TERRALINGUA NEWSLETTER #3
News and Views from Terralingua: Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity
March 1997

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ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE

Terralingua Gains Official Nonprofit Status.

After a couple of arduous rounds of paperwork, in early February the U.S. Internal Revenue Service granted Terralingua official status as a nonprofit organization ("501(c)(3)" status, in the bureau's jargon). This bit of legal arcana would hardly be newsworthy were it not for two facts: Such status (1) makes financial contributions to Terralingua tax-deductible for U.S. citizens; and (2) qualifies Terralingua to apply for grants from

numerous foundations who hold 501(c)(3) as a prerequisite. So the main effects of this ruling may not come into play for some time. Nonetheless, getting 501(c)(3) solidifies our status as a "legitimate" organization (at least in the eyes of officialdom).

Review of Organizational Structure, Initial Board Elections on the Horizon.
Sharp-memoried readers of past Terralingua communications will recall that Terralingua's first-year trial structure, with an Interim Board of Directors at the helm, will expire on 30 June 1997, at which time the structure will be opened to review by the membership. In the next (June) newsletter we will ask for comments on creating a permanent operating structure. We anticipate having our first Board elections in the final quarter of 1997. This item, then, is a "heads up" reminder: now is the time to begin thinking about any comments you might have on Terralingua's structure, and to begin to consider whether you might be interested in running for the Board of Directors. As a reminder, the present Interim Board Members are:

Luisa Maffi, President (University of California-Berkeley, USA; maffi@cogsci.berkeley.edu)
Anthea Fallen-Bailey, Vice President (University of Oregon, USA; anfallen@ursula.uoregon.edu)
Dave Harmon, Secretary-Treasurer (George Wright Society, USA; gws@mail.portup.com)
Martha Macri (University of California-Davis, USA; mjmacri@ucdavis.edu)
Mari Rhydwen (Murdoch University, Australia; rhydwen@central.murdoch.edu.au)
Paul Weiss (University of New Mexico, USA; pweiss@unm.edu)

We are especially interested in seeking the participation of persons representing areas outside North America and from indigenous groups. More details forthcoming in June!

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ACTIVITIES

Web Site Set for Updating & Expanding.
Various circumstances have kept us from devoting as much time as we would have liked to maintaining the Web site. It has remained unchanged since November. However, we plan to do a major overhaul in April, making the site easier to use and updating the references (and fixing a couple of broken links). A report will be forthcoming in June....

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REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS FROM MEMBERS
In this section of the newsletter we publish letters, essays, reports, queries, and other communications from Terralingua members. Please note that one of the ways you can join Terralingua is by contributing to the newsletter, so this is an easy way to share information with others and become a member at the same time!

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Yiddish and Biodiversity / Jeffrey Wollock

[In a note of transmittal accompanying this essay, Terralingua member Jeff Wollock asked us to make it clear that the following is a "first stab," with the points being simply offered for discussion, as he had not originally intended it for publication, having sent it to us first in the form of a private letter. We found it so interesting that we asked Jeff to share it with the rest of the Terralingua membership.]

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December 31, 1996
Revised version, February 10, 1997

(Letter to the new organization "Terralingua")

As noted in an earlier message to Luisa Maffi, I received via the "Endangered Languages" List her report of the recent conference on biodiversity and linguistic diversity, and enjoyed reading it. Since then I have also read the Terralingua Newsletter No.2, and as I am extremely interested in these issues and want to be involved, I'd like to join.

Although I'm not a linguist, my doctorate (in history, from Oxford University) does have some connection with language -- my area of concentration is history of science and medicine, more specifically, history of the psychophysiology of speech and music, especially BEFORE the 18th century. Moreover, I am research director of the Solidarity Foundation, a non-profit research and information service affiliated with the Native American Council of New York City. Since we are interested primarily in current economic, environmental, and cultural issues, we have done much demographic research on American Indian languages and also have a collection of articles on the state of Indian languages in our files.

This tells you a little about why I'm interested in endangered languages and biodiversity, however I would also like to become a member on my own account and in connection with my own endangered language, which is Yiddish.

As there are many misunderstandings about Yiddish, even among ethnolinguists, let me clarify a few things at the outset. Rob Pensalfini in February 1995 on

the "Endangered Languages" List, wrote "Yiddish... I will also venture is an immigrant language (with its Germanic morphosyntax and (partly) Semitic lexicon and sociolinguistics)..."

By this logic, English (with its Germanic morphosyntax and (partly) Romance lexicon), must also be defined as an "immigrant language." Yiddish is no more or less an immigrant language than Italian or Polish. That is, in the United States, Canada, Australia, etc. it is, where spoken by immigrants, an immigrant language, but even in these countries there are already communities where Yiddish has been spoken for several generations. The language itself can be traced back 1,000 years. In its main area in recent times it began to spread at least as far back as the 16th century, and some of the roots of the culture which came to speak it go back in that area at least 1,000 years (Jewish communities of Przemysl, Halych, Kiev, etc.), with an original nucleus in the Crimea going back to at least the first century B.C. The Ukrainian historian O. Pritsak conceives of this early population as a group of Ukrainians who adopted the Jewish religion and intermixed with Jews from Crimea, Byzantine Empire, and Khazarian converts from the Volga region (Itil, now Astrakhan), and some of our Jewish historians also say this (with somewhat different emphasis, but it boils down to the same thing).

Yiddish is often thought of as a language of urban ghettos. If so, what could it possibly have to do with biodiversity? While it is true that, especially beginning in the late 19th century and especially in the larger cities of Poland, there were large Yiddish-speaking communities, most of these had only recently been streaming in from rural areas. The heart of Eastern-European Yiddish culture was the _shtetl_, typically a small town in a rural area, inhabited by both Jews and non-Jews. Until the 20th century, many Jews lived in even smaller rural villages. Again, despite all the caricatures and cliches by people who don't know what they're talking about, Jewish culture, originally tribal, is permeated with love and respect for nature, and this traditional attitude developed new cultural manifestations in Eastern Europe despite the growing attempt of European governments, especially in the 19th century, to suppress it. (For example, Jews in Russia were not legally allowed to own any land.) For some sense of traditional Jewish teachings on ecology, see Richard Schwartz's essay posted on the Internet at http://envirolink.org/arrs/essays/schwartz/ecology.html.

Admittedly there has been little research on the relation of Yiddish to biodiversity, but in this sense Yiddish scholarship is probably no different from that of many other European languages. I'm extremely interested in both subjects, and have long intuitively felt a connection, but not until I read the material fromTerralingua did it come together for me. Now I am eager to look into the question, to the extent time permits. Without having yet done any specific research on it, let me just cite a number of points that come to me from general reading and knowledge within my own family.

You will notice that the heartland of Yiddish culture is an area with some of

the greatest bio- and linguistic diversity in Europe. It includes Poland, Lithuania/Latvia, Belorus, much of the Carpathian region, Transylvania, the Bukovina, Moldova, and Ukraine. People in these regions, and particularly Jews, were commonly multilingual. My great-grandfather, for example, who lived in an agricultural village in west-central Ukraine, was fluent in Yiddish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish, and could read Hebrew. This was not unusual.

As noted above, it was difficult and often impossible for Jews to own land within the Russian "Pale." But before WW2 most of the Carpathian Jews were small farmers, and Jewish farmers and livestock raisers were fairly common in southeastern Poland (Galicia). My great-uncle's second wife grew up on a horse farm in Mielec, Galicia. A friend of mine in Winnipeg, who speaks Yiddish and whose children speak it, is the son of a Manitoba farmer whose father was a farmer in southern Poland.

Many Lithuanian Jews had small orchards, and Jews throughout the region had vegetable/herb gardens. There was a rich vernacular cuisine (of which the modern Jewish delicatessen gives only a small idea) and a wide assortment of traditional crafts and trades more or less associated with the land, such as small commercial fruit-growing, dairy and egg production, horsetrading, fishing, forestry, carpentry, etc.

I know that seeds of many "heirloom" varieties of fruits and vegetables can still be found in Eastern Europe.

My great-grandfather in the Ukraine managed to have a few acres of land, on which they grew sugar beets -- although the actual work was done by Ukrainian women. In addition my great-grandmother kept a garden. Again, typical of Jews in rural areas, they raised chickens, ducks and geese. They had 2 horses and 3 cows. Another great-grandmother about 15 miles away had one cow.

On the other side, my father is a (retired) carpenter. He was raised in a Yiddish-speaking community in Brooklyn. He is a carpenter essentially because his father was, and the reason my grandfather and many other Jewish boys learned that trade is that the area around Baranowicze (Belarus), where he grew up, was full of huge pine forests which produced much timber. My grandfather's first job as an apprentice was the one nobody wanted, pit man (the guy on the bottom) sawing boards from logs. (It used to be done by hand.)

There are many beautiful descriptions of nature in Yiddish literature and the vernacular painting that adorned the interior of synagogues (most destoyed by Nazis or Communists) was full of depictions of animals and plants.

None of these things actually show the connection between Yiddish and biodiversity/linguistic diversity, but I think they do strongly suggest that the question is worth looking into, and also some avenues of approach and even activism. As far as work already done or being done, I do know that the eminent Yiddish philologist Mordkhe Schaechter has been working for many years on a

dictionary of Yiddish plant names, and I also know that Leah Robinson, one of the most admired Yiddish writers of the younger generation, is constantly looking for Yiddish names of all living creatures. As for linguistic diversity, Prof. Joshua Fishman, whom you may know as an authority on "reversing language shift," is also himself an important writer in Yiddish on cultural and linguistic issues.

I am sending a check for $15.00, and also, by separate e-mail, an essay of about 1,600 words in which I try to formulate some general connections between linguistic diversity and biodiversity. Will you be good enough to consider it for a future newsletter? [That essay follows below.]

With best wishes for a happy and successful new year,

Jeffrey Wollock (Itsik-Leyb Volokh)

ADDITIONAL POINTS ABOUT YIDDISH AND BIODIVERSITY (January 22, 1997):

1. Judaism on the one hand was committed to the equality of men, based on common descent from Adam and Eve, but unlike Christianity (as Rabbi Emanuel Rackman writes in _Modern Halakha for Our Time_, Hoboken, NJ, Ktav, 1995, p.139), "Judaism was not committed to a universal church. On the contrary, it preferred a multiplicity of nations and languages. And it saw in the enormous differences among people, despite the origin of all men in one man, an added reason for admiring God's creation."

2. The roots of this last idea are found in Genesis. On Genesis and biodiversity, see the first section of my paper "Building Megaprojects on Lands of Indigenous Peoples: A Philosophical Analysis with Special Reference to Hydro-Quebec's James Bay II."

3. Over the centuries, the commitment of Christianity to a universal church developed manifestations that continued to proliferate when this missionary drive to universality mutated into a secular mode, which is one of the chief manifestations of cultural imperialism today. How many languages and cultures have, over the centuries, fallen victim, directly or indirectly, to either the religious or secular variants of this proselytism, would be worth investigating.

4. Very compatible with the traditional Jewish view of cultural diversity was the special character of the medieval Lithuanian empire, which (along with the Carpathian Mountains) was the cradle of East European Jewish culture. This huge territory, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, was roughly co-terminous with what in the 18th century would come to be known as the "Pale of Settlement," throughout which Yiddish would be the language of Jewish daily life. This empire was devoid of cultural imperialism; it was built through

tribute and alliance. Extending their rule into the Ukraine during the 1300s, the Lithuanians often proclaimed, "We do not change the old, nor do we bring in the new." (See Mikhailo Hrushevsky, "The Traditional Scheme of 'Russian' History and the Problem of a Rational Organization of the History of the Eastern Slavs," Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States, 2 [1952]:355-364). Likewise, the Jewish culture of this huge area was characterized by an extraordinary cultural conservatism, steadfastly maintaining its own ancient system of vernacular law and learning into the 20th century. The Yiddish language embodies the vernacular European experience of this ancient traditional culture. To this day, Yiddish, which has never been the language of a nation state, retains its vernacular character to a high degree.

5. Similarly, Masha Greenbaum (The Jews of Lithuania, Jerusalem: Gefen 1995), p. 5, writes: "Jews in [medieval] Lithuania enjoyed a considerable degree of official tolerance and goodwill.... Their good treatment may have been due to the fact that the Lithuanians were still pagans and, as such, were uninfluenced by their western Christian neighbors. In fact, Lithuania, was the last European country to embrace Christianity, rejecting the faith until the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century."

6. At the Council of Constance (1414-1418), Paulus Vladimiri, Rector of the University of Cracow and spokesman for King Wladyslaw Jagiello of Poland (himself of Lithuanian/Belorusian origin), strongly criticized the Teutonic Knights and their wars of conquest in the Baltics, and presented a defense of the rights of non-Christians. (Christiansen, The Northern Crusades, 223-232, gives a full discussion of the debate.) The King of Poland was a firm ally of Grand-Prince Vitovt of Lithuania, at that time the most religiously free country in Europe (cf. Christiansen 139), where Rabbanite and Karaite Judaism, Lithuanian paganism, Islam, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy coexisted peacefully. Vladimiri's arguments are historically very important, as they are the direct precursors of the 16th-century defense of Indian rights in the Americas by Bartolomeo de las Casas and Francisco de Vitoria.

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December 25, 1996, revised 10 February 1997
How Linguistic Diversity and Biodiversity Are Related / Jeffrey Wollock

A remarkable correlation has been noted between geographic areas of high biodiversity and of high cultural/linguistic diversity. What is the cause of this correlation? In brief, it seems to be that a maximum degree of biodiversity and linguistic diversity, which may be described as a state of biological and cultural negentropy or maximally diversified order, is the normal state of the planet. I have discussed why this is so (along lines set

out by St. Thomas Aquinas) in the opening section of an unpublished paper "Building Megaprojects on Lands of Indigenous Peoples: A Philosophical Analysis with Special Reference to Hydro-Quebec's James Bay II." While there are certain natural geographic constraints on diversity, causing in some areas (the tropics) a higher, and in others (deserts, boreal and arctic lands, cold, brackish seas like the Baltic and Hudson's Bay) a lesser, degree of it, in each area, mutatis mutandis, the principle applies.

Traditional cultures have not only been built up around this biodiversity, they have greatly expanded it by developing cultivated varieties of plants, and wildlife-management or pastoral regimes, to exploit to the highest degree of sustainability the food-producing potential of every available environmental niche. Traditional peoples understand the basic principle, rediscovered by modern ecology, that complex systems are highly stable and simple systems are highly unstable. Thus they understand that the more complexly they can develop their land management systems, the more stable and equitably distributed will be the food supply. Maximum biodiversity thus means maximal social stability, and reducing competition and interference with shared ecosystems also lowers the likelihood of conflict with other peoples. These understandings are in turn embodied and expressed in vernacular political systems.

Modern theories of linguistics cannot begin to explain the connections between linguistic diversity and biodiversity, because, being structurally oriented, they deal with languages as autonomous, self-contained systems -- grammars. When linguistic theory extends to semantics, this is rarely seen as anything but a self-contained, self referential system (a "text"). Even pragmatics, the study of the relation between linguistic systems and their users, does not necessarily get us beyond the text. Modern linguistic theory, obsessed with the nominalist conception of language as a purely arbitrary system of signs, cannot handle the idea that there are really-existing systems outside of language and outside of man, to which language bears a definite relation. Nature, if considered at all, is an abstraction, a sociolinguistic construct.

The conception of nature as a sociolinguistic construct does at least allow one to consider some relations between linguistic diversity and biodiversity. Perhaps certain languages are semantically and pragmatically structured in such a way as to promote biodiversity and to tolerate or even encourage linguistic diversity in their users. But this is stretching the Cartesian dichotomy of active mind-passive nature as far as it will go. It is only when we shift our perspective from language as grammar (no matter how universal, generative or otherwise), used on its own by human or artificial intelligence, to language as a pattern of human action, used by human beings with bodies as well as minds and connected with other actions within the social and natural world, that it becomes possible to talk adequately about how linguistic diversity is related to biodiversity.

Each culture has an established policy as to the actions and forbearances that are good (or bad) to do on the land which it holds under its jurisdiction.

Traditional cultures believe they have received this in the form of instructions from a superhuman agent and they have often formalized these as a covenant with that agent and/or all other species in the community. Whether monarchical or democratic, this social model includes natural kinds as active participants in the community. The covenant becomes a social fact legitimatizing the right of that people to exercise jurisdiction, or "say what the law is," on that land, to maintain its order among themselves and to control entry and use by others.

That such a world-view is not simply a linguistic construct but an adequate reflection of extra-linguistic (ontological) reality is being experimentally demonstrated by the history of the very phenomenon in question, i.e., the growing correlation of high linguistic diversity and biodiversity with the territories of more traditional cultures, and of low diversity with "developed" cultures, which have internalized the idea of nature as a mere construct. That there is such a correlation can be seen not only in language use, but in virtually any sphere of thought that guides a culture's actions, e.g. theology, education, agricultural science, economics. In the history of Western thought, such a trivialization of all other members of the ecosystem, and of the rights of traditional cultures, correlates with the gradual triumph of the nominalist strain in philosophy, which treats all universal concepts (including "nature" and "community") as arbitrary social constructs. Certain universals, of course, really are arbitrary constructs, and since these are the ones that are chartered, institutionalized, and recognized by law in "developed" societies, they always take precedence over the former, which are considered to be no less arbitrary, but which have no official sanction and are supported by mere "mumbo-jumbo."

The development of nominalism in Western culture since the 14th century correlates closely with the triumph of revived Roman law over traditional law and with the development of nation states and empires. Now that language had been made an official instrument of state, it remained only to see to it that alternatives would henceforth be unavailable. This was perhaps first achieved at the end of the 15th century. As Robert A. Williams writes in The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: the discourses of conquest (p.74):

"Perhaps no single historical incident better illustrates the transformations occurring throughout Discovery-era Spain than Queen Isabella's acceptance of Antonio de Nebrija's Spanish _Gramatica_, the first-ever grammar of any modern European language. Upon its presentation in the momentous year 1492, Isabella reportedly asked the scholar, "What is it for?" Nebrija answered Her Majesty modestly but with profound presence and insight respecting the demands of the new expansion-minded age. "Language," he reportedly stated, "is the perfect instrument of empire."

(The point about Nebrija's grammar is explored in greater detail by Ivan Illich in "Taught Mother Language and Vernacular Tongue," in D.P. Pattanayak, Multilingualism and Mother-Tongue Education, Delhi: Oxford UP, 1981).

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Of all the actions exercised within a culture, language is the most fundamental. In traditional cultures, all right actions are really ritual actions ("right" is etymologically related to "rite" -- i.e. done according to primordial sacred model). Language is, first of all, the vehicle of prayer accompanying ritual action, and it is here especially that it is revealed as in itself a form of ritual action protecting and maintaining the land. (Vedic linguistic theory is explicitly based on this premise.) Language as a code also facilitates and embodies the discourse that interprets the meanings of all the actions performed to maintain biodiversity, the wisdom formalizing it and knitting it all together.

Thus, traditional activities are intended to maintain biodiversity. (As we are dealing with human beings, they can sometimes go wrong, especially under abnormal stresses, but they usually are capable of extraordinary stability.) There is an intimate correlation between vernacular activities, values, and language. As Illich writes, ibid. p.32):

Traditional cultures... subsisted basically on vernacular values. In such societies, tools were essentially the prolongation of arms, fingers, and legs. .... Language was drawn by each one from the cultural environment... The vernacular spread just as most things and services were shared, namely, by multiple forms of mutual reciprocity... speech resulted from conversations embedded in everyday life, from listening to fights and lullabies, gossip, stories and dream. Even today, most people in poor countries learn all their language skills... in a way that nowhere compares with the self-conscious, self-important, colourless mumbling that, after a long stay in villages in South America and South-East Asia, always shocks me when I visit an American college. I feel sorrow for those students whom education has made tone deaf; they have lost the faculty for hearing the difference between the dessicated utterance of standard television English and the living speech of the unschooled.

Of course when languages are lost, cultural actions are never simply left to take care of themselves, or vice-versa. That a language is lost necessarily means it is replaced by another one. The new language embodies another discourse, in terms of which the actions which had formerly upheld the land-management regime that maintained the traditional biodiversity, may no longer make sense. If these actions and traditions are already being lost and being replaced by others, it is all the more likely that the new language will be accepted. If the land is lost, the traditional actions cannot be performed, and the language itself loses much of its raison d'etre. Either way (usually both processes are going on at more or less the same time), the people are left with a new language and little of their old culture.

If these processes are less extensive and if they occur gradually

enough, as
tended to be the case in ancient times or in the early Middle Ages, people are often able to adapt to the new conditions (as Christianity, a local market economy) and to calque a great deal of the new meanings into their own language. Vice-versa, if their language is lost they may be able to calque most of its meanings into the new language; where the new language has "prestige," this process may even be voluntary. But if the change is forced and rapid, as when people suddenly lose jurisdiction over their land, or are even relocated, then culture, language, and biodiversity are all threatened.

The process of driving local cultural groups off their land or at least divesting them of jurisdiction is characteristic of 19th and 20th-century imperialism. By and large, ancient forms of imperialism demanded tribute and obedience of subject peoples but left them their cultures and land regimes, and thus their languages. Modern imperialism takes almost everything, especially from tribal peoples, whose traditional land rights are usually nullified (through the nominalism maneuver referred to above). A uniform language is imposed and, like everything else in the new system, becomes a global commodity, which immediately puts those who do not speak it, or who speak it badly, at a grave disdvantage. The new language embodies a system of values which conceives of land and nature as arbitrary signs, objects of domination and profit, a discourse in which maintenance of biodiversity is equated with "waste." (The classic statement of this theory is John Locke's Second Treatise on Government, chapter 5.) As this language extends itself through compulsory education and mass media, both linguistic diversity and biodiversity decrease, leading to a condition of not only cultural but also biological simplification, which is extremely unstable and dangerous on both levels. Food production is no longer for the local economy but for "the empire," culture is no longer vernacular but is imported and imposed. Societies are destabilized, religions become apocalyptic. Disconnected from the land, cultures homogenize and no longer uphold biodiversity.

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Centro Editorial de Literatura Indigena / H. Russell Bernard

[The following information on CELIAC was posted February 12, 1997, to the ENDANGERED LANGUAGES list by Terralingua member Russ Bernard.]

From: H. Russell Bernard
University of Florida
Subject: Recent developments at CELIAC

Many colleagues have asked about progress at CELIAC, the Centro Editorial de Literatura Indigena, Asociacion Civil. I am posting this to several lists to get the word out about CELIAC. I know that there is a lot of overlap in our list subscriptions, and that some colleagues will therefore see this message several

times. I apologize in advance for any inconvenience.

CELIAC is a not-for profit organization, incorporated by indigenous people in Oaxaca, Mexico. CELIAC operates as a publishing house for indigenous-language books written by native speakers of indigenous languages from across Latin America. CELIAC now has its own building, with kitchen and dormitory facilities for up to 16 people. Indigenous authors in residence at CELIAC learn to use computers to write books in their own languages.

Six books are now available for purchase directly from CELIAC. Six more are complete and await funding for publication, and another dozen books are in various stages of completion. Here is a list of the books available and awaiting publication.

BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM CELIAC AND HOW TO ORDER THEM

CELIAC (Centro Editorial en Literatura Indigena, A.C.) is a not-for-profit, indigenous-language publishing center in Oaxaca, Mexico. Proceeds from sales of CELIAC books support indigenous authors and the distribution of books to local communities. The following books are currently available.

1. X'TACHWIN X'TATLIN LI TUTUNAKU (Palabra y Canto de los Totonacos), A book of original poetry by Tiburcio Perez Gonzalez (Jun). In Totonac and Spanish. Over 50 original color illustrations by the author. Publication date: April 1994. 195 pages. $60.

2. DILLZAAN NHA' KALHJAGOK'KS (Cuentos y Leyendas en Idioma Zapoteco de la Sierra Norte; Area Cajonof: Yaganiza, San Mateo, Xagacia, y Carizal), by Alfredo Rios Belem. In Zapoteco de la Sierra Juarez. Publication date: May 1994. 165 pages. $30.

3. NA KAA IYO YO CHI NUU CHIKUA'A (La Vida Cotidiana de Jicayan, Volume I), by Josefa Leonarda Gonzalez Ventura. In Mixteco de la Costa. Published jointly by CELIAC with the government of the State of Oaxaca. Publication date: March, 1993. 165 pages. $30.

4. LA VIDA COTIDIANA DE JICAYAN. (Na Kaa Iyo Yo Chi Nuu Chikua'a Volume I), by Josefa Leonarda Gonzalez Ventura. Spanish translation of #3, above. Publication date: March 1994. $30.

5. ETNOGRAFIA DEL OTOMI, by Jesus Salinas Pedraza. This book was published in 1983 by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. This oversize book contains the first three volumes, in Mezquital

Nyahnyu and Spanish (on the geography, the fauna, and the flora of the Mezquital Valley) of Salinas' Nyahnyu ethnography. 377 pages. $60. (The English edition of all four volumes of the ethnography is Native Ethnography, by H. R. Bernard and Jesus Salinas Pedraza, Sage Publications, 1989.)

6. ESTUDIO ETNOGRAFICO SOBRE EL MANEJO DE LA ENFERMEDAD DIARREICA
EN EL HOGAR EN SEIS REGIONES INDIGENAS DE OAXACA. Coordinacion: Homero Martinez Salgado and Jesus Salinas Pedraza. Bilingual texts in Spanish and Highland Mixtec, Coastal Mixtec, Highland Zapotec, Juchitan Zapotec, Chinantec, and Mazatec by: Florencio Carrera Gonzalez, Vigilia Rosa Cruz Valentin, Pablo Hernandez Hernandez, Vicente Marcial Cerqueda, Digna Salvador Eugenio, Ignacio Santiago Perez, Juventino Silva Escobar, and Tomas Villalobos Aquina. Published jointly by Instituto Mexciano de Seguro Social, Secretaria de Salud, and CELIAC. Heavily illustrated. 140 pages. $40.

The following books are completed and await publication by CELIAC.

1. RA NT'EMEE MAYA'MU 'NE MAPAYA (La Religion Tradicional y Religion Contemporanea), by Jesus Salinas Pedraza. This is the fourth volume of Salinas's Nyahnyu ethnography. It will be published in Nyahnyu and Spanish.

2. LALA IA TI JUJMI KI TSA KO WI (Asi se Cuenta en el Idioma Chinanteco de Ojitlan), by Fidel Pereda Ramon and Bartola Morales Garcia. In Chinantec.

3. TE'EN NI TUI NUU YO (Asi se Fundo Nuestro Pueblo), by Pablo Hernandez Hernandez. In Mixtec.

4. RA 'MEDE RA HNINI RA DEXTO (Historia de la Comunidad de El Dexto), by Jesus Salinas Pedraza. In Nahnyu and Spanish.

5. YELESI'IN CHE BENE' GOLHE JSESHE (Los Conocimientos de los Ancianos de Yatzachi el Bajo), by Digna Salvador Eugenio. In Zapotec and Spanish.

6. TYUSU CHA NAKATYI NUYIVI NUU KASANDO'O (Cuentos que Narra la Gente de Jamiltepec), by Miguel Lopez Hernandez. In Mixtec and Spanish.

To order, contact CELIAC, Avenida Ejercito Mexicano 1107, Colonia Ampliacion Dolores, Oaxaca, Oaxaca 68020 Mexico or by phone at 011-52-951-59725; fax: 59729; e-mail: celiac@infosel.net.mx. For

further information in English, contact Russ Bernard at:
voice 904-376-4544; fax 904-376-8617; e-mail
ufruss@nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu.

You can contribute to the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures in Latin America by:

1) buying (or asking your university library to buy) the books produced by CELIAC authors;

2) sponsoring the distribution of indigenous-language books to village schools in which those languages are spoken;

3) sponsoring the publication of an indigenous-language book by CELIAC;

4) sponsoring a colleague who speaks an indigenous language to spend several months in residence at CELIAC and to write a book in her or his language;

5) making a tax-deductible contribution (in the U.S.) to the Native Literacy Project at the University of Florida Foundation, Inc.

For further information in English about how you can participate in CELIAC's efforts, contact Russ Bernard at
ufruss@nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu.

For information in Spanish, or to arrange to visit CELIAC, contact Jesus Salinas at
celiac@infosel.net.mx.

For more detailed information about CELIAC (its history, how it works, etc.), please read the following.

The Oaxaca Native Literacy Project

Over the last five years, the CELIAC project has been featured in articles in the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, and other newspapers around the country. It was also covered by several magazines, including Cultural Survival Quarterly, and was featured on CNN's Future Watch. CELIAC began in 1987 as the Oaxaca Native Literacy Project, but the roots of the effort go much earlier.

Jesus Salinas Pedraza is a Nyahnyu (Otomi) Indian school teacher from Mexico. He and I began working together in 1962 when I was doing my MA research on his language. In 1971, Salinas and I began working on a project to document the Nyahnyu culture, in Nyahnyu. We developed a writing system for Nyahnyu and Salinas wrote four books about the culture of the people of the Mezquital Valley. Three of those books are available from CELIAC in a single volume, in both Nyahnyu and Spanish (see the book list attached). All four books were published in a single volume in English in 1989 (Native Ethnography; A Mexican Indian Describes His Culture, H. Russell Bernard and Jesus Salinas Pedraza, Sage Publications).

In 1987, building on our book collaboration, Salinas and I conceived of the Oaxaca Native Literacy Center -- a place where Indian people from around the Americas could learn to read and write their own languages using microcomputers. Our idea was for Indians to write, print and publish their own works, in their own languages, on topics of their own choice. They would write their own histories and record their knowledge for their children -- and for all our children as well.

The center began operation in 1989, with support from the National Bureau of Indian Education and the Center for Advanced Studies in Anthropology in Mexico; from the Interamerican Indian Institute; and from the Jessie Ball Du Pont Foundation. My students and I at the University of Florida's Department of Anthropology provided technical training. Salinas runs the center, along with Josefa Gonzalez Ventura, a Mixtec Indian from Oaxaca. Together they train other Indians to use computers to write and to print books in Indian languages.

The Project becomes CELIAC

In 1993 the project incorporated as a not-for-profit organization called CELIAC -- the Centro Editorial de Literatura Indigena, A.C. The A.C. stands for Asociacion Civil, which means "not-for-for-profit corporation." All five board members of CELIAC are native speakers of Mexican Indian languages.

In January 1994, CELIAC moved into its own building in Oaxaca. The building houses up to 16 persons. There are toilet facilities for men and women, an ample kitchen, office space, meeting rooms, and computer work rooms. Indigenous authors spend time in residence at CELIAC, and CELIAC is now a publishing house for indigenous literature, written in indigenous languages. CELIAC markets its books to scholars, libraries, and individuals.

Proceeds from the sale of the books help keep the project going. Books are sold directly by CELIAC and all funds go directly to the project.

So far, over 150 people -- speakers of a dozen languages (Mixtec, Chinantec, Aymara, Quichua, and others) from countries across Latin America (Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Ecuador) -- have spent from four weeks to six months in residence at CELIAC.

How You Can Participate

As a not-for-profit organization, CELIAC accepts donations from foundations and from individuals. Just as important, however, is the support from colleagues who purchase the books and services of CELIAC.

One thing we can all do to help slow the erosion of language diversity in the world is to purchase books produced by indigenous authors. This will create incentives for indigenous-language authors to produce more literary output, and it will create jobs for indigenous-language production editors, marketing specialists, and so on.

Dictionaries of languages like English and French that already have long literary traditions are built from printed materials. Dictionaries of languages that have no literary tradition are built from transcriptions of speech. The result is: a) dictionaries of languages like English and French that are enormous -- because they represent the lexicons of thousands of people -- but have little information about spoken language; b) dictionaries of previously nonliterary languages that have lots of information on how words are used in speech, but which are small because they represent the lexicons of a few people. In my experience, the production of dictionaries for indigenous languages is best supported by the development of literary traditions.

A list of the books available from CELIAC is appended here. Please ask your library to place a standing order for CELIAC books, particularly if your library has a strong collection in Native American and/or Latin American titles.

Besides its books, CELIAC offers other cultural products and services. Here are some examples:

1. A four-year college in the U.S. has contracted with CELIAC to

accommodate a class for a month at a time.

2. The Mexican Social Security Institute contracted with CELIAC to conduct ethnographic interviews, in six languages of Oaxaca, on the management (at the household level) of infantile diarrhea. The results of that study were recently published jointly by the Mexican Ministry of Health and CELIAC. The interviewers had been trained at CELIAC. They conducted their interviews in the local languages and submitted their reports in those languages. The book that resulted contains both the Spanish and the indigenous language versions of the report.

3. The Interamerican Institute for Indigenous Studies (Instituto Indigenista Interamericano) has so far brought two groups of 12 and one group of 6 bilingual school teachers to CELIAC from South America (Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina).

4. An anthropologist in the U.S. sponsored one of his indigenous colleagues to spend several months at CELIAC. The indigenous colleague produced a book in Ecuadorian Quichua.

5. An anthropologist in Mexico sponsored a craft show at CELIAC where indigenous paper-making technology was highlighted.

CELIAC offers colleagues in linguistics and anthropology the opportunity to purchase indigenous cultural and linguistic goods and services directly from the creators of those goods and services at fair market value.

You may make a tax-deductible donation to the CELIAC project through the Native Literacy Project at the University of Florida Foundation, Inc. For information, contact Russ Bernard at
ufruss@nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu

If you would like to sponsor an indigenous author in residence at CELIAC, or help CELIAC acquire computers for rural village schools, or sponsor the publication of a book by an indigenous author -- or inquire about the many other ways you can participate, contact Jesus Salinas at
celiac@infosel.net.mx

If you are planning a trip to Mexico and would like to visit CELIAC, contact Jesus Salinas or Josefa Gonzalez by phone: from the U.S., dial 011-52-951-59725. From elsewhere, substitute your the international access number for 011. If you do not speak Spanish, you may send e-mail in English to me at
ufruss@nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu

h. russell bernard
dept. of anthropology
1350 turlington hall
university of florida
gainesville, florida 32611

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

Appeal on Behalf of the Itza Maya (Guatemala) / Scott Atran, Doug Medin, Luisa Maffi,
and the staff of Ecologic News (original date of posting: December 18, 1996)

Dear Colleagues,

Doug Medin recently sent me a copy of a letter written by the Itza Maya of San Jose,
Peten, Guatemala to the Guatemalan President, concerning a situation that is threatening their culture and their land. By way of providing some background, I preface it with some other related materials earlier sent to me by Scott Atran. I would like to call for your attention and action on this urgent matter. I may add that the state of affairs described below is currently widespread throughout the lowlands of Southern Mexico as well. I just read some alarming news about logging and deforestation in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve in the Selva Lacandona of Chiapas, Mexico. Public awareness of and reaction to such threats to cultural and biological diversity are badly needed. Thank you very much for your support.

Luisa Maffi

---> Received from Scott Atran, University of Michigan:

A C T I O N A L E R T !
December 1996

THE FOLLOWING ALERT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

C O N T E N T S

(1) The Crisis in Brief: Peten, Guatemala and the Maya Itza
(2) Statement from the Bio Itza Committee
(3) Authorities for You to Contact
(4) Open Letter from the EcoLogic Development Fund, English and Spanish

CRISIS IN BRIEF
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* The Maya Itza are one of 21 Mayan linguistic groups in Guatemala.
* The Itza are on the verge of cultural extinction as fewer than one hundred people now speak the language fluently.
* In 1991, the Itza of San Jose, Peten banded together to halt illegal logging in their municipal forests and established THE COMMITTEE OF THE BIOSFERA ITZA RESERVE.
* Since that time this community organization has effectively protected a 36-square kilometer municipal forest reserve and promoted activities for environmental conservation, cultural revitalization, and community development.
* San Jose's current Mayor has recently announced under municipal decree that he is disbanding this community group. Like his predecessors he sees greater personal and financial benefit in logging the forest reserve than protecting it.
* The Mayor has appointed his father as the new leader of the Bio Itza Committee and secured the support of immigrants to serve on the committee.
* These immigrants have been very clear in expressing their desire to cut down the forest for agricultural plots.
* To reverse this injustice, the Bio Itza Committee has requested immediate letters from international organizations to be directed at local authorities.
* This is a situation when a letter can both save a tropical forest and ensure that the efforts of a threatened cultural group continue.

For more information contact:

Shaun Paul
EcoLogic Development Fund
PO Box 383405
Cambridge, MA 02238 USA
tel (617) 441-6300
fax (617) 441-6307
email: news@ecologic.org

Reginaldo Chayax Huex
Presidente
Comite Bio Itza
San Jose, Peten GUATEMALA
community telephone:
011 [502] 928-8135

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LETTER OF APPEAL
WRITTEN BY THE BIO ITZA COMMITTEE

November 19, 1996

DEAR FRIENDS IN THE CONSERVATION AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COMMUNITY:
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The Committee of the Biosfera Itza reserve wish to make known, both nationally and internationally, the following. Since 1991, when the reserve was founded, this organization has pioneered the conservation of the environment in the Department of Peten, Guatemala in Central America. As the last indigenous inhabitants of the Peten's forest, the Maya Itza have fought to maintain the forest, culture and language of their great civilization. The reserve protects 6 km2 of threatened primary forest under the guidance of a Management Plan; we also have a Forest Inventory, a map of the area, archaeological studies of the sites within the reserve, and currently have five on-going projects that are compatible with the environment. Furthermore, we have received technical and/or financial assistance from the following institutions: the University of Michigan, Cultural Survival, IIZ-Austrian Embassy, ProPeten/CI, TNC, CONAP, CATIE/RENAR, CCAD, EcoLogic Development Fund, and SEGEPLAN.

Unfortunately, for the past three years the Biosfera Itza Committee has suffered at the hands of the current municipal leader, Julian Tesucun y Tesucun, who together with members of the immigrant population, want to extract the forest resources protected within the reserve. With this purpose in mind, the municipality held a meeting Saturday, November 16, 1996 in which Mr. Tesucun y Tesucun inappropriately permitted the election of a new Committee to manage the Biosfera Itza. Those in attendance represent the immigrant population and other persons with personal agendas. Their interests are not the well-being and development of the Maya Itza community, rather their primary goal is to log the reserve and divide it up for the extraction of forest resources--thereby converting it into a desert.

As such, we urgently protest before you, asking for your moral support to exert pressure on the authorities and institutions whose role it is to protect the rights of the indigenous communities and the environment. We want this situation to be resolved through the appropriate legal channels so that we can live and work in peace for the good of the environment and future generations. We are the first indigenous organization to worry about our natural environment in the northern forested region of the Peten, which has suffered deforestation and destruction due to the increasing number of immigrants from other parts of the country.

With the hope of receiving your words of support, we thank you for your consideration. For more information, please communicate with us by means of the community telephone in San Jose ([502] 928-8135).

Ecologically,

REGINALDO CHAYAX HUEX FELICIANO TZUL COLLI
PRESIDENT VICE PRESIDENT

LUIS FERNANDO LOPEZ CESAR MUNOZ SUNTECUN

JUAN JULIO TUT BERTA HUEX CHAN

~~~~~~

!!!

THE AUTHORITIES IN GUATEMALA NEED TO KNOW THAT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OBJECT TO WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE ITZA!

PLEASE WRITE A LETTER, PREFERABLY IN SPANISH, TO THE AUTHORITIES IN GUATEMALA.

AUTHORITIES FOR YOU TO WRITE IN ORDER OF PRIORITY:

(1) Ing. Juan Francisco Asturias Fajardo, Coordinador Nacional
Comision Nacional del Medio Ambiente, CONAMA
5 Avenida 8-07, Zona 10
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Tel: =09011 [502] 332-7174
Fax: =09011 [502] 362-6845

(2) Dr. Edgar Armando Aragon Gonzalez, Gobernador
Gobernacion Departamental del Peten
Ciudad Flores, Peten, Guatemala
Tel/Fax: 011 [502] 926-1383

****
OTHER PEOPLE THAT NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU

(3) Sen~or Diputado Mario Hugo Miranda
Presidente de la Comision de Medio Ambiente
Congreso de la Republica de Guatemala
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Tel/Fax 011 [502] 232-1260 (Ask for the "extension 327"
- tres dos siete)

(4) Lic. Manuel Barquin
Delegado Departmental, Peten
Procuraduria General de la Nacion
Santa Elena, Peten Guatemala
Tel/Fax: [502] 926-0318

(5) Excelentisimo Sen~or Presidente
Alvaro Arzu
~~~~~~

Palacio Nacional
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
EMAIL: AlvaroArzu@guate.net

PLEASE SEND A COPY OF ALL LETTERS TO:

Reginaldo Chayax Huex AND/OR Shaun Paul
Presidente EcoLogic Development Fund
Comite Bio Itza PO Box 383405
San Jose, Peten GUATEMALA Cambridge, MA 02238 USA
fax c/o PROPETEN [502] 926-0495 fax (617) 441-6307
email: news@ecologic.org

OPEN LETTER FROM THE ECOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

December 16, 1996

Dr. Edgar Armando Aragon Gonzalez, Gobernador
Gobernacion Departamental del Peten
Ciudad Flores, Peten, Guatemala
Tel/Fax: 011-502-926-1383

Dear Dr. Aragon Gonzalez,

I am writing on behalf of the EcoLogic Development Fund, an international charitable organization, to bring your attention to a problem of great concern to us regarding San Jose, Peten.

Both my organization and many other international agencies have recently received reports concerning the questionable dissolution on November 16, 1996 of the "Committee of the Biosfera Itza Reserve" in San Jose by Mayor Julian Tesucun y Tesucun. If this is true, I am confident that you will join us in supporting the valiant efforts of the Bio Itza Committee to protect their natural resources, promote the sustainable use of these resources, and preserve of their language and culture.

The Bio Itza Committee was formally established in September 1991 in San Jose when Itza community members established their general assembly. The area in which their development has been centered is located in the buffer zone of the Mayan Biosphere along the perimeter of El Zotz-San Miguel-La Pelotada Biotope. This 36-square kilometer area was conceded by the Honorable Corporation of the Municipality of

San Jose as a municipal forest reserve (in the 34-91 session, of the folio 312-317 of the Act No. 37). The Bio Itza Committee, under the leadership of Reginaldo Chayax Huex and Feliciano Tzul Colli, developed a management plan and established projects to protect this fragile area. These projects include the protection of San Jose's threatened forests, the reforestation of degraded areas, the promotion of ecotourism and most importantly, the education of Maya Itza youth in their nearly lost traditions and language. They have been effective not only in their conservation work, but also in promoting the economic development and cultural well-being of the Maya Itza people.

Because of its important work, many national and international organizations have supported and are willing to continue supporting the Bio Itza Committee. Institutions that have joined forces with the Bio Itza Committee by donating their financial, technological, and human resources include: Secretaria de Planificacion Economica (SEGEPLAN); Direccion General de Bosques y Vida Silvestre (DIGEBOS); Plan de Accion Forestral Maya (PAF-MAYA); Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala; Comision Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarollo (CCAD); Asociacion del Rescate y Conservacion de la Vida Silvestre (ARCAS); Centro Agronomico Tropical de Investigacion Ensen~anza (CATIE); Consejo Nacional para un Bosque Sostenible (PROPETEN); OEW, Austria; Le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France; Cultural Survival, USA; The Nature Conservancy, USA; UNESCO, UNICEF, the EcoLogic Development Fund, USA; University of Michigan, USA; Instituto para la Cooperacion Internacional, Austria; US Agency for International Development (USAID).

We support the leaders of the Bio Itza Committee, elected by the Itza themselves, in their claim to their rights as indigenous people under United Nations Convention ILO 169, Article 15, ratified by the Government of Guatemala, which states that indigenous people have the right to participate in the use, management and conservation of their natural resources. The removal of the Bio Itza Committee's leadership and their replacement by three of the Mayor's relatives and recent immigrants with little understanding of the local culture and intent on converting the forest into agricultural lands is in clear violation of this Convention.

Please join us by helping to resolve this conflict in San Jose. We believe that the Bio Itza Committee should be rewarded for its valiant efforts rather than punished. This is the second time that Mayor Tesucun y Tesucun has tried to take land away from a community organization. The first involved the Ixchel group, under the leadership of Brenda Mayol. Please join with us to stop this second attempt.

Both the EcoLogic Development Fund and many other international agencies would be most grateful to you for any action taken by your

office to settle the conflict in San Jose for the well being of the Maya Itza and all of Peten. We, in turn, are committed to investing financial and technical assistance to promote economic development and conservation in San Jose.

The Bio Itza Committee has realized projects that serve not only as a model to other Guatemalans, but to the international community as well. I am sure that they would welcome you if you visited them to see first-hand the results of their efforts at reforestation and ecosystem preservation. We believe that this fragile parcel of land should remain with the Bio Itza Committee, who has shown the desire and ability to improve and preserve it.

Knowing of your dedication to environmental and cultural conservation, I kindly ask you, Mr. Governor, to help ensure that the Bio Itza Committee's vital environmental and cultural work continues. On behalf of the government you represent and in the interest of preserving the environment and upholding the human rights of the Maya Itza, we await your assistance in resolving this urgent matter.

Thank you again for your attention.

Sincerely,

Shaun Paul, President
EcoLogic Development Fund

cc: Juan Francisco Asturias Fajardo, CONAMA
Sen~or Diputado Mario Hugo Miranda, Presidente de la Comision de Medio Ambiente
Lic. Manuel Barquin, Delegado Departamental, Peten; Procuraduria General de la Nacion
Arq. Jorge Cabrera, Director Ejecutivo, CCAD
Sen~or Reginaldo Chayax Huex, Presidente, Comite Bio Itza

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This alert was provided by the ECOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND
(news@ecologic.org), P.O. Box 3405, Cambridge, MA 02238-3405 USA
EcoLogic is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the destruction of biodiverse tropical ecosystems by advancing economic development and self-determination among local communities in threatened habitats. To subscribe to EcoLogic News, respond to this message by providing your name, address and organizational affiliation if any.
##

---> Received from Douglas Medin, Northwestern University:

9 February, 1997

Mr. President
of the Republic of Guatemala
Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen

Dear Mr. President:

On the occasion of your visit to the Department of Peten today, the Itza peo=
ple
wish to bring the following to your attention:

On 13 March, 1697, the Spanish army destroyed the last independent
Mayan confederation, with the death of 77,000 out of the 80,000 Itza
who lived in the Peten lowlands. Today, 300 years later, some Guatemalan
politicians who continue the work of colonization wish to destroy the last
Itza Maya still living in the region. Following in the footsteps of Don Mart=
in
de Urzua, the conquistador of Peten, the municipal authorities intend to
deprive our surviving people of our last refuge.

We the Itza are the second-smallest ethnic group in Guatemala, with only
about 1,300 of us. (Fewer than us are the Xinca, numbering 350 people.)
In 1989 we, the people of San Jose, at the northern end of Lake Peten Itza,
started a process of revitalization of our language. Later, in 1991, we bega=
n
taking measures to conserve the Itza forest lying within our community's
territory. We developed a management plan for this tract of forest, and ther=
e
we opened what is now known as the Itza Biosphere Reserve, or BioItza. This
reserve is managed by us, a Mayan people, the only ones to have lived in the
central region of Peten since colonial times and many years before then. We =
are
organized by means of a citizens' committee. Our reserve borders with the
protected biotope of El Zots, San Miguel La Palotada, and with Tikal Nationa=
l
Park. We believe that ours is a living example of what a people can do by it=
s
own initiative to protect its own culture and heritage and its right to life=
.
Ours could be seen as a model reserve, which, although a small one--with onl=
y
36 square kilometers--is for the enjoyment of all Guatemalans.

However we, proud of our own identity, never thought that it would be one of our own brothers who would betray us. An indigenous person who does not wish for his children to learn our language, but rather English, is the one = who
promised land to immigrants in exchange for their votes. A man who, in his second term as San Jose's Mayor, has devoted himself to causing irreparable damage to life, and by the same circumstance, damage to the rights of our ow= n
indigenous people. Actions such as those carried out by Mr. Tesucum threaten the peace process and the political prestige of your party, Mr. President, t= o
which he belongs. As if this were not enough, the good road system he developed, which earned him the support of newcomer residents, has not been paid for. These works were carried out with machinery belonging to the logging company Bahren Comercial, that does not accept monetary payments, but payment in kind.

What San Jose's Mayor wishes to do is expropriate our land of the BioItza reserve, and divide it up in order to pay back his political debt with
those who elected him. By the same circumstance, he would pay back his debt with Bahren, which would be done by cutting down and delivering an ancient primary forest of over 18 square kilometers, found within the 36 of which our reserve is comprised.

We the Itza are surprised. After years of efficiently administering our rese= rve
according to our country's environmental regulations, and of obtaining local and foreign financial support for our reserve and our projects, our prize today is more persecution and greater disrespect for our constitutiona= l
rights, our culture, and our identity.

Will our suffering in Guatemala never end? In a world in which globalization moves forward and the preferred cultural identities are those of the ruling economies, little do the things matter to which our people attributes real value: life itself, our trees, our customs, the smells of the forest, and th= e
medicinal plants it contains.

Now we will have to submit to the whims of the town's God, Mr. Mayor who gave a theatrical performance in the form of a farce going under the name of conservation. So that it could not be said he is not an environmentalist,
he has created a new committee of usurpers who, under the shield of nepotism and racism that has caused us Guatemalans so much suffering, intend to carry out a daring action, potentially damaging for the cherished process of firm and lasting peace.

This is not the first time this shady character has abused of his power. Thi=
s
is customary with him. If he is further allowed to act with such impunity, his abuses will continue and be ever greater, since his lack of respect, his ambition and his politicking know no limit.

Said Mercedarian Friar Diego de Rivas, who accompanied the conquistador of Peten at the time of the Itza's demise (folio 389 of the Real Audiencia d=
e
Guatemala no. 345, dated 15 November 1698): "About Mr. Don Martin de Urzua's entry, it appears that the number of opponents was so great, that having died from the innumerable shots fired by our own, the bodies of dead Indians formed what looked like an island in the middle of the lake."

Although the first conquest was perhaps more brutal, the current one is more devastating.

Mr. President, what will be written about the Mayor, your Government, and our people by today's chroniclers who are observing history in the making?

Sincerely,

BioItza Committee
San Jose, Peten

Guatemala, 7 February 1997

(Translated from the Spanish by Luisa Maffi, University of California at Berkeley)

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Texistepec Popoluca Instruction Course/Soeren Wichmann

[The following was posted to ENDANGERED LANGUAGES on 2 March 1997.]

In Texistepec, Southeastern Veracruz, Mexico, a native speaker of the Mixe-Zoquean language Texistepec Popoluca, Carmen Roman Telesforo, and myself have founded a course for the instruction of the native language of this small town. According to the Mexican national census there were then less than 400 speakers of TP in 1990.

Roman has been working as a linguistic consultant for the past 3-4 years and has helped me create a practical alphabet. I used this in a book, Cuentos y colorados en popoluca de Texistepec, which came out in

September 1996. What that got things going were: Roman's persistent effort to try and find logistical and financial help, the book, the presence of someone who, for being a foreigner, could move as easily among influential mestizos as among the Popolucas, about 35 dollars for expenses such as photocopies, bicycle-transported loadspeaker announcement, telephone calls to local presses, etc., the enthusiasm of a young medical doctor who managed to talk the local cattle-raiser organization into lending us some space in their building, and the (somewhat hard won) willingness of the municipal president to pay Roman a 200 pesos monthly salary.

The course opened in the end of January. There were at first some 25 potentially interested students (11-54 years of age, all non-speakers or nearly so). I taught three classes during the first week and then left Texistepec where Roman was to take over teaching thrice a week. So he did. I have just received news that the local authorities granted him the salary and that the course continues with 10 students. They read stories out of the book, Roman explains them his language as he knows best, and he tries to encourage them to find individuals with whom to practice. I plan to develop some more materials, certainly I'll go back to teach some more in Texistepec the coming summer.

If any of you out there should come by Texistepec you could stop by and say hello to Roman. Also, if any of you have good contacts to Mexican institutions that might be interested in lending a hand somehow or to individuals in Mexico that know how to spread the news to the relevant people in that country, let me know.

I am not a regular subscriber to the list, so please respond to me personally.

I'll be reporting on the project on this list or elsewhere when/if we get our first graduates from the `escuela popoluca'.

Soeren Wichmann
University of Copenhagen (soerenw@coco.ihi.ku.dk)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

MIT Working Papers: "Papers on Language Endangerment and the Maintenance of Linguistic Diversity."
MIT Working Papers in Linguistics is pleased to announce the publication of its 28th volume of Working Papers, "Papers on Language Endangerment and the Maintenance of Linguistic Diversity". This volume, edited by Jonathan David Bobaljik, Rob Pensalfini, and Luciana Storto, grew out of a workshop series

held at MIT in January 1995. The workshop placed a particular emphasis on the thorny question of 'what works in language maintenance?', and in addition to papers presented at the workshop the editors have collected papers from other authors recommended by presenters and a preliminary bibliography drawn from the extensive bibliographies provided by members of this list.

The contents of the volume are:

Introduction (general questions of endangerment and survival)
- Jonathan Bobaljik & Rob Pensalfini

Can Senior Secondary Studies Help to Maintain and Strengthen Australia's Indigenous Languages ?
- Antonio Mercurio and Rob Amery

The Ulwa language wakes up
- Thomas Green

A report on language endangerment in Brazil
- Luciana Storto

Modern Irish: A Case Study in Language Revival Failure
- Andrew Carnie

Explaining and Reversing the Failure of the Irish Language Revival
- Peter Slomanson

Universal grammar and the roots of linguistic diversity
- Ken Hale

Language Endangerment & the Non-indigenous Minority Languages in the UK
- Mahendra K. Verma

Policy Statment: the need for the documentation of linguistic divers=
ity
- Linguistic Society of America

A Preliminary Bibliography on Language Endangerment and Preservation
- Jonathan Bobaljik, Rob Pensalfini &
Luciana Storto

The volume costs US$12 (+postage/handling of $2-$3 surface, $5-$12 air) and can be ordered from MIT Working Papers in linguistics by writing to them at MITWPL, MIT Room 20D-219, Cambridge MA02139, USA or by sending email to MITWPL@MIT.EDU.

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Endangered Language Fund's First Request for Proposals.

Request for Proposals, Endangered Language Fund

The Endangered Language Fund provides grants for language maintenanc=
e
and linguistic field work. The work most likely to be funded is that which

serves the native community and the field of linguistics immediately. Work which has immediate applicability to one group and more distant application = to
the other will also be considered. Publishing subventions are a low priorit= y,
although they will be considered. The language involved must be in danger o= f
disappearing within a generation or two. Endangerment is a continuum, and t= he
location on the continuum is one factor in our funding decisions.

Eligible expenses include travel, tapes, films, consultant fees, etc= .
Grants are normally for one year periods, though supplements may be applied for. We expect grants in this initial round to be less than $2,000 in size.

HOW TO APPLY

There is no form, but the following information should be printed (on one side only) and four copies sent to:

Endangered Language Fund, Inc.
Department of Linguistics
Yale University
New Haven, CT 06520

Applications must be mailed in. No e-mail or fax applications will be accepted.

If you have any questions, please write to the same address or email to:
elf@haskins.yale.edu

REQUIRED INFORMATION:

Please provide the following information for the primary researcher (and other researchers, if any): Name, address, telephone numbers, email address (if any), Social Security number (if U.S. citizen), place and date of birth, present position, education, and native language. State previous experience and/or publications that are relevant.

Beginning on a separate page, please provide a description of the project. This should normally take less than two pages, single spaced. Be detailed about the type of material that is to be collected and/or produced, and the value it will have to the native community (including relatives and descendants who do not speak the language) and to linguistic science. Give = a
brief description of the state of endangerment of the language in question.

On a separate page, prepare an itemized budget that lists expected costs for the project. Estimates are acceptable, but they must be realistic= .
List other sources of support you are currently receiving or expect to

receive and other applications that relate to the current one.
Two letters of support are recommended, but not required.

DEADLINE

Applications must be received by MAY 1st, 1997. Decisions will be delivered by the end of May, 1997.

IF A GRANT IS AWARDED

Before receiving any funds, university-based applicants must show th=
at
they have met with their university's human subjects' committee requirements=
.
Tribal- or other-based applicants must provide equivalent assurance that pro=
per
protocols are being used.
If a grant is made and accepted, the recipient is required to prov=
ide
the Endangered Language Fund with a short formal report of the project and t=
o
provide the Fund with copies of all publications resulting from materials obtained with the assistance of the grant.

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Bat, the Sociolinguistic Journal.

This journal is published by the Euskal Kulturaren Batzarrea (EKB for short or Congress for Basque Culture in English). The first issue came out in 1990 and is the only journal dealing with sociolinguistic matters which appears exclusively in Basque. Nevertheless, there is a synopsis in English for each article.

Bat 20/21: LANGUAGE PLANNING IN CATALONIA AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Isidor Mari
Assistant director of the Language Policy Office of the Catalan Government
Josune Aristondo
Vice-director of the Language Policy Department of the Basque Government
Working Committee on planning of the =ABEuskararen Unibertsoa=BB (Basque Universe) organization

In this dossier, there are three articles on three practical proposals or applications dealing with strategic level planning with the aim of language normalization. The first ones deal with what is being applied

in Catalonia: =ABThe Overall Plan of Language Normalization in Catalonia: a Strategic Framework for Defining and Putting into Practice Language Policies=BB is the title and was written by the assistant director of the Language Policy Office of the Catalan Government, Isidor Mari. The second deals with what is being done in the area of the Basque Country known as the Basque Autonomous Community and is entitled =ABNew Steps towards the Normalization of Basque=BB, written by Josune Aristondo, the vice-director of the Language Policy Department of the Basque Government. The third one deals with what is being proposed for the Basque Country form sociological point of view and is entitled =ABA Proposal for an Overall Plan for Normalization for a Sociological Point of View=BB, prepared by Working Committee of the =ABEuskararen Unibertsoa=BB organization.

ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMES: FORECASTS FOR THE STATE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND AND THE FUTURE

Kike Amonarriz
Member of the SIADECO research team

At the instance of many Basque language schools for adults and in coordination with the EKB, the SIADECO research team has conducted an overall survey of the state of adult Basque literacy programmes today. We published an article about the first chapter of this piece of research in the previous issue. In this issue, however, is a report on the second chapter of said research. The goals of the second chapter of the research mentioned above is to ascertain the level of literacy, to identify linguistic needs, and to ascertain attitudes and value judgements. The results, on the other hand, stress among other things that in future literacy needs will have to be adapted to specialized modules and offers.

A MICROPLANNING PROJECT IN LANGUAGE NORMALIZATION AT THE =ABCLUB DEPORTIVO HERNANI=BB SPORTS CLUB.

J. Inazio Marko
Professor at the University of the Basque Country

This article deals with a field project done on language reform and normalization of the usage of Basque being carried out in a sports club. The article is divided into four chapters: The first places the project within its context. The second reports on the nature of the field project. The third is concerned with the theoretical premises and the fourth details the methodological bases.

=46our issues are published a year and the annual subscription rate is
3,200 pesetas or US$ 23.00 plus postal handling. Payment may be made
by postal money order. Those interested in subscribing should send the
following information to EKB:

=46ull name (name and surname):
Address:
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Postal Code:
Country:
Telephone:

EKB - Euskal Kulturaren Batzarrea (Congress for Basque Culture)

Baleazaleak 12, 1 A. 20011-Donostia
Tel.: + 34 (9)43 466676 Faxa: + 34 (9)43 466894
e-mail: ekb@eusnet.org http://www.eusnet.org/partaide/ekb
EUSKAL HERRIA (Basque Country - EUROPE)

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=46ourth Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium: Sharing Effectiv=
e
Language Renewal Practices.

Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education is pleased
to announce again the Fourth Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages
Symposium to be held at the University's south campus duBois Conference
Center on May 2nd and 3rd, 1997. The Symposium is designed to allow
community, preschool, K-12, college, and university American Indian
language educators and activists through panels, workshops, and papers to
share ideas and materials for teaching American Indian languages.

Presentations dealing with programs of language renewal involving the
Apache, Arapaho, Cherokee, Cree, Deg Xinag (Ingalik Athabascan), Hawaiian,
Hualapai, Keres, Maori, Nahuatl, Navajo, Northern Cheyenne, Tewa, Unangan
(Eastern Aleut), and Yaqui languages have been accepted. Presenters are
coming from New Zealand, Mexico, Canada, and the United States.

Keynote speeches include Dull Knife Memorial College President Dick
Littlebear speaking on "Some Rare and Radical Ideas for Native Language
Preservation," Northern Arizona University Regent's Professor Gina Cantoni
speaking on "Keeping Indigenous Languages Alive: The School's
Responsibility," and Dr. Evangeline Parsons Yazzie, Symposium Co-chair and
Navajo language professor at Northern Arizona University speaking on "The

Power of Navajo Communication."

=46or more information and an e-mail flyer with presentations and a registration form contact:

Jon Reyhner
Coordinator of Bilingual Multicultural Education
Center for Excellence in Education
P.O. Box 5774
Northern Arizona University
=46lagstaff, Arizona 86011-5774
Phone: 520 523 0580
=46AX: 520 523 1929
e-mail: Jon.Reyhner@nau.edu

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HOW TO JOIN TERRALINGUA
Many of you reading this have expressed an interest in Terralingua, but have yet to join. Of course, we hope you'll seize the moment now! There are two ways to join:

By Contributing Money. One option--and it's only an option, not a requirement--is to make a Membership Contribution. Any amount is welcome, but we suggest a minimum of US$10 for a Regular Membership. You can be a Donor Member by contributing US$100, and organizations can join for US$35. Contributions will make you a member through June 1997.

By Contributing Effort. A second option is to join Terralingua by volunteering to do something on behalf of the organization. Like what, you ask?...

*** By translating Terralingua's Statement of Purpose from English into one or more languages.
*** By distributing information on Terralingua to local groups, your circle of friends, your family--to anyone who might be interested. We can provide you with text and/or a master copy of introductory material on Terralingua that you can reproduce and distribute locally.
*** By sending us the names of people or organizations we can contact to further our work.
*** By contributing one or more items to this newsletter.
*** By contributing to the Terralingua Web site.
*** By working on Terralingua committees (as they are formed).

Anything you do along these lines qualifies you for Regular Membership through June 1997. All you have to do is contact us with what you have done or plan to do, and we'll convert your name from "Interested Person" to

"Regular Member" on our list. It's as simple as that!

Special Note to Supporters Outside North America. We have heard from a number of you about how difficult (and outrageously expensive!) it is to send US dollars for a membership contribution. Some of you, through heroic effort, have managed to surmount these obstacles and send contributions anyway, and for your interest and effort we are truly grateful. As far as we can tell, the only relatively inexpensive ways to send contributions internationally are through a credit card or by our opening depository accounts in banks in various regions around the world. At some point down the road we hope Terralingua will be able to use such methods. In the meantime, please don't let these difficulties deter you from joining--just send us a note and we'll enroll you as a Regular Member. We don't want to exclude anyone who wants to join, so let us hear from you!

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THE NEXT NEWSLETTER
Terralingua Newsletter #4 will come out in June 1997. The deadline for items is June 1. Help us make this a real forum for news--let us know what is happening in your area! Send your items to Terralingua at the address below--either regular mail or e-mail is fine.

That's all for now. Thanks, and, as always, best regards to you all!

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Terralingua
Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 122 * Hancock, Michigan 49930-0122 USA
E-mail: gws@mail.portup.com
Web site: http://cougar.ucdavis.edu/nas/terralin/home.html
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and to investigating links between biological and cultural diversity
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Terralingua
Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 122 * Hancock, Michigan 49930-0122 USA
E-mail: gws@mail.portup.com
Web site: http://cougar.ucdavis.edu/nas/terralin/home.html
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Terralingua
Partnerships for Linguistic and Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 122 * Hancock, Michigan 49930-0122 USA
E-mail: gws@mail.portup.com
Web site: http://cougar.ucdavis.edu/nas/terralin/home.html
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