

Reply to: 728 212th Pl. S.W.
Lynnwood, Washington
U.S.A. 98036

22 February 1982

Ms. Marcia Langton
c/o Christine Vincent
78 Coranderrk Street
Reid, ACT 2601
Australia

Dear Marcia:

I suspect this letter is a surprise to you since you haven't heard from me since the General Assembly! It has been only in the last few weeks that I managed to get an address for you that wasn't the NAC. Frankly, I have been uncertain whether I could get a letter to you through the NAC offices so I have waited. From what I have been able to gather (mainly from the publication of your land rights document) you are now working out of an institute in Canberra and not at the NAC. From the changes that were taking place and the heavy politics within the NAC I must say your present position must be more satisfactory.

You will recall last May I spoke with you about the prospects of the WCIP undertaking a study of the "Situation of Indigenous Peoples". Well, the Executive Council finally met to decide whether we would undertake the study in Managua, Nicaragua in early December. They reviewed the proposal I had written (enclosed) and decided to postpone action "until the WCIP is more financially stable." Their failure to act was in part due to reduced capabilities in the Secretariat. Despite this set-back I remain undaunted. I believe the study should be done even if it isn't sanctioned by the WCIP. I am sending it to you to see whether you and your associates might be able to find a way to implement the South Pacific portion. While my estimates may be a little off (72,208.000CAN) I think that the South Pacific portion can be done for about that amount. I am appealing to people like you in Norway, Costa Rica, Peru and the United States with the hope that individual initiative will make a joint global study possible. I believe the study should be done for our own purposes to strengthen and expand indigenous knowledge about ourselves, and only secondarily for the United Nations. Please send me your thoughts and comments.

As you can see by the second enclosure I have completed (in draft for the WCIP Executive Council meeting) a "thought piece" entitled: "The Meaning of 'Indigenous' and WCIP Membership" which may be of some interest to you. The paper is theoretical, but I believe it provides strong foundations for clearer political analysis of indigenous affairs within nation-states and within the international community. Though flawed with "typos" I believe my arguments are clear.

For your further reading enjoyment, I have enclosed a copy of my prepared remarks before the Sub-committee on Petitions,

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Information and Assistance of the Special UN Committee on Decolonization. I am sharing this paper with you because I believe you may find a future use for it in Australia. Your comments on this submission would be helpful.

I am presently in the throws of completing a paper comparing Indigenous and Nation-State Land Rights Policies in Australia, United States and Canada. You may find this paper (when I complete and send it to you) helpful in your work. Before I complete the paper, I want your permission to quote you from the materials you prepared on Aboriginal Land Rights (the folder you gave me in Canberra). When I do send the paper to you I wonder if you could help get it published in Australia. The reason for this request is that I believe that Aboriginal people will benefit from the knowledge that strict adoption of US government or US tribal land policies is not wise. Indeed, my paper will demonstrate how the most damaging US land policies and "Indian institutions" are being adopted by the Australian Commonwealth government to further compromise Aboriginal interests. The extent to which Aboriginals seek to replicate the tribal experience in the US seems to be increasing, and I am eager to warn them away from doing this. The Samis in Scandinavia are attempting to replicate the tribal experience in the US as well,---as are the Indians in Canada and Central America. While Indian tribes in the US have managed to survive, the extent of their political absorption into the US system has been disastrous. The Tribes are being increasingly ripped-off by many of their own leaders with the benefits going to a few Indians and mostly to the US and multi-national corporations. It is an urgent matter, in my mind that Aboriginals know how this is being done so you may avoid the kind of entanglements experienced here.

Finally, the US National Congress of American Indians is taking steps to establish an Office of Tribal International Relations which I will likely head. To establish, and, therefore improve, communications between your region and North America I would like to determine if you could help me find a position (at your institute perhaps) to locate an Indian person in Australia from here to work with you and serve as our liaison. It is necessary to find employment for our person in Australia as soon as possible. (I am intentionally not asking the NAC because I want to avoid structured entanglements as much as possible.) We have a person in mind who has an Academic degree in Indian Studies and in Economics. He understands US tribal politics, is an excellent writer and researcher. We want him to become well informed about the Aboriginal situation and be of assistance to Aboriginal Peoples concerning the situation of Indians in the US. Can you help me? A small salary sufficient to cover his personal needs is all that is necessary. I am interested in taking steps to facilitate an exchange where we will find employment for a qualified individual coming from your people. I believe that such an exchange will help us both. Do you think we can do this exchange quickly?

Can you send me current information about events affecting Aboriginals in Australia? I need current information about the Kanaks and steps that are being taken to organize the South Pacific Region. Thank you for your help and assistance.

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