

BRAZIL

Ava-Guarani Write President Of World Bank

Hon. Barber Conable
President of the World Bank

Dear Sir,

We are from the Ava-Guarani community in the Ocoi native area, in the municipality of São Miguel do Iguacu, state of Paraná, Brazil.

We want to tell you about our suffering and our struggle. We used to live in an area of about 3,750 acres, bounded on the west by the Paraná River, on the east by the Santa Helena/Santa Terezinha road, on the north by the Ocoi River, and on the south by the Jacutinga River. Our area was all forest. In the Ocoi-Jacutinga area we were more than 100 families numbering over 500 people, since the families were very large.

Our land was going to be flooded by the Itaipu dam. Then the Itaipu people told FUNAI [Brazil's bureau of Indian affairs] that there were Indians in the area that was to be flooded. FUNAI sent an anthropologist, but he said that there were no Indians in the area, only *mestizos* [people of mixed blood] and Paraguayans. This was not true because we were certainly there.

They made various offers of land to us. The first was 70 acres. The second proposal was 420 acres and the third was 560 acres. We did not accept any of these and we also refused the fourth and last offer, which was 625 acres.

The Itaipu people gave us a deed for 625 acres, although on the map they made on July 31, 1982, only 575 acres are shown. We discovered this map two months ago. We did not agree to the 625 acres, but then the Itaipu people began to pressure us and frighten us. They gave us three days to leave. We did not want to leave our land of 3,750 acres for an area of 625 acres.

Then the Itaipu reservoir began to fill up and there was nothing we could do but leave. We arrived on this land in 1982, after a difficult struggle to obtain our rights. Now we are 35 families consisting of 147 people. We have never forgotten our land and we are always making claims to the Itaipu people.

Our new land is slowly being washed away. The strong winds are driving the water from the new lake against the land and eroding it from below, and the trees are falling because their roots are being undermined. When we arrived in this new area, it was already being invaded by neighboring settlers. The settlers did not respect the Indians. They came in with their machines, tore down the forest and the survey markers, and took away everything that the Itaipu people had put here. The settlers said they did this because the Itaipu people had not compensated them. We are peaceful Indians who don't want to fight with our neighbors.

Along the edge of the Itaipu lake there is a lot of rotting wood which is infested with animals and insects, including mosquitos. We are not used to living on the edge of a lake. In summertime the lake becomes very warm and both adults and children in the Ocoi native area have caught malaria because of the lake. At the beginning of May, 27 adults and 16 children between the ages of nine months and 12 years old had malaria.

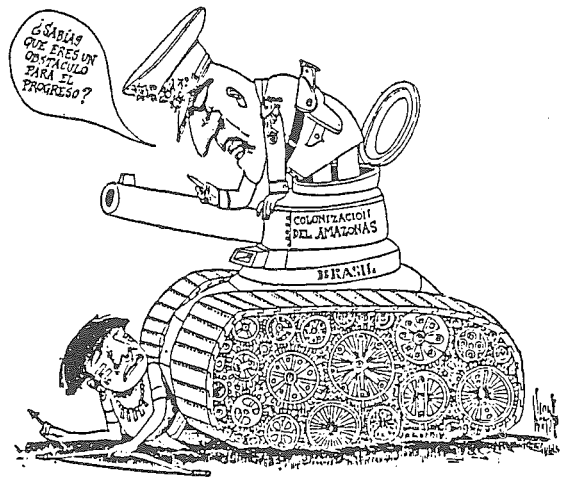
We are not used to taking water from the lake. We are only used to taking water from the rivers that the Creator put there for us to use. In this land there are now no pure rivers and our water is full of malaria and insects. All the water along the edge of the lake is full of

poison because the settlers washed a tank of insecticide in the lake. When it rains the poison that the settlers use on their plantations passes across our land and goes into the lake, and this causes a lot of illness. We can't get away from the edge of the Itaipu lake because our land is very narrow.

Next to our land are 420 acres that Itaipu owns. We want Itaipu to compensate us for the rest of the land they stole from us. We had about 3,750 acres of land, with forest, fish, and game, instead of 575 acres with poison and malaria. God put us in the world to live in peace as brothers. The whites want to kill the Indians rather than be brothers with them, but we want to live in brotherhood with everyone.

Now we have nothing and there are hardly any Indians left because in many parts of Brazil white men and foreigners have killed Indians with bombs and machine guns and have poisoned Indian areas. Can it be that you are not aware of this crime that must be resolved? You loaned money to the Itaipu people so that they could hurt us and the poor whites in the same situation as we are. Itaipu has done very great damage here, but you loaned money for this, and to FUNAI so that it could pay people to shoot the Indians, because we have enormous rights.

Signed by the chief of the Ava-Guarani community, followed by the signatures and fingerprints of 58 others.



"Are you aware you are an obstacle to progress?"



Yanomami Land Claims Recognized

The Yanomami Indian people of northern Brazil have received official recognition of their claims to land through a presidential decree which establishes the Yanomami Indian Park near Brazil's border with Venezuela. The Yanomami, who number 10,000 to 12,000 people, are the largest Indian nation in Brazil still maintaining a traditional way of life.

The decree was announced in the midst of controversy over a proposal by the Brazilian military to occupy the remote northern frontier of the Amazon region with military bases and air strips. According to the Union of Indian Nations (UNI), the project would directly affect 50,000 Indian people from 51 groups now living in the rainforest, including the Yanomami, Tukano, Baniwa, Uanano, and others. Reports indicate that the decree establishing the Yanomami Indian Park includes provisions for a strip 60 kilometers wide along the Venezuelan border which would be designated an "Area of Environmental Protection" and used to accommodate the military plan.

Critics of the plan, which the military describes as "a joint project of economic development and national security," argue that its primary motivation is exploitation of the tin, aluminum, uranium, and other mineral resources thought to be buried beneath the dense Amazonian rainforests.