

## **THE RAIZAL POSITION FACING A CROSSROADS & TWO COMMON PREDATORS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

While two states are sharing-up our territory; our People, our expectations, our natural, non-natural renewable and non-renewable resources are overexploited by foreigners. We the Natives of the Archipelago are kidnapped, occupied, and administered by a colonial regime. Under the act of free self-determination, the People of the Archipelago adhered to "La Gran Colombia"; while the State and Government of Colombia have taken-over, supplanted the legitimate owners, assumed the ownership, and used and abused of the People. Today, we the Raizal People are in peril and after finding ourselves as the most endangered species of the whole world, cry for freedom.

### **THE RAIZAL PEOPLE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL IN NEO-COLONIAL TIMES**

The Raizal People are against the wall and without an apparent feasible and viable solution, are now struggling for survival. The Raizal Nation was consolidated before Colombia was erected into a Republic. In fact, our Raizal Nation backed-up the Colombian struggle, a group of men from these territories, under the leadership of General Petion and at the request of Simon Bolivar, traveled all the way from the Caribbean to Boyacá to fight for Colombia's freedom. Today we receive a dagger in the back, from the Nation that we helped to construe and set-up. The Raizal Nation went a step further and became part of the Confederation of Nations later known as "La Gran Colombia." Because of the personal and mean interest of a few, La Gran Colombia was to give way to several independent Nations, including the Raizal.

Because of the disenchantment caused by the systematic ill-treatment of Colombia to the Raizal People from the times of the Independence of Panama and the militarization of our territory by the Colombian Army with the deployment of two regiments of soldiers, one situated on the Hill and the other in the Gough. Because of the treatment we have received from said groups, our People had to begin to open their eyes and to fight-back. This initiative was not the only outrageous attack exercised on our People. The Colombian State & Government in 1912 without our previous consultation, nor consent approved Law 52 in an attempt to legalize her

overseas colony. To seal the outcome in 1928 Colombia, in a criminal act, ceded our Miskito Coast, including Bluefields, and the Corn Islands to Nicaragua. Our Raizal People were now divided and two different nations had started their pursue of extinction of a People, our Raizal People.

The giving-away of our territory did not stop with the Treaty of 1928. In fact it was just the beginning. From 1928 until today more than 600.000 km<sup>2</sup> of our territory have been given-away by Colombia, with the only purpose to assure their sovereignty and ownership of our territory. However they have never been able to secure legitimacy. From 1912 until today we have been excluded and kidnapped in our own territory, displaced, replaced, overpopulated, criminalized, dispossessed, intimidated, and made prisoners on our own territory, through the active deployment of the State policy of segregation & discrimination, exclusion, racism & xenophobia, and cultural, Ethnic, linguistic, economic, social, and political genocide. Since 1928 our territory has been shared-up amongst Six or more predators who are plundering our natural & non-natural, as well as our renewable & non-renewable resources.

### **OUR BIRTH-RIGHTS & OWNERSHIP OF THE ARCHIPELAGO DATE-BACK AND CAN BE TRACED ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE EARLY 1620'S**

We did not settled here just yesterday. Our sovereignty goes all the way back to the arrival of the Puritans who had ventured to seek for a safe place to worship The Almighty. This evident fact is not in dispute; even Colombia alleges that as a free Nation we adhered to La Gran Colombia. Four centuries of possession of the territory had passed and three before the treaty between Colombia & Nicaragua was celebrated, which still continues until today and the one that is first in time is also first due to the rights. Nothing that Colombia has done has ever, ever, consulted nor agreed-upon with the Raizal People, the only legitimate owners of these territories.

Two centuries of conquest & bitter colonization & re-colonization had occurred amongst the European powers to possess America and the Caribbean. Our ancestors as a People were erected around a Calvinist Protestant Spiritual background, a cultural heritage, and the English language. But within these parameters the African Diaspora grew like wild bush, not hidden in the bush; but in the proper faces of the European masters, our African culture that still endures, had sown the seed, the Creole seed, that is and will be here forever. After the British had decided that commercial exchange in the Caribbean & Great Britain, through the Archipelago was no longer profitable, they delivered the territory to their former slaves and took-off to never return. Things were not always jolly good amongst us since the Spaniards would try and insist in occupying our territory, including the Neo-Spaniards, but never succeeded. Fortunately in 1818 our People under the command of General Luis Aury was set free from all Spanish pretensions, intentions, and expectations.

### **THE FREE-PORT WAS CARRIED-OUT AS A FISCAL PARADISE FOR THE OWNERS OF THE BUSINESS**

The Free-Port was carried-out on the basis of a fiscal paradise and has become the strongest strategy to destroy the Raizal People's economy. The owners of the business have enjoyed the exemption of taxes and have gained the position of the new lords of the hotel industry, the

commerce, and the tourist agencies and industry; while the Native People became witnesses of how their lands were taken-away from them, for a few pesos in some cases or fraudulently in the majority.

### **THE IMPOSED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US**

To begin, let me say that language plays a central role in education. Children learn through language-by listening, reading, speaking, and writing. If they begin school in a language they know well-the language they speak at home, often referred to as the mother tongue- they can understand what is being taught and can learn the official or national language used at higher levels of education in their area.

Many countries have innovative educational programs that allow children to start school and develop everyday and scientific concepts in their mother tongue, learn to read in that language and gradually learn the language of wider communication in their area. In this way, the children have two (or more) languages in which to continue their schooling. In addition to providing educational opportunity to children, these programmes help preserve the language and culture of their ethnic groups.

### **WHY MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION?**

The value of mother tongue education has been known for many years. As early as 1953, a UNESCO committee of experts considering questions about language and education found many advantages to mother tongue education: It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (UNESCO, 1953, p,11)

A 1999 UNICEF report agreed with UNESCO. There is ample research showing that students are quicker to learn to read and acquire other academic skills when first taught in their mother tongue. They also learn a second language more quickly than those initially taught to read in an unfamiliar language. (UNICEF, 1999, P. 41)

In its 2003 publication, *Education in a Multilingual World*, UNESCO reiterates the points made in its 1953 report and states that virtually all research since 1953 has served to confirm the earlier arguments in support of mother tongue education programmes. The 2003 report argues forcefully for the use of the mother tongue in primary education. With extensive exposure and high motivation, children often learn to converse fairly easily in a new language. But learning academic language takes much more time. Research demonstrates that the longer a child can learn reading and academic content in his or her mother tongue while learning the second language, the better the chances of success beyond elementary school. In one large-scale study, researchers found a direct link between the amount or duration of mother tongue instruction and student's average percentile rank on national standardized tests after 11 years of schooling Thomas & Collier (1977), Forbes & his Coworkers (1993 & 2006) carried-out, two extensive research projects here in San Andres that arrived at the same conclusions. In other words, the

minority language students who received the most mother tongue instruction in elementary school performed best on standardized test in high school in the national language. In Forbes & his Coworkers studies the Native Raizal out-performed the Native Spanish speakers in every skill and in the three languages involved in the process.

UNESCO was not satisfied just with the information reported since 1953. It went a step further and gathered-up a group of Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural experts in Barcelona, Spain, between June 6 and 9 of 1996, with the purpose of bringing forth the empirical evidence and to provide a conceptual framework in regards to the role of the child's mother tongue in cognitive and academic development (of the learner) coming from and ethnic, indigenous, native, linguistic, and minority groups. The result of the study was conclusive in the sense that the role of the mother tongue in cognitive and academic development in the classroom and beyond. It is fundamental and absolutely necessary, not only for those aspects; but also for the general development and the self-esteem of the child. From the expertise of the intelligentsia a declaration was made as a sequel and triggered-off the UNESCO'S Universal Declaration of Linguistics Rights that basically states that all children, no matter the condition or origin, have the Universal Linguistic Right to receive formal education in their mother tongue before any other regional or national language. With this declaration the right to receive instruction in the mother tongue, anywhere in the world; the linguistic right of every child has been vindicated and has become a mandate of the United Nations. The Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, was adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992.

In our case this has been the whole way around. Since 1926 the Colombian State & Government have imposed a brutal assimilation educational programme on our People in the Archipelago. This situation has forced us to become functional illiterates. Namely, dummies, who repeat at one voice: "Mi mama me ama. Yo amo a mi Mamá." Our educational system is a wreck for our children's cognitive development; but at the same time a total success for the empire. We have not received education from Colombia. What we have received over the ages, until today is simple and pure indoctrination. This form of indoctrination creates another type of slavery, the worst kind, yes the colonization of our precious minds.

### **COLOMBIA DOES NOT DESERVE OUR LOYALTY AS A PEOPLE**

After all that the Colombian State and Government have done to obliterate us as a People and the damages caused, as well as all the grievances inflicted upon us; they still have the guts to demand and expect our loyalty in return. Shame on you Colombia! This is the repeated history of "the chronicle of an announced death". Now, let us get it clear. We do not have a problem with the Colombians as a People but with the regime. So let it be crystal clear that we are not fighting the Colombians nor with the Colombians. We want to leave a very conspicuous evidence of this, what we are struggling-for is our just cause, in a cry for freedom.

The Colombian System, including the Financial sub-system is based on the over-exploitation of human labour which in turn is triggered-off by competitiveness and supply & demand, which in turn is supported on the free market and deregulation. Our System is based on Cooperation, triggered-off by love & sharing with our neighbours. Colombia as a State does not provide or give sufficient confidence to her own citizens. Everyone is located somewhere transitorily, but with the expectation and need of moving-on to somewhere else, the supposed paradise. We are here in

and on our paradise and the Colombians want it for themselves. There is the problem, to be or not to be, to live or to leave our paradise, that is the question. If Colombia does not and cannot provide and give a sense of confidence & security to her own people, imagine, to us who are the problem to possess our paradise in the end. In Colombia, justice and human rights are just and simple, wishful thinking. Whatsoever comes from the Government has never consulted our needs and expectations, but those are the ones that are desperate to get us out of paradise land. The Colombian Government does things with two specific purposes and intentions.

1. To satisfy the ego of those in power.
2. To show the international community of nations that they are carrying-out activities in different areas, including the intimidation of the Native population.

Any organization or business that happens to fail to satisfy the internal needs of its members, in due course will disappear. All empires & kingdoms have a cycle that once infiltrated by corruption, false pride, and the incapacity to accept and correct its errors has followed the same trend. That was the case of Rome, Babylon, Greece, and others, even until today. Colombia has failed, in a very serious way, to meet our expectations, once, twice, thrice, over and over, and over again. Colombia, in synthesis does not deserve our paradise and we cannot give her anymore time.

### **COLOMBIA'S DOUBLE STANDARDS**

The State of Colombia has always played a game of double standards in regards to the Raizal People. 1. Colombia loves our Archipelago; but rejects and detests our People. 2. Colombia loves our beaches but does not want any Raizal, neither on them nor on the seashores. 3. Colombia takes our water, gives it to Spaniards, and then, they sell-it back to us. 4. Colombia imposes her culture and language upon us; while she destroys ours. 5. Colombia over-populates us, and then, forces us to migrate. 6. Colombia occupies our job possibilities while we are left in peril to perish in physical misery. 7. Colombia lives-off of us while she tells the whole world that we are a burden. 8. Colombia closes our temples while the pagans occupy our streets. 9. Colombia makes contracts in Bogota to plant cement on our land without our opinion, nor consent, and then, takes back the contracts money to Mainland. 10. Colombia is devoted to the destruction of our People while announcing to the world how she socializes her projects. It is outrageous that a State like this that confiscates our economic production, decides from Bogota on the present and future of our nation and in return still expects us to adore the Colombian dream, the drugs dream, the dream of a country without rights, without justice. How could you dream of shaping our nationality? We are a humble People but not a stupid one, and remember: History is implacable, it does not condemn; but it does not pardon nor does it forget, either.

The double standard is the daily bread as well as the "false positives." Since 1960 the United Nations approved Resolution 1514 in an attempt to decolonize and free all territories under colonial powers, oblivion, and Armageddon. Colombia as a State was one of the first on the list, supposedly, ready to denounce her existing colonies. 48 years have passed and on the contrary, she has tried to silence the People and to wither their existence through a slow process of fading-away their Ethnic community. Colombia's approval of Resolution 1514 is a mockery to our People and our legitimate rights to self-determination & self-government and just as most Colombian laws, just another salute to the flag.

We cannot forget the types of actions carried-out by the Colombian State during the 1930's and 1940's in order to recruit Raizal youngsters for her Armed Forces. In this case our young men were hunted-down during the dark nights, just like wild animals and taken-away from their homes of our community, in a violent way. They were even taken-out of our Churches for said purpose and without the permission nor approval of the parents, family, nor community. While we have tried since the 1900's until 2000 to share our homes and belongings with the Colombian State, Government and People; the Colombian system has destroyed our social network into pieces, in such a way that some of our People are now suffering from "Stockholm Syndrome". We set-up the Colombian Navy and instructed them how to command their ships, we had fought in their query for independence and later-on in the war with Peru; however, before, over and over, and again they have always paid us with a kick in the rare. Today we are now teaching them English; so they will be able to occupy the few positions we have gained overseas and even at home, and of course this will enable them to negotiate directly in the international underground market, their vast drugs production; while our young men and families pay the price in the ocean and in the jails of the world. Nicaragua "ain't" any better either. Our Raizal People down there in the Corn Islands and Bluefields have gone through the same tough processes as us with that Government and State. Just as us, they have no say. We are both spectators of our own plight. Both the Colombian and Nicaraguan are perverse systems. They are two common and at the same time mutual friends and enemies. Our position is neither Colombia nor Nicaragua from here-on we want our Nation (Country) back. The Almighty is with us and His will be done.

## CONCLUSION

In order to leave certain aspects to the creativity of the audience, let me finish not by stating but by bringing forward some open questions for further reflection:

1. What are the evidences that Colombia has of the sovereign willful annexation of the Raizal People of the Archipelago or is it just a bluff or another false positive?
2. If the great majority of our People were the former slaves who at the supposed time could not read, write, nor sign their names for themselves, how come then, that they could have written a document and plus in a foreign language that they did not understand nor speak?
3. If there was any such annexation, as an act of self-determination, why then is the Colombians surprise when we ask for our Independence? Or is it that self-determination only works in one way?
4. If there was an annexation document, how come, then, that Colombia has not been able to come-up and provide such evidence, putting-it on the table?
5. If Colombia has such a document, why is it, then, that is still giving-away our territory to the first bidder and sharing it with third parties?

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