Workshop IX
Rape of the Land, Rape of People

Introduction

We were a small group using our own resources. The original moderators were not able to come. We made a deliberate decision to stay together, since we felt that our subject is a significant part of the conference theme. Using an existential approach, we picked three case studies due to our available resources.

Description

We started with three presentations of case studies:

1. Papua New Guinea (Rev. Leva K. Pat)

   The effects of mining industry in Papua New Guinea has created much pain and suffering. Land has been taken away from the people for mining operation. People from the mining sites are relocated to new places. Since these are open cut mines, the environment is completely destroyed to allow wanted minerals to be extracted. The waste from the mine is dumped on the land. And when the rain comes, the waste is carried into the river systems everywhere. This operation has created loss of marine life and pollution of waters, and the heavy sediments have spoiled the land for gardening. Symptoms of new diseases are reported. In consequence, people can no longer enjoy their environment. The entire relationship between human beings and the environment is seriously distorted and destroyed. The resources of livelihood are shattered. The future of men is at stake. We do have scientific evidence on much of what has been reported here.

   If this is what development is all about, i.e. to create suffering, pain and poverty for some, and wealth, prosperity and peace for others, there certainly something must be wrong somewhere.

2. Hawaii (Dr. Ha’aeo Guanson)

   The Hawaiian Islands, an occupied nation, are home to over 10,000 native animal and plant species found nowhere else on earth. They face a state of emergency. The people and the land are endangered.
The central issue is the search for identity as a means to recapture dignity. For people to exist they must regain dignity. The question is raised on how to define one's identity: by "blood," by "soil," by a combination of both? The culture which includes the language is integral to the identity of Hawaiians.

The complicity of the Church in this destruction resulting in the separation of rich and poor was well described by Liliuokalani, Hawaiian's last monarch who writes among other descriptions in her autobiography: "It is the missionaries party which overthrew me," hinting at the children and grandchildren of the missionaries who have "bought" the land and collaborated with the Republican Party which, against the will of President Cleveland, have annexed the country.

And the Wai'anae Women's Support Group today sees the situation as follows:
"... long before the Christian missionaries came upon our sacred 'Aina' (land) bringing the cross and the flag, we were three hundred thousand strong. Strong in body, mind and spirit. But they came and they offered, no they demanded, that we accept the cross and the flag, these Siamese twins of power" (see appendix to this report).
And they say this although they know that "historically" the cross came to Hawaii before the US flag.

The process of colonization in Hawaii resulted in deculturation. The value of the tradition and the culture was not recognized. The misuse of culture led to the merchandization of culture (for tourism ...) and its destruction.

The people of this land of Aloha are in pain, suffering the burden of militarization, tourism, economic development for the rich (golf play grounds etc.), environmental destruction and, most of all, the loss of the 'Aina' (the land), the root and soul of the people.

3. Palestine (Dr. Geries Khoury)

Since the first Zionist Conference in Basle 1897 the Zionist slogan was: "Land without people for people without land." They applied this slogan to Palestine, started to immigrate and to live in our country, especially after the First World War and with the help of the British mandate in Palestine. This immigration continued until 1948 when