receive us with joy. The boys right away go in their canoes to tell their neighbours of the bishop's arrival and to invite everyone for the Mass.

Here in Jacarequara is where the re-telling of suffering, pain and death begins. It is repeated for three more days - Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

We visited the communities of Flechal, Caranatuba, Caribi, Santa Ana and Sao Sebastiao. We talked with people who lived at the mouth of the Abacate River and Pedras also. They all said the same thing: "This river is not ours (anymore)." "This water is not ours (any longer)."

DECLARATIONS OF RIVERSIDE DWELLERS ALONG THE UATUMA RIVER

"The situation is truly dangerous for us. This water is in a horrible state."

"Nobody can drink the water; it's not fit to drink."

"I took a bath in the water and it gave me an itch all over."

"Mama doesn't let us go in the water."

"We can't wash our clothes in this filthy water. The only way is to wash them in the pool."

"The water has a bad smell."

"Sickness is arising all over the place."

"There is a large-scale destruction of the fish. The killing is of every type and every size. I saw even 'sucuriju' (water-boa constrictor) dead in the water. It was a good six metres long. It was floating on the water."

"We can't catch fish with a hook anymore. We can only get stunned fish with their heads above the water. We have to eat them or go hungry."

"The little boys brought some 'jaraqui' (fish). I cooked it for supper. It had a bad taste. Nobody ate it."

"Up there near the headwaters is where it's really bad. That's where the fish are heading. They end up dying there. You can't stand the smell. Nobody will go there to see. Only ourselves. The mayor said that he went around here and upriver and only saw two dead fish. He didn't go up there at the headwaters where he would see the enormous quantity of dead fish."

"An animal has a good sense of smell. Arriving at the riverside, he doesn't drink the water anymore. He goes far away into the heavy forest. Hunting is very difficult now. The animals all disappeared."

"I am here now since 1950. I never saw such a flood as this. My neighbour's planted field (of manioc) is flooded."

"We won't be able to put the manioc root in the water to soften it." (This is the first stage in processing manioc meal and flour, and the root will be contaminated by the water.)

ASSISTANCE TO RIVER-DWELLERS - MORE DECLARATIONS (STATEMENTS OF WITNESSES)

"An engineer from Eletronorte passed by here. He came from Balbina. He said the water was alright to drink. But he didn't drink it himself. On his boat there was mineral water and 'SKOL' (beer)."

"Eletronorte had wells made for the river-dwellers but only as far as the mouth of the Abacate River."

"A social worker was here and told us the firm (Eletronorte) is now going to make wells up to Caribi River. But it's not going to be like above the Abacate. There they have manual pumps. Our well will have only a hand-winch."

"We dug a pool ourselves. One day the mayor arrived here at the river port. He didn't disembark. He remained on the prow of the boat, looked at the pool and said it was good. He didn't even talk to us to find out how we were getting along."

"We are lacking everything, food supplies, medicines, fish. The river merchant never came up this way again. He's afraid of the water."

"The mayor made a distribution of fish. It was a good deal of 'curimata' (common fish), but it's all gone."

"The Brazilian Institute for Protection of the Forests is not even present. They arrest a working man for cutting a tree to fix up his wood-frame house. Eletronorte won't go to jail. Why is this? It was Eletronorte that destroyed our river. It wasn't ourselves."

"Our companions were at this meeting in Manaus. They spoke of the situation we are enduring. If it wasn't for them we would be totally desperate, without anything."

"The padre (priest) is going to send the parish boat so that we can go to Sao Sebastiao on Sunday (for a meeting about the crisis)." "Let's all go to Sao Sebastiao. We will hold a meeting there. In God's sight, it's only together that we can resolve our situation. The communities of the region are going to unite. Together we will have more strength."

THE PEOPLE DO NOT ACQUIESCE TO DEATH

The residents of the Uatuma River, like all poor and humble people everywhere, easily identify themselves with the Passion and Death of the Lord. During Holy Week the people prayed fervently, listened to the reading of the Passion of Christ, and venerated in faith the Holy Cross.

On Easter Sunday, the joy was prevalent. In the chapel of Santa Ana the children brought a cross in procession into the church. The cross was all decorated with flowers - a symbol of the victory of life over death.

In the afternoon of Easter Sunday, we held a meeting in the church square at Sao Sebastiao. People from all the communities of the Uatuma River came to attend as well as from the communities of Urucara, Itapiranga, Silves, and Itacoatiara, and Presidente Figuieredo. Persons from Manaus as well, union representatives, scientists from the National Institute of Research in Amazonia and professionals were present giving their sign of solidarity in a public act that began at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and ended with a protest walk through the streets of the little town.

The public act was a protest against the pollution-death of the Uatuma River. Still more than a simple protest, it was a public outcry in favour of life for the people and for nature.

With enthusiastic spirit the people sang:

"Why such a thing as Balbina? Why more dams
If the energy it generates brings no advantage
To the river-dwellers of the Uatuma?"

The mayor elected to defend the people, did not attend. His absence appears to approve the action of the power company Eletronorte. A councillor of the municipality of Sao Sebastiao denies responsibility by saying that the company Eletronorte and the Secretary of Health (State Department of Health) must assume their responsibility and help the people; that the situation has nothing to do with the municipal government.

"May this public act be for (us) all
Who believe in the Resurrection
A New day - that doesn't end tomorrow, so soon!
Nor is just a utopian dream!"

Thus it was that the people sang and still sing. And there is being formed a Committee for the Defence of the Uatuma River. A growing awareness is prevalent that only by organizing and through a community consensus will it be possible to straighten out what was destroyed.

The Union of Rural Workers is preparing a civil court action against Eletronorte. This action is for indemnization for losses and damages suffered, and to try to secure an embargo on commencing operation of the other turbines of the Balbina Hydro Plant.

"Why are you seeking among the dead for him who is alive?
He is not here, He is arisen!" (Luke 24)

Having terminated the public act (of protest) we now have come back to our communities. The families who live along the Uatuma River returned to a life of suffering and pain. They came back to their communities along the shores of that lethal, toxic-laden river. But they went back with faith in Jesus risen from the dead and with the will to struggle against the pain, the suffering and death that is there.

The Christian cannot remain in the world of death. In spite of being buried under domination, manipulation, lies and injustice, the Christian knows that he has the strength to liberate himself from the clutches of the grave. Just as Christ has risen, we also, through Baptism and through the grace of God, have the strength of the life of God to rise again.

I invite everyone to assume the cause of the families living along the Uatuma River. They are not going to give in to the power of death. They are going to struggle for life, for dignity, for nature itself and its integrity. Let's place ourselves in solidarity with them and remain with them at their side. May the Risen Lord be our strength in our struggle for life!

Jorge, Bishop of Itacoatiara
Amazonas, 02 April 1989
1st Sunday of Easter

ITEM V

JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE
SCARBORO FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY
2685 KINGSTON ROAD
SCARBOROUGH - ONTARIO - CANADA
M1M 1M4

June 27, 1989

Angela Gennino
World Rivers Review
301 Broadway, Suite B
San Francisco, CA
U.S.A. 94133

Dear Angela:

Many greetings from neighbours to the north. I am writing at the advice of Pat Adams, Probe International/Toronto. Our offices have collaborated on joint support for issues and concerns raised by the Canadian Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility. TCCR is organized similarly to the Inter-faith Community for Corporate Responsibility/ICCR in the States.

Scarboro Foreign Mission is a Catholic missionary society quite similar to Maryknoll. Our Justice and Peace Office responds to requests for international solidarity raised by overseas partners. For over a decade our missionaries working in and around Itacoatiara (east of Manaus in the Brazilian Amazon, see map, Item I), have raised concerns and objections over the construction and operation of the infamous Balbina Dam (Item II). Recently both Probe and TCCR have pursued research on Canadian government and corporate links to Balbina. I was again at the site of the dam in November '88 (Item III).

Our missionaries cooperate fully with two movements in the vicinity of Balbina:

- Movement in Support of the Resistance: Waimiri-Atroari (MAREWA). They have documented proceedings of the construction and operation of Balbina, with special attention to the invasion of Indigenous lands (Item IV, V).
- Committee for the Defence of the Uatuma. This popular group organizes the communities along the banks of the Uatuma River which was dammed to form the reservoir for Balbina. Some 1900-2000 families are now adversely affected by the toxic-laden waters being discharged from the dam into the downstream path of the Uatuma. The Uatuma has been the traditional source of livelihood for these communities along the 200 kilometer distance between Balbina and the mouth of the Uatuma at Sao Sebastiao (Item VI).

.../2

Pat noted that you are preparing an issue of the "Review" aimed at the upcoming September meeting of the World Bank. She suggested that we make available to you the documents in translation from both these movements. I have referred to them by item.

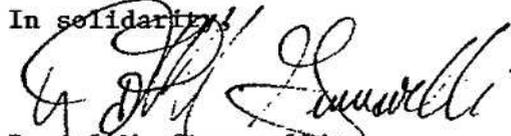
Of special note are two additional items: the "Letter to the Communities", (Item VII) of Bishop Jorge Marskell citing the testimonies of the river community dwellers downstream from Balbina; the attempted assassination of a lawyer who was investigating the conditions of these dwellers now that Balbina is "functioning" (Item VIII). Both are indicative of the desperate level to which the resisters and supporters of Balbina have fallen.

Please feel free to use or make available any of the documents. One of the principal authors of material prior to the opening of Balbina is Egidio Schwade from the municipality of Presidente Figuerado where Balbina is situated. He, during the '70s, was national executive director of CIMI (the church's commission on indigenous mission) before moving north to work with the pastoral team of Itacoatiara under Bishop Marskell. He and the bishop are nationally known and respected for their resistance to Balbina in particular, and Plano 2010/Calha Norte, the projects which call for an additional 130 dams in the north.

A "renegade" group within the National Institute for the Preservation of the Environment (INPA) recently completed a study on Balbina's effect on the Uatuma and environs. They declared the river "dead" for the next 6-10 years. Once the study became known, the group was isolated and attempts were made to discredit their study, but not before they could produce and circulate a video version of their findings. Later in July we hope to be in possession of both the study and the video. Do you have any access to rapid translation from Brazilian -- portuguese? We have a reliable translator but I hardly think we'd be organized to move rapidly through a 20-page text and video sound track.

Anyway, we'll keep you posted. Things are desperate. Yesterday one of our missionaries called from Urucara, east of Itacoatiara, requesting international support for their petition to the Governor of Amazonas and the regional president of Eletronorte (Item IX). Local people held these two responsible to address the urgent need for medical assistance and food supplies occasioned by the contaminated substances introduced into the Uatuma. I hope that we'll be able to raise enough objection to the continuing destruction caused by these ill-conceived hydro projects so that deliberators at the World Bank are forced to deal with the tragedies of their designs.

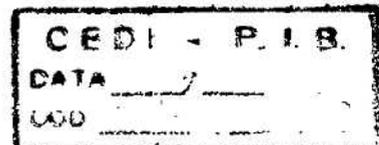
In solidarity,


Daniel M. Gennarelli
Director

Enclosures

cc: Pat Adams, Probe International
Moira Hutchinson, TCCR

BALBINA: MASSIVE DESTRUCTION OF AMAZONIAN LIFE



An Update from Brazil: 18 May 1989

Written by Egydio Schwade for

MAREWA: Movement in Support of the
Resistance Waimiri-Atroari

Translated by: Justin MacInnis, SFM

Circulated by: Justice and Peace Office,
Scarboro Foreign Mission Society/Canada

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18-05-89

Dear Friends and Companions,

1. Destruction and Misery Caused by the Balbina Dam Continues

Many of you, from near and far, must be accompanying with deep concern the reports arriving centered around the consequences of the closing of the sluice gates of the Balbina Hydroelectric Plant, and, recently, a year and a half later, the beginning of operation of the first turbines:

- the flooding of 3,000 Km² of Amazonian forest;
- the destruction of the habitat of thousands of birds and wild animals;
- the inundation of a considerable part of the Waimiri-Atroari (two indigenous groups) area and consequently the removal of two of their villages;
- appearance of great quantities of insects in the vicinity of the reservoir such as mosquitoes (non-existent before in the region) and other plagues that are causing worsening epidemics, such as malaria, leishmaniasis, dysenteries, diarrheas;
- the poisoning of the waters of the Uatuma River by methane gas that was formed in the lake with the inundation of the bio-mass, now reaching the point where there is danger that the Uatuma River could be set on fire;
- the death of the living things and food chain downstream along the Uatuma River: fishes, various species of turtles (tartarugas, tracajas, pitiu, etc.);
- the contamination of the waters of wells near the shores of the river;
- the disorganization of the people resulting from the payment of bribes to union leaders of the community.

The governor of the State, Amazonino Mendes, today refers to Balbina as "a great bluff," and President Sarney in an attempt to avoid responsibility for this bluff refused to be present at its inauguration (February 1989).

Nevertheless, Balbina is a disaster that was consciously and intentionally produced by an authoritarian government and included in this is Amazonino Mendes who, as ex-mayor of Manaus, was one of the major political proponents of the "bluff," and Sarney in a radio conversation on the 16th of September, 1988, when the reservoir was already for more than a year inundating the forest, creating a lake, was still speaking of Balbina with enthusiasm. What is now occurring was foreseen by science, by technology and by good sense --both of persons and entities--with the exception of the military dictatorship, President Sarney, the politicians and authorities of Amazonas who preferred to sing the praises of the interests of the economic conglomerates both national and foreign rather than consider the well-being of the people of the region.

2. Invasion of the Indigenous Lands of the Waimiri-Atroari: A Cover-Up

Balbina was conceived between 1968 and 1972. At that time all the region of the reservoir, including the worksite of the dam, was effectively occupied by the Waimiri-Atroari.

Tens of official documents in our archive attest to this fact. And "the preliminary project of demarkation of the area for the Waimiri-Atroari," presented in 1971 by the indigenous expert Gilberto Pinto (considered the most knowledgeable of the region), included the area in question as part of the territory of those indigenous people.

Ignoring this public and notorious fact, Eletronorte in 1973 contracted the consortium MONASA/ENGE-RIO [with ties to the Montreal Engineering Company] to proceed with the hydraulics survey of the region, to do the viability studies, and as a follow-up to elaborate the basic and executive projects of the Balbina Hydroelectric Complex.

In 1975, Padre Justino MacInnis of the Prelacy of Itacoatiara denounced the placing of a log barricade under the bridge where the federal highway BR 174 passes over the river Igarape Santo Antonio do Abonari. This was intended to impede the free passage of the native peoples to the Uatuma River. Milton Lolli, an official of FUNAI (the government's National Foundation of the Indian), had established at that same period of time a direct relation between the massacre of FUNAI employees and officials, including Gilberto Pinto, and the prohibition placed upon the indigenous to freely occupy that part of their traditional habitat.

With the beginning of construction in 1976, CIMI (the Catholic Bishops' Counsel for Missionaries Among Indigenous Peoples) has been systematically denouncing Balbina as a project that was going to bring enormous injury to the Waimiri-Atroari and loss of their patrimony. The firm Eletronorte denies that the territory in question belongs to the indigenous people. FUNAI suggests simultaneously to say yes and no, even going to the extent of affirming the absurd--that the Balbina reservoir "will not harm in any way the indigenous people, rather it would even make things more convenient (for them)."

The presence of indigenous people in the area of Balbina was so well known that when the French president, Giscard D'Estaing, in 1978 came to sign an agreement which included the financing for Tucuruí and Balbina, the journalists questioned the French president and his accord because he was granting "financial assistance for two hydroelectric plants, located precisely in indigenous territories."

Although in official documents to FUNAI the firm Eletronorte acknowledges the indigenous presence in the area of the reservoir, publicly it is denying the fact from the beginning until around 1986 when the World Bank conditioned the granting of new loans to the demarkation of indigenous lands and to a solution for the two indigenous villages which were still remaining within the compass of the future reservoir.

Thus in 1983, in an official document to Mrs. Sandra Wentzel of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Douglas Souza Luz and Mr. Newton Burlamaqui Barreira (respectively president and director of supplies for Eletronorte), affirm that the area of the Waimiri-Atroari reserve that will be affected was "formerly an area traversed by the forest dwellers, whose presence today is not recorded there any more..."

"What was assuring for us," the document proceeds, "were the technical conclusions obtained later that the area initially considered to be occupied by indigenous people in reality was merely a traversing ground and, since the exodus that took place, there was no record of the presence of villages." It concluded: "the construction of the Hydroelectric Plant of Balbina, as well as others in Brazil, is just as important as the ethnological preservation of our ancestors..."

Only in 1986, when the whole population should have been already indemnified, or at least advised, is when Eletronorte "discovered" two Waimiri-Atroari villages within the future reservoir: the village of Taquari and the village of Topupuna. And this was only thanks to the pressure of financial advantages that were provided in the conditions set by the World Bank.

3. An Environmentally Sound Energy Alternative Smothered

The same procedure was followed in respect to the project's technical viability. The construction of Balbina was effectively begun in 1976 without Eletronorte having made public the viability studies. In the same year the University of Campinas (UNICAMP), of Sao Paulo, completed studies on the possibility to supply the energy demands of Manaus from an alternative technological source, one which was already in use in France. Fundamentally it is a method which deploys the difference in temperature existing in the meeting of the waters of the rivers Solimoes and Negro, four kilometers below the city of Manaus. The energy that can be made available by this process would be sufficient to supply the requirements not only of Manaus but the whole state of Amazonas as well, without interfering seriously with the environment.

The proposal was smothered through the lack of financial support given to University of Campinas - National Institute of Research in Amazon Region (UNICAMP-INPA) who in collaboration had proposed to prove the viability of this alternative project.

The government preferred acting through the federal firm Eletronorte, without the usual process of bidding on the contracts, to select as the contractor the construction firm Andrade Gutierrez to begin the infra-structure works, thus creating a relationship of dependence of the state itself on this and other contractors as well, to the point where from that time on it had to defend the irrational in all the areas in which the Balbina project was being called into question. And effectively this followed in the areas of social, economic, technical and environmental costs.

Even in 1979 when the access road had just begun to be built, Mauricio Schulman, President of Eletrobras, proposed to substitute Balbina with a power plant using coal as fuel (the coal would be brought from Santa Catarina). The Amazonian politicians led by the state governor reacted in favour of Balbina, alleging that there had already been invested 118 million dollars in the infra-structure works alone (a road of 70 Km linking Balbina with the federal highway BR-174).

4. Compensation Denied to River Dwellers and Small Rural Farmers

In this same year 1979, the studies made under the patronage of Eletronorte already had revealed that the reservoir would take up a space of 3,000 Km², even though up until 1988, the firm publicly continued to maintain that the reservoir would cover only 1,650 Km². Today it acknowledges that 2,360 Km² are already inundated.

"Not even the farmers along highway BR-174 are given any solid information in regard to how much land will be flooded," writes the *NewsLetter* from Boston in December 1979. [Translator's note: more likely 1987]

As a result the rural dwellers and farmers both along highway BR-174 and the access road to Balbina as well as those of the Uatuma River below the dam remained all the time within this state of disinformation. Making the situation even worse, Eletronorte transferred its first dweller, Senhor Antonio, from above the dam to below the dam who right away would have his land affected again by the waters. They gave him land, a house and dug him a well, transforming him into a news and film hero showing what "good" treatment he received. Today his land and his well, just as all of the population of the Uatuma River down as far as Sao Sebastiao (318 Km below the dam) have been adversely affected, and nobody (from above or below the dam) has been compensated. The majority of those affected simply had to move away in search of another place.

5. Defending the Absurd with Official Lies and Manipulation

The Rural Workers Union (STR) of Presidente Figueiredo (the municipality in which the Balbina Dam is located) in the person of its president, Vicente de Paula Rodrigues and of Genezio de Oliveira Bezerra, solicited a court injunction requesting suspension of the work during the time when the negative effects that were being announced by scientists were not yet being answered. The process in the courts was passed on from one instant to another--no one knows if this was done through interest groups or through bribery--until the sluice gates were closed, rendering the court action without effect.

The manipulation of statistics and information on the part of Eletronorte is also evident in the case of Balbina's productive capacity. From the beginning the authorities of Eletronorte knew from the studies made that Balbina could not produce effectively the 250 Megawatts that the firm announced, unless it had recourse to another absurd scheme; that is, by diverting the Alalau River to the reservoir of Balbina with a canal 25 Km in length. Note that, although this project is included in the construction program of Balbina, Eletronorte constantly tranquilizes the scientific circles with contrary affirmation. This leads one to believe that Eletronorte is not speaking the truth neither when it affirms the non-existence of the plan of diversion from the Alalau River nor concerning the real productive capacity of Balbina which in normal periods will not reach 100 Megawatts.

Time after time the directors of Eletronorte tranquilized, as well, public opinion with respect to the negative effects announced that Balbina would have on the environment in the case that the bio-mass were not removed from the lake. They even went as far as to enumerate the advantages that the flooding of the forest would contribute to the environment, such as the increase of the fish population, of turtles (both tartaruga and tracaja), as well as a lake propitious for the almost extinct manatee (peixe-boi).

The surveys made by scientific entities such as INPA (National Institute of Research in Amazonas) recommend in their reports even drastic measures such as the use of defoliants to take away the bio-mass from the reservoir, alerting to the damages that would come to the environment (if the bio-mass remained in place). The general coordinator himself of the firm Eletronorte, Armando Ribeiro de Araujo, chaired a meeting promoted by Eletronorte with owners and union representatives of wood and sawmill industries dealing with the extraction and utilization of the forest bio-mass in the area of the reservoir of the Balbina Hydroelectric Plant, on 16 May '84 saying: "Contrary to the case of Tucuruí, Eletronorte must clean the area (of Balbina) for both technical and ecological reasons."

6. Multi-national Mining Companies: Ventures or Vultures

But the Balbina complex is only a part of the overall threats to life in these lands which only a little more than 20 years ago were the exclusive possession of the Waimiri-Atroari Native Peoples.

Thirteen mining firms continue waiting like starving vultures for the indigenous to disappear so that they can occupy the areas that the National Department of Mineral Production (DNPM) is reserving for them. At the head of them all is Paranapanema which continues to take out more than a hundred tons of mineral ore daily from Pitinga, where in 1968 aerial photos registered the location of nine Waimiri-Atroari villages. Today, the devastation by that mining company in its search for the coveted strategic minerals (niobium, columbium, tantalum, tin, zirconium and yttrium) is obliterating the vestiges of the indigenous presence.

On this past weekend during the meeting of the presidents of eight countries of the Amazon region, special emphasis was given to a "Letter of Intent" which provides for the construction of a 600 Km highway linking Boa Vista (of the state of Roraima) to the capital of Guyana, Georgetown, on the Caribbean shore. During the signing ceremony there was observed the strange prominence of Otavio Lacombe Cavalcante, the director-president of the conglomerate Paranapanema, a construction firm and above all a mining firm, who announced his interest in carrying out the construction of the portion under Brazilian responsibility.

The presence of Lacombe at that event, as well as his spontaneous offer, show how the interests of transnational firms dominate in Latin American governments even to the extent of programming meetings and setting the agenda of these as well.

The interest of Paranapanema in that highway is obvious. A branch reaching to the site of Pitinga (north of the state of Amazonas) where actually 90% of the interests of the firm are located, will interlink those of the conglomerate already operating in the state of Amazonas, with those of the Anaua River (in the south of Roraima) and finally with its subsidiary which is already mining in Guyana. So, the highly extolled "Letter of Intent" solemnly signed by eight Latin American chiefs of state does not provide really for the construction of a highway in the interests of the countries in question; rather it will simply provide the resources and political cover for a highway of private transnational interest. Similar to the branch of the highway that now links the Pitinga Mine with highway BR-174, which was illegally constructed through the middle of the indigenous area of the Waimiri-Atroari, the new highway will remain under the exclusive control of the Paranapanema private militia. Consequently, not only the state of Amazonas, but Roraima as well will be "internationalized," with greater ease and even less possibilities will there be to maintain control. (From the Manaus newspaper *A Critica*, 08 May '89.)

This is a further example that reveals the deceit and plunder of the nation by the Brazilian government which raises itself against any voice that is opposed to the pillaging of the Amazon region.

What the economic powers fear is that the Amazon region (Amazonia) will return to the possession of the people who live in this region, whether aboriginal or not.

7. Signs of Hope and Solidarity

Fortunately, it is not only destruction that takes place here. Indigenous nations, various class organizations, scientific entities, universities, Ecclesial Base Communities, CIMI (Counsel for Missionaries Among Indigenous Peoples), CPT (Catholic Bishops' Land Pastoral Commission) etc., are articulating more and more in a common front in favour of life. Evidence of this is the public acts of demonstrations and protest and the circles of debates concerning Amazonian problems that took place recently in Sao Sebastiao do Uatuma, Manaus, Brasilia, and Goiania (as well as in Altamira).

The Movement in Support of the Waimiri-Atroari Resistance (MAREWA) participates in this effort in the hope of one day counting on the Waimiri-Atroari to be present at the table of discussions. Until now they continue living as wards of the "mother-in-law" FUNAI which leads them to sign accords with their plunderers and restrains them from participating in the meetings of the Union of Indigenous Nations (UNI) or other entities which support them.

Here we remain, friends, with the hope that this will furnish some basic information with which may be articulated a new spirit in the struggle in favour of Amazonia, in particular of the Waimiri-Atroari people, with the certainty that they will survive, and contribute to make the future of us all more human and more joyful!



JACK CHIANG

THE JUNGLE PRIEST: Ron Macdonnell poses with two villagers in the Amazon village of St. Sebastian, where he lives in a spartan but comfortable house.

Nova Scotia priest in Amazon to help villagers fight for life

By Olivia Ward Toronto Star

When Nova Scotia priest Ron Macdonnell arrived in the Amazon jungle three years ago, he was offered food by the Indians he visited along the Uatuama River.

Now the villagers beg him for tins of meat.

They are close to starvation because a dam project upstream has poisoned the river, killed the fish that were a source of livelihood and cut off the supply of drinking and washing water for more than 8,000 people in the area.

"They have only two choices now: move to the cities or hang on and fight. Most of them want to fight," Macdonnell said.

But the 32-year-old Scarborough Foreign Mission worker said on a visit to Toronto last week that the struggle is large and complex.

The hydro company, Eletronorte, a division of the national utility Eletrobras, says the problem is only temporary. But it is doing little to revitalize the shattered Amazon communities.

The government is also avoiding responsibility for the damage done by the Balbina Dam, which was initiated 10 years ago by the former military rulers and supported by loans from the World Bank.

The government, however, is planning another 70 projects to supply electricity for badly-needed industrial and domestic use.

Tomorrow Probe International, which monitors worldwide environmental damage, is sending a protest to the World Bank's direc-

tor of Brazilian development.

The Toronto-based organization is calling for the cancellation of \$750 million in loans to Brazilian hydro projects unless Eletronorte compensates the communities along the polluted river.

Macdonnell said the Balbina dam has proved inefficient and can't supply enough electricity to run industries in the nearby Amazon city of Manaus.

Declared dead

Meanwhile, the river was declared dead in a study done by the Institute of National Research on the Amazon.

The environmental destruction began in October, 1987.

Poisonous vines and plants decaying under water in the newly-flooded area gave off toxins that killed tambaki and tucunare fish, the main source of food and livelihood for the villagers downstream.

"The hydro company sent out workers in speedboats to bury the stinking fish as quickly as possible," Macdonnell said.

"But they didn't do much else."

Two years later, the river communities can't harvest the manioc root that was a staple of their diet.

Now they are forced to shoot monkeys for food.

People who try to wash in the river get painful rashes. Fever and diarrhea are rampant.

"The company dug some wells to supply clean water, but they went dry. Now there's a two-hour canoe ride to find unpolluted lakes," said

Macdonnell.

Disease and malnutrition are serious problems in a community that used to be self-sufficient.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are a 12-hour trip away in Manaus and too expensive for villagers who earn an average of \$3 a month.

But Macdonnell said attempts to gain better wages are defeated by powerful landowning families which control the Amazon's political life.

"There's no job security, and no strong unions, so people who say unpopular things may be out of work."

Macdonnell, who was born in Antigonish, believes economics is the key to the Amazon's desperate environmental problems, aggravated by large companies that burn away the rainforest for cattle ranching.

"My interest in Latin America began with the music," he said.

"When I did my training in Mexico, I realized the wonderful attributes of the region are buried by poverty."

Living in a spartan but comfortable house in the Amazon village of St. Sebastian, Macdonnell learned Portuguese and travelled to visit parishioners in the Uatuama River area.

He became an advocate of liberation theology, a contentious Roman Catholic philosophy that stresses social justice.

"Canadians have to realize we're all one world," he said. "That goes for people, not just ecology."