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P.O. Box 90
Cambridge, MA 02138
29 April 1979

Dear Claudia:

I take it by now that you have received a copy of my letter about the Park Proposal, and that perhaps by the time you receive this a letter from you is in the mail to me. I hope that my letter did not make you think that we were not behind you in support for the proposal. To the contrary, we are still interested in helping in any way possible, but wanted to work out a strategy where certain issues-- such as the mining provisions that I discussed in my letter-- could be clarified and could be part of our support efforts here.

Last week, Susan Williams called Oxfam America from Recife about your concern regarding Marlon Brando's visit to Brazil. Yesterday, I talked with John Mohawk, an Iroquois who is editor of Akwesasne Notes in upstate New York. John was the first person to inform me about Brando's trip to Brazil. Several weeks ago, he called and mentioned that Brando was organizing a trip of North American Indians to Brazil under the invitation of one of their contacts in Brazil. At the time, I had mentioned to John that there was a proposal being put together for a Yanomamo Park, but we did not discuss what role Brando could play in this. Nor, did we ask Brando to speak out on the issue when he returns from Brazil.

Right now, I hope that his visit has not caused your group any trouble. As you know, Brando is an important public figure here who has close contacts with Native American people in this country. It seems that if he does consult with your commission when he is in Brazil, he could play a very important role in focusing attention on the Indian situation on his return. I was interested, though, in knowing just what happens when he does come to Brazil, whether you have found it possible to cooperate with him, and whether you think we should contact him for international support assistance on his return to the United States. I am certain that if he or the other Native Americans who accompanied him on the trip spoke out on their return, much publicity for this issue could be generated here in the United States. I wait, though, for your advice on this matter.

John Mohawk (who I deeply respect) and I also discussed a strategy for support once we hear from you and your coworkers in Brazil. John was of the opinion that the problems we expressed about the proposal could be seen in two ways. First, in the short term, any international attention that focuses on the delicate situation of Yanomamo might prove of help in insuring their physical survival in the face of a quite powerful threat. In this sense, we should provide all the support possible for the Park Proposal, despite some serious criticisms of existent Indianist law. At the same time, though, John felt that it was important to point out that the real issue-- in the long run-- was the right of the Yanomamo, and other

(over)

Indian tribes, to exist as groups per se. In this sense, he felt that it was important to point out that Brazilian law does not recognize the ownership rights of the Yanomamo to land and that serious issues concern the rights of the government to exploit Indian subsoil wealth. If we accept this way of thinking about the issue, then the proposal can be accepted and supported, but the point must also be made that-- in the long term-- the struggle must be for the rights of the Yanomamo and other tribes to exclusive rights to their land and self-determination in their culture and way of life. Obviously, all of us know this, but it may be easier for us to say here in North America than for your folks under a much more repressive institutional arrangement in Brazil.

*Mike Scott from Oxfam just called
wrote & told me about a long
letter from Suzanne! - dated Apr. 18*

I have an appointment to discuss these matters with Oxfam America in Boston on Tuesday morning. I have already showed Mike Scott from Oxfam a copy of the proposal, and I plan to talk with him about this strategy of accepting and supporting the proposal, but also expressing concern for the long-term and more intrinsic rights of the Yanomamo. I take it that out of our discussions on Tuesday will come some preliminary strategy for organizing a support effort here in the United States. Again, though, we will follow advice from you and not do anything until we have a go ahead from Brazil.

At the same time, I will again write to Stephen Corry at Survival and Helge Kleiven at IWGIA. We have made plans to do a joint publication of the Ramos/Taylor articles and the translation of the proposal. When I read the proposal, I wrote to Corry and Kleiven telling them to delay the publication until we hear from you about the mineral provisions. Once, I do hear from you (which I hope will be soon), I will recontact IWGIA and Survival to get the materials translated and published as soon as possible. They have asked that I write a short preface to the document, and I am excited about doing this, because it could provide a forum for both raising the short and long-term issues concerning the proposal and protecting of the rights of the Yanomamo.

Obviously, the problems of communication have made this effort extremely difficult. I wish we could have talked about all of this at length, but I am certain that in the long-run everything will work out and be in the best interests of the Yanomamo.

Please write back soon.

Yours, as ever

Sandy

Shelton H. Davis
Director, ARC, Inc.

PS: I should mention that there is also support for the proposal-- when we again hear from you about making it public-- among the Washington Office on Latin America, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and the Indian Law Resources Center in Washington. They are our main contacts for organizing a press conference in Washington, when and if you again communicate us about a possible date.

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