

Ernesto Salazar

**An Indian Federation  
In Lowland Ecuador**

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**The International Secretariat of IWGIA  
Frederiksholms Kanal 4A  
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AN INDIAN FEDERATION IN LOWLAND ECUADOR

Copenhagen 1977

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The present paper is written especially for the IWGIA Document series.

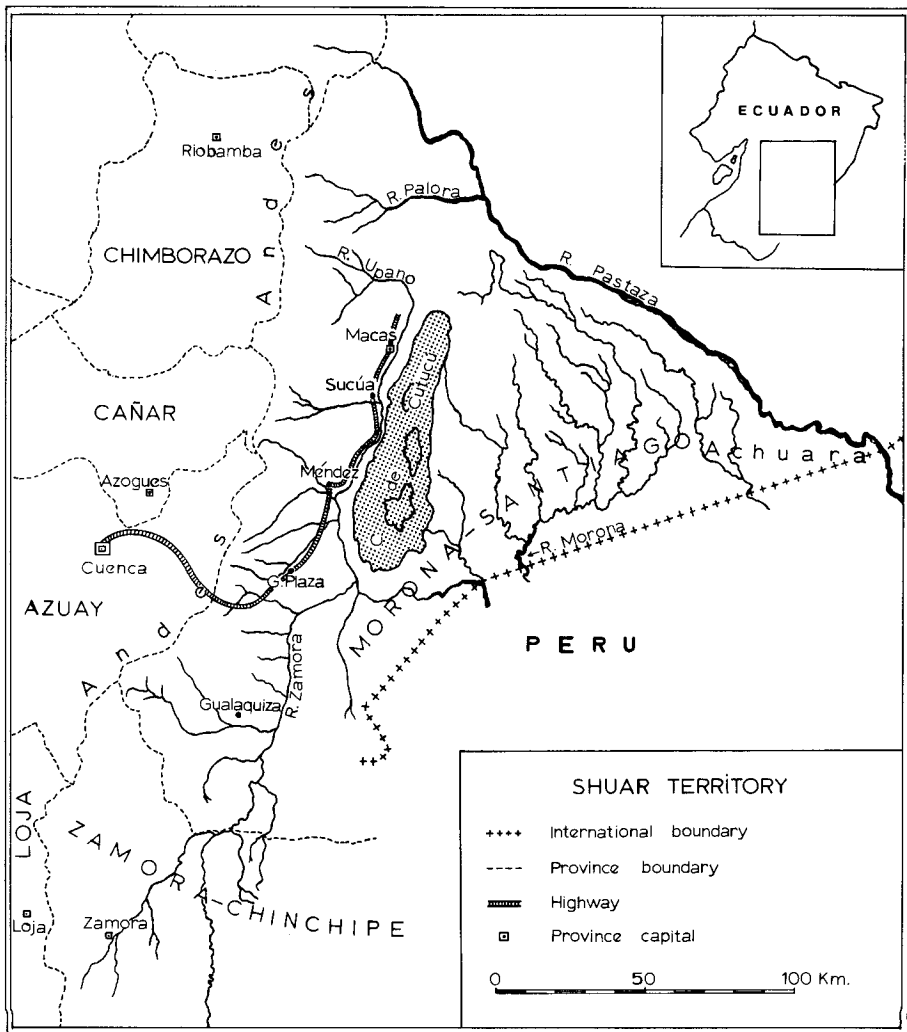
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Copenhagen, June 1977

The International Secretariat of IWGIA

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## AN INDIAN FEDERATION IN LOWLAND ECUADOR

"For fifty years we have walked in only one direction: towards the whites, towards the world on the other side of the Cordillera... until we finally realized that we were dying. Our sons left to work over there, while here we remained poor. Our daughters migrated giving up their status of ladies of our fertile gardens, to adapt to the miserable conditions of maids in an alien home.... (Chicham, December 1974)".

## INTRODUCTION

The history of frontier settlement in South America has been characterized by a rather uneven penetration towards the interior of the continent. At the time of the formation of South American republics, the areas of dense demographic concentration were confined to the Coast-highland strip along most of Western South America and part of the eastern coast of present day Brazil (Butland 1966:96). It was from these areas that the colonization movements of the 19th and 20th centuries first began to spread; eventually occupying the rest of the continent with the exception of the tropical forest. Generally speaking, climatic and geographic factors, as well as historic ones, have prevented a dense colonization of lowland South America by white settlers. However, the pressing demand for raw materials by the industrialized countries has generated in the present century a renewed interest in the lowlands. The rubber boom triggered this interest which has grown steadily as South American countries turned to the forest in search

of solutions for many of their economic problems. At present, almost all countries sharing the Amazon basin are actively engaged in oil exploitation and development programs for the utilization of other resources of the forest. This has brought about an urgent need for building an adequate infrastructure that will facilitate the transportation of goods and raw materials to populated centers for processing and/or exportation. The underlying incentive of this increasing build up of activity is the supposedly vast potential of the Amazon basin for the economic development of countries with access to Amazonia. Yet, lately, nothing has been more controversial than the economic potential of the lowlands. Recent studies (Cf. Meggers 1971, Dickinson 1972, Denevan 1973, Harris 1974) have pointed out that the rain forest is a rather fragile ecosystem whose degradation may, ultimately, turn the forest into a useless savanna unless its exploitation is carefully planned. In any case, the conquest of the forest has already started. The governments of Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil are at present working on several projects of colonization, and an extensive road network program is under way, namely the Carretera Marginal de la Selva and the Transamazonian highway. However, a closer look at the events taking place in the lowlands reveals that South American colonization projects, as a general rule, have ignored an important element in the colonizing process: the aboriginal population. It is apparent that the ever increasing influx of white colonists to the Amazon basin has forced the lowland Indian into a situation of constant retreat into the forest as colonists arrive and take possession of Indian lands. At present, this is the best strategy available to the lowland Indian for those who have stayed to defend their lands have either been exterminated or "integrated" into the white civilization. It is evident, however, that in the context of colonization in South America the term "integration" masks another painful reality, that



is, the exploitation of the lowland Indian and the negation of his culture.

Faced with the problem of the vanishing Indian, several international organizations have been established in support of Amazonian Indian rights (for a list of organizations see: Indigena 1974:63). Likewise, two international symposia (Paris 1970, Barbados 1971) have recently been held to denounce the ethnocide perpetrated by western civilization on Indian groups (Grunberg 1972, Jaulin 1972a,b). Ethnocide, and even genocide, have been a common feature of colonization in South America. Regarding the latter, we have only to remember the activities of the S.P.I. in Brazil, the slave raids on Guayaki Indians in Paraguay, and the military intervention against the Guahibo Indians in Colombia, to cite the most publicized cases. Although activities of this type are at present avoided by South American countries for their international repercussions, relatively little has been done for the safeguard of aboriginal cultures. A case in point is Ecuador where the situation of the lowland Indian has become critical because the government has not developed a specific policy for the protection of aboriginal groups. It is apparent that, at the present time, such a policy is badly needed if we consider that the discovery and exploitation of oil in the Oriente have produced in the past ten years a great influx of colonists, particularly to the northern part of the lowlands. As a result, government sponsored projects of colonization are now under way in order to resettle both whites and highland Indians in the new promised land. Population statistics clearly reflect the magnitude of the migration rate. According to the census of 1950, the population of the Ecuadorian Oriente was 55,131 inhabitants, composed in its majority by native Indians (Fuentes Roldán 1959:277). However, the population estimate for 1972 was 130,899 inhabitants (Terán 1972:256), the increase being attributed more to migration than to demographic growth of the aboriginal

population. The white invasion, coupled with the nature of the Ecuadorian colonizing process which is clearly biased towards the settlers, have created an open conflict between the lowland Indian and the colonist, a conflict that will remain unsolved as long as the government ignores the rights of the native population. Considering the gravity of the present situation, it is surprising that the anthropological literature dealing with interethnic contact in lowland Ecuador is rather scarce and often lacking objectivity (for an annotated bibliography see: Robinson 1972c). There is good indication, however, that research is now taking the right direction towards the understanding of the factors involved in the conflict (Cf. for instance Robinson 1972a, Whitten 1976). The present report dealing with the interethnic situation in the southern lowlands is intended to make a contribution along this line of inquiry.

The information gathered in 1975 during my visit to the Upano river valley (Morona Santiago province) reveals that the Shuar Indians (Jivaro) are very concerned about the ever growing white colonization that is seriously threatening the existence of their culture. The Shuar are known to have offered in the past a relatively successful resistance to white penetration, but since the beginning of the present century they have undergone strong acculturation through missionaries and colonists. Confronted with a future that may only bring "integration" into the national society, the Shuar have adopted new strategies in order to counteract the advance of the colonization frontier. These strategies have found their best expression in the establishment of the Shuar Federation, which has been functioning since 1964. This appears to be a rather unexpected move on the part of the Shuar considering the independence and even hostility among different groups, that have characterized Shuar social structure. In any case, the Federation has shown that the Shuar are capable of great achievements despite the discrimination they are faced with

in contemporary Ecuador.

It is the purpose of this document to describe the framework of the Shuar Federation and to analyze its meaning in the context of colonization in lowland Ecuador. Particular attention will be given to the factors involved in its formation as well as to the possible explanation for the adoption of an administrative system that clearly differs from the traditional social organization of the Shuar.

## THE SHUAR

The Shuar live in the southern lowlands of Ecuador in a roughly triangular territory delimited by the Pastaza River, the Ecuadorian-Peruvian boundary, and the Andean Cordillera. Two tribes occupy this territory: the Untsuri Shuar, who live in the Upano and Zamora River valleys, the Cordillera de Cutucu, and part of the forest beyond it; and the Achuara Shuar, who inhabit the easternmost corner of Shuar territory, roughly west of the Pangui River, and across the border into Peru (See map).

Most of the existing literature on the Shuar refers to the Untsuri Shuar, more commonly known as Jivaro or Jibaro. The origin of the latter term is unknown. Corominas (1954) has suggested that it may be an Antillan term meaning hick, rustic, montagnard, applied since the 18th century to the peasant population of the Greater Antilles and the Caribbean Coast (present day Puerto Rico peasants are still called "jibaro"). Corominas states that the first written record of the term jibaro appears in the Greater Antilles in 1752, and argues that it was subsequently applied to the Ecuadorian tribe. Actually, the term was already in use in the 17th century as shown by the accounts of Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries (Rivet 1907:333). At best, it seems that the term jibaro originated in lowland Ecuador, for it appears for the first time in Benavente's own account (dated 1550) of his unsuccessful expedition (Jiménez de la Espada 1965,3:174). Be it as it may, the term is still used with derogatory connotations in present day Ecuador, and for understandable reasons "Jivaro"

Indians have rejected it, requesting instead to be called "Shuar", which is the name they use to refer to themselves. The term Shuar (or the hispanized Shuara) means "people" and theoretically refers to the Indian population south of the Pastaza River, including the Achuara tribe. In practice, however, it is only applied to the Untsuri Shuar or Jivaro proper who officially introduced the term in 1964 with the foundation of the Shuar Federation. Consequently, I will use the term Shuar in this restricted sense for the remainder of this document.

There are discrepancies with regard to the size of the Shuar population, although the best estimate seems to be about 21,600 individuals (Burbano et al. in Robinson 1972a:138). Harner (1973) has distinguished two major groups, Western and Eastern Shuar. The first group, which occupies the Upano and Zamora River valleys, has been in contact with whites, although in a discontinuous manner, practically since the expedition of Hernando de Benavente in 1549. This group has undergone extensive acculturation particularly since the arrival of the Salesian missionaries. The Shuar living on the Upper Zamora river valley are at present under the influence of the Franciscan mission.

The Interior or Eastern Shuar live in the region between the Sierra de Cutucú, which still constitutes a barrier to penetration by colonists, and the Panguí River where the Achuara territory begins. Although the Salesian mission is already established among the Eastern Shuar, they are still less acculturated than their "western" counterparts. The most recent ethnographic field work on the Shuar was carried out in this group in the late 50's and 60's by Michael Harner (1968, 1973).

## THE COLONIZATION FRONTIER IN SHUAR TERRITORY

The history of the Shuar prior to the Spanish conquest is unknown. For one thing, no archaeological investigations have been carried out in the southern lowlands to determine when the Shuar arrived to this region and what kind of relationships they engaged in with neighboring Indian groups. However, a limited contact with highland Indians, particularly Inca, is suggested by occasional finds of highland pottery and polished stone axes in Shuar territory. Judging from the scanty information on this matter in Spanish chronicles, it appears that contacts were of a rather hostile nature. Highland Cañari Indians, for instance, had good reasons to be enemies with the Shuar after being pushed out of the Loja province by a Shuar group known in the chronicles as Palta (Murra 1946:800). Furthermore, Friar Domingo de los Angeles has reported in 1582 (Jiménez de la Espada 1965,2:270) that before the Spanish conquest, the Cañari often engaged in hostilities with the Shuar over women and also over the control of salt mines whose location is unknown at present. These hostile situations are quite understandable in light of the fact that the Cañari had also established several settlements on the eastern slopes of the Andes, thus infiltrating Shuar territory. One of these settlements was Arocxapa, probably located in the valley of the Rio Cuyes, a tributary of the Zamora River. Ekstrom (1975) has pointed out that in pre-Contact times the Cuyes valley was extensively used by highland Indians for the extraction of placer gold. There are indications that the Shuar

resented the Cañari presence in their territory, for Ekstrom (1975:31) has found along the Cuyes valley a series of prehispanic sites which "appear to be fortified from attack down valley". Arocxapa was eventually renamed San Bartolomé and became an encomienda under Spanish rule.

On the other hand, the Ecuadorian historian González Suárez (in Rivet 1907:339) has reported a short term alliance of the Upano River Shuar and the Cañari against the invading army of Tupac Yupanqui Inca. According to the same source, the first Inca penetration into Shuar territory was undertaken by Huayna Capac (Tupac Yupanqui's son) who reached the Chinchipe River basin. It is said that the Shuar resistance was so great that the Inca army was forced to retreat to the highlands and Huayna Capac supposedly hid his failure by stating that the Shuar were not worthy of being his subjects.

The decade that followed the conquest of Peru (1534) saw the subdivision of the Inca empire into new administrative units subsequently entrusted to high ranking conquistadors as reward for their military services. The distribution of the highlands was accomplished rather quickly, so that by 1540 many loyal servers of the Spanish king found themselves landless and with no place to go. As a result, a number of Spaniards eyed as an alternative the conquest of the lowlands.

The first white penetration into Shuar territory took place in 1540, and was carried out by Rodrigo Núñez de Bonilla by order of Francisco Pizarro. Very little was accomplished by this expedition except securing Núñez de Bonilla's rights as conqueror of the region. It should be noted, however, that Spaniards were engaged at this time in the infamous Guerras Civiles and during this period conquest rights were often questioned or disregarded (Jiménez de la Espada 1965,3:187). In fact, just after Núñez de Bonilla's journey, two more expeditions were carried out again without success. In any case, it

appears that these expeditions produced in the long run, if anything, considerable geographic information about this lowland region which eventually became known as the Province of Macas. This province was finally awarded to Hernando de Benavente who entered the region in 1549. Benavente explored the land along the Upano River but was unable to establish peaceful contacts with the Shuar, who instead forced him to retreat back to the highlands. Benavente attempted another penetration the same year further South through the Rio Cuyes valley. In this region he met Alonso de Mercadillo and eventually joined him in the foundation of the town of Zamora which became an important though ephemeral gold mining center.

Another expedition to the lowlands was led by Juan de Salinas Loyola who left Loja in 1557 heading East across the Andes and the Cordillera del Cóndor to the Santiago, Marañon and Ucayali rivers. All this territory was eventually annexed to the Spanish Crown possessions under the name of Province of Yaguarzongo and the viceroy of Peru appointed Salinas Loyola the first governor. Four towns were founded during this journey, two of which (Valladolid and Loyola) were located in Shuar territory. Salinas Loyola set limits to their jurisdiction and appointed approximately 30 encomenderos to each town. However, these towns did not succeed in attracting new settlers, due to their isolated location in the forest. On the contrary, population decreased despite Salinas Loyola's efforts to prevent it in order to consolidate the conquest of his province.

Since Hernando de Benavente never performed his functions as governor, the Macas province remained for a while as a no man's land, until Salinas Loyola claimed it to be within the boundaries of the Yaguarzongo province. To this effect he sent several Spaniards at different times to "people" the region. Eventually, several towns were founded, namely Logroño de los Caballeros, Nuestra Señora del Rosario, Sevilla del Oro, and Mendoza.



Life in Spanish settlements was centered around gold mining, which seems to have been the real incentive of colonization. Gold mining operated under the mita system. At Loyola for instance, out of 5 male Indians 1 was chosen for gold extraction either from mines or rivers. Age of mita workers ranged between 14 and 25 years, and work was carried out for 7 consecutive months (Aldrete 1582, in Jiménez de la Espada 1965,3:150). The subjected Shuar population was distributed in encomiendas and, consequently, had to pay tribute to the encomenderos either in crops or with mita labor. Spaniards brought to some settlements pigs, sheep, goats and cows, but cattle raising was minimal. Agriculture was based on tropical as well as highland crops, and a surplus had to be produced by the Shuar in order to feed encomenderos and doctrineros (missionaries). Spaniards do not seem to have been very fond of tropical crops, for they usually forced the Shuar to tend special plots of corn, beans, and even wheat for exclusive Spanish consumption. Food was usually produced to satisfy local needs, although occasionally shortages occurred, particularly in gold mines. In this case, additional food was brought from other settlements of the region.

Spaniards often complained about Shuar behavior, their lack of motivation for work, their reluctance to being christianized, and their unrest for independence, which in the long run became real problems for the conquistadors. Generally speaking, the Spanish colonization of Shuar territory never achieved a solid hold on the native population. Indian uprisings occurred frequently, weakening the Spanish population otherwise unable to keep its number for lack of a steady flow of colonists from the highlands. Briefly, it can be said that geographic isolation and the resistance of the native population were the basic factors in the failure of Spanish colonization in the lowlands. Furthermore, the exploitation of the Shuar seems to have reached a critical point in 1599 when, according to

the Ecuadorian historian Juan de Velasco (quoted in Harner 1973:18ff.), the Shuar destroyed the Spanish towns of Logroño and Sevilla del Oro. Although the attack was probably of much smaller magnitude than the one described by Velasco, Spaniards do seem to have abandoned these settlements by the end of the 16th century. A few, however, remained at Sevilla del Oro, which became known as Macas and was practically the only white settlement in Shuar territory during the 17th and 18th centuries. Harner (1973:27) has pointed out that the Shuar launched unsuccessfully several attacks against Macas which, despite its isolation, subsisted through this period. Macabeos had the advantage of possessing firearms which enabled them to resist the Shuar, although not without being forced to relocate the town several times.

A few military expeditions were carried out into Shuar territory during the 17th century, but none of them were successful at conquering the Shuar. More numerous, however, were the religious expeditions which for more than a century sought to establish mission centers in the southern lowlands of Ecuador. Rivet (1907), who has discussed this period in detail, indicates that the missionary advance into Shuar territory took place from two fronts: on the West, it was carried out by Dominican and Franciscan missionaries across the Andes; and on the Southeast, by Jesuit missionaries travelling up river from their flourishing missions on the Peruvian forest. The expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish colonies in the 18th century severely hampered this religious crusade, and freedom shone for the first time in Shuar territory. This is also true for the first decades of the 19th century during which the lowlands remained virtually abandoned while the wars of independence were fought in Coastal and Highland Ecuador.

Meanwhile, the town of Macas, which was linked by trail to the highland town of Riobamba, became the only center of western manufactured goods for the Shuar who, gradually, engaged in trade relation-

ships with whites. By the second half of the 19th century trade had become steady, the Shuar exchanging pigs, salt, chickens, blowguns and shrunken heads for guns, axes, ammunitions and clothing (Harner 1973:29, Oberem 1974:352). Missionaries also came back with new hopes to Shuar territory. In 1870, the Jesuits established themselves in Macas and Gualaquiza, but failed to christianize the Shuar and abandoned the missions two years later. Subsequently, in 1887, the Dominican Order founded at Macas a mission center which lasted about ten years, but ended in failure also. By this time, gatherers of cinchona bark and rubber engaged in small trade with the Shuar, but no white settlement was established.

In retrospect, the Shuar seem to emerge at the end of the 19th century with a cultural heritage relatively untouched. And yet, some religious and economic features of western civilization had already been adopted, suggesting that Shuar society was in the path of acculturation. Rivet (1908:235), for instance, has reported in the first decade of the 20th century that Christian myths introduced by the Jesuits in the 18th century had greatly altered original Shuar mythology, to the point that it was often difficult to dissociate Shuar elements from Christian ones. Furthermore, it now appears that the normalization of trade with whites during the 19th century was only the prelude to an increasing economic dependence that eventually led the Shuar to the extensive acculturation which they underwent in the 20th century.

The major events that have directly affected Shuar society in the present century are the permanent establishment of missionary Orders and the formation of a frontier system in Shuar territory. Given the role that these events have played in bringing about culture change to the native population of the lowlands, it seems appropriate to deal with them in greater detail in order to understand the present situation of the Shuar.

In 1893, the Holy See established and gave to the Salesian Order the Vicariat of Mendez, which includes both Western and Eastern Shuar territory. At the beginning, missionary work was greatly hampered by several factors such as the climatic conditions of the lowlands, the lack of roads of penetration, and particularly the open hostility of the Shuar towards the presence of the Salesian missionaries. The situation became even more critical as a result of the friction between the Ecuadorian Church and President Alfaro's anti-clerical administration, which eventually was resolved with the expulsion in 1895 of several religious Orders including the Salesians. Although some missionaries were allowed to stay in the lowlands, the government banned immigration of new foreign clergymen. Father Barrueco (1968:23), the historian of the Salesian Mission, has reported that under the circumstances the Salesian Order, which has its home base in Italy, had to "smuggle" missionaries into the country, often appearing at the Immigration Office as farmers or as husband and wife. Actually, it was after Alfaro's administration that the Salesian Mission expanded vigorously into Shuar territory. Statistics for the late 60's indicate the existence of 13 mission centers and 22 elementary schools under direct control of the Salesians (Barrueco 1968). Moreover, this religious Order has also been entrusted with the administration of High Schools, Technical Schools and Hospitals that the Ecuadorian government has established on the colonization frontier to provide assistance to both colonists and native population. As a result of these activities, the Salesian Order has gradually gained political power to constitute, at present, the most influential institution in the lowlands.

The impact of the Salesian Mission on Shuar culture is still to be studied. However, it is apparent that the acceptance of Catholic religion has generated profound changes in the social structure of the Shuar. Looking from a historical perspective it can be said that

the activities of the Salesian Mission has been characterized by a paternalistic attitude and the negation of Shuar culture values. The missionaries became convinced that without their help there could be no salvation for the Shuar because, as Father Barrueco (1968:44) put it, "the Indian mind suffers of a lack of sight for the future, of character and decision to face problems...". In general terms, two strategies have dominated the expansion and success of the Salesian Mission in Shuar territory. The first is the uprooting of Shuar children from their families in order to group them in boarding schools under direct control of the missionaries. The second is the concentration of the sparse population in villages generally located around the Mission center. These strategies are by no means a Salesian innovation, but rather the standard procedure of missionaries in order to achieve effective control over the native population.

The Salesians' rationale for the establishment of boarding schools was the supposedly "low moral level" that they saw in Shuar families, which made the separation of children from their parents not only desirable but necessary (Barrueco 1968:42). In the boarding school, Shuar children (boys and girls) grow up in a communal atmosphere learning the values of Catholic religion and western civilization. The acculturation process is long and intensive, for Shuar children do not leave the boarding school until they are old enough to choose a partner for marriage, which usually is a school mate. By this time the young Shuar is acculturated enough to desire a permanent home near the mission center. Statistics for the late 60's (Barrueco 1968:57) show that the Salesian Mission was supporting 20 boarding schools with a total of 1,880 Shuar children representing approximately 12% of the population controlled by the Salesians. I have not been able to gather information regarding the position adopted by the recently founded Shuar Federation as far as the boarding school is concerned. However, it can be said that its role is expected to

become less important, although it is unlikely that it will disappear for reasons that I will discuss later in this document.

A small group of approximately 2,000 Shuar living on the Upper Zamora River valley is under the influence of Franciscan missionaries. The so called Vicariat of Zamora, given to the Franciscan Order at the end of the 19th century, has been somewhat less successful than the Vicariat of Mendez. Driven out several times by the Upper Zamora Shuar, the Franciscan missionaries could not establish themselves permanently until 1951. The strategies adopted for the acculturation of the Shuar are similar to those adopted by the Salesians. Likewise, the Ecuadorian government finances several facilities such as schools and hospitals which are under control of the Franciscan Mission. According to a report published in the late 50's, there were 4 Franciscan mission centers and 5 boarding schools sheltering 175 Shuar children (Fuentes Roldán 1959:286). Galarza Zavala (1973) has reported

that the living conditions of the Upper Zamora Shuar are more precarious than those of the Shuar controlled by the Salesians. In fact, it appears that the exploitation of the Shuar by the Franciscans has generated deep resentment in the native population towards the missionaries. This is somewhat less apparent among the Shuar of the Vicariat of Mendez who hold a rather high esteem for the Salesians. In any case, a fact that can not be overlooked at this point is that the religious Mission, in general, has degenerated from a Christian enterprise into an economic one. Both Salesian and Franciscan Orders own haciendas in the lowlands exploited with Shuar labor. In fact, young Shuar and even children from the boarding schools work for the Mission in agriculture and cattle raising in exchange for education and shelter. Although the government supports the Missionary Orders working in the lowlands, there seems to be little control over expenditures. As a consequence, Missions grow with state funds and Indian labor.

Another major event that is directly responsible for the present situation of the Shuar is the wave of colonists that invariably follows the missionary advance. Highlanders have been pouring into the lowlands all through the 20th century, although the bulk of migration has been more apparent in the past 25 years, this time encouraged by the government. Most colonists have migrated on their own initiative (spontaneous colonization) searching for the prosperous way of life they have not been able to achieve in the highlands. In this way, towns such as Gualaquiza, General Plaza, Mendez, and Sucúa were established in the lowlands, constituting at present the colonization frontier in Shuar territory. Based on the 1972 population estimate (Teran 1972:248) for the two provinces that constitute Shuar territory (Morona Santiago, and Zamora Chinchipe), it can be said that the colonist population has reached at present about 42,000 individuals. This figure indicates a considerable increase as compared with the 1959 statistics which show the presence of 30,787 colonists in the same region (Costales 1961:279).

The area of colonization has been mostly confined to the strip between the Eastern Cordillera and the fluvial network composed by the Upano, Namangoza, and Zamora rivers. However, the present construction of bridges will soon overcome the fluvial barrier, thus opening the rest of Shuar land to colonization.

The official involvement of the Ecuadorian government with colonization of the southern lowlands started in the early 60's with a large scale project designed to provide assistance to white settlers who have migrated as part of the spontaneous colonization. The task was assigned to the CREA (Centro de Reconversión Económica del Azuay, Cañar y Morona Santiago), a highland institution with its seat in the city of Cuenca. The so called "Upano Project" managed by the CREA included infrastructure works (bridges, roads, etc.) as well as other public services such as sanitation, education, technical assistance,

administration of justice and legalization of property. An unpaved road, which incidentally is also part of the Carretera Marginal de la Selva, links at present the frontier towns mentioned above to the highland city of Cuenca. Likewise, the construction of secondary roads to smaller towns is now under way. According to CREA statistics, the spontaneous colonization has taken approximately 250,000 Has. of land distributed to about 8,000 families of colonists (Martinez 1972). Although the Ecuadorian government has repeatedly emphasized the economic potential of the Oriente for the future of the country, there is at present some question regarding the actual contribution of colonization projects in terms of improving the national economy. While it is certain that the highlands are suffering from population pressure, it appears that the colonization of the Oriente can not alleviate the immediate economic needs of the country, at least under the present conditions. In this regard, Smith (1971:294) has pointed out that in the Coastal region there is still abundant land available, the colonization of which would be more advantageous to the country, due to its more accessible location for both national and international markets. Likewise, Bromley (1972:293) has suggested that Ecuador should give priority to agricultural intensification and colonization of the Coastal region. As of now, the colonization of the Oriente can be said to be serving political purposes only. For one thing, it has become the substitute for a land reform that has failed to break up the large estates of the Coast and the Highlands (Bromley 1972:292). Furthermore, it is being used as a means of asserting Ecuador's sovereignty in the lowlands; a growing concern of this country resulting from the loss of territory to Peru in the aftermath of the 1941 war.

In any case, colonization is expected to increase, now with full support of the government. In fact, the activities of the CREA are programmed along this line. A new project of "semi-directed"



colonization is at present under way in order to resettle 3,000 highland Indian families in 121,000 Has. of land located between the Upano and Palora rivers. The aim of the Upano-Palora project is to alleviate the demographic pressure and poverty of the highland provinces of Azuay and Cañar. According to Ecuador's leading newspaper (El Comercio, June 8, 1975), 20,120 Has. of land have already been distributed to 350 families (1,430 individuals) in this six-year old project, which means that at the present rate of migration the total area may be colonized in about 30 years. Two factors seem to prevent a rapid colonization of the area of the Upano-Palora project. The first is the remoteness of the settlement area, and the second the reluctance of the highland Indian to move permanently to the lowlands. A CREA official has informed me that about 60% of colonists return to the highlands for reasons of a different nature, but particularly because of their inability to adapt to the lowland environment. However, this situation does not seem to have affected CREA's program of colonization. In fact, it has already prepared the "Morona" project designed to resettle 1,000 highland Indian families in 156,000 Has. of land located in the Morona river region adjacent to the Peruvian border (CREA 1974).

The ever increasing advance of the colonization frontier has become a serious threat to the interests of the Shuar population. It is apparent that the acculturation brought about by continuous contact with colonists has already produced profound changes in Shuar culture. Furthermore, the invasion of Indian lands coupled with CREA's open bias towards the colonists are gradually reducing the vital space of the Shuar. However, they are reluctant to become landless peasants, and in order to protect their rights they have formed a Federation which, if successful, will in the long run allow them to keep their land and their culture.

## THE SHUAR FEDERATION

In order to understand the emergence of the Shuar Federation it is necessary to consider some of the developments on the colonization frontier that have favored the movement towards unification among the Shuar. It should be stated from the outset that the Salesian Mission planned and carried out the establishment of the Federation to counteract the continuous advance of colonization. The reasons for such a move on the part of the missionaries seem to be of an economic and religious nature. Galarza Zavala (1973:35) has pointed out that colonization has generated a hostile attitude between the colonists and the Shuar, which would have led to extermination or to retreat of the Shuar into the forest. This situation threatened the Mission in the sense that in either case it would have been deprived of converts and labor for the haciendas. As a result, the missionaries took side with the Shuar against the colonists, who indeed have often accused the Salesian Fathers of "obstructing the progress of the country" by preventing them from penetrating Shuar reservations. Along this line, it could be said that the Federation emerged as the culmination of a series of attempts on the part of the missionaries to protect the Shuar from the colonists. The reaction on the colonization frontier to the establishment of the Federation was, as could be expected, negative and even violent. As a result, the Salesian Mission lost influence among a number of colonists, who incidentally are held responsible for the unresolved fire that burned down one of the Mission buildings at Sucúa in 1969. Under

the circumstances, the Mission has opted to deny its participation in the establishment of the Federation, much to the satisfaction of the Shuar who like to think it was their own initiative.

A factor that possibly favored the emergence of the Federation may have been the changes operating in the structure of missionary work. Young missionaries have realized that the prevailing framework of the indoctrination process is ethnocentric and, operationally, traumatic to the native population. The Second National Congress of Missions held in Quito in 1973 was openly critical of the classic procedures of evangelization and stressed the need for a policy oriented towards the safeguard of aboriginal cultures (Congreso Nacional 1973). In fact, it seems that at the present time the Mission has arrived at a turning point where the perpetuation of archaic schemes would be a self destructive maneuver. Consequently, the "new" Mission is now advocating that Christian religion must adapt to the cultural values of the native population. Although the extent to which this could be achieved without destroying the aboriginal culture is at present difficult to assess, it is apparent that this strategy could in the long run benefit both the missionary and the native. At best, missionary teachings will be more readily accepted by the aborigines who, in turn, will be able to keep their cultural identity. It would be premature to speculate on the consequences of this new missionary strategy on the Shuar population. In any case, I suspect that the reaction process that is presently taking place among the Shuar may be related in part to this new attitude. It can be said that the last 15 years have witnessed the awakening of Shuar identity. After half a century of white novelty, when imitation of white's behavior and dress was the primary concern of the Shuar, a traditionalist movement encouraged by the Federation is finally taking shape.

According to the information gathered during my visit to the

Upano river valley, the first move towards unification started in the early 60's in the town of Sucúa, apparently under Salesian auspices. Shuar families living around Sucúa decided to join efforts by establishing small administrative units called Centros. These Centros, however, were largely autonomous and the need to coordinate their activities led to the creation of the so called Asociación de Sucúa, which was recognized by the government in 1962. At the same time informative meetings were held in other Shuar communities and, eventually, new Centros and Asociaciones were established in a great portion of Shuar territory. The success of this movement brought about the need for the formation of a higher level administrative unit that would control and coordinate the activities of all Shuar Asociaciones. Thus, the Federation was born.

The Shuar Federation was officially established in January 1964 as an autonomous organization for the social, economic and moral improvement of its members, and as a coordinating institution for colonization projects undertaken by the government (Federación 1974:3). In October of the same year the government approved the Federation statutes and recognized it officially.

The basic administrative unit of the Federation is the Centro which is constituted only by those individuals who have either signed its Constitution Act, or applied subsequently for membership. An average Centro is composed of 25 to 30 Shuar families, most of them related by marriage alliances. An important action in the establishment of a Centro is to seek legal recognition from the Ministerio de Previsión Social in order for the Centro to function within Ecuadorian law. Only with official recognition would the Centro be granted a territory of variable size, according to the number of families it includes. These features show that the Shuar Centro represents a clear departure from the traditional concept of Shuar community as defined by Harner (1973:77):

"The interior Jivaro [Shuar] "community" is a neighborhood of widely distributed households in which membership is not formally or usually very clearly defined and in which the abundance of land is accompanied by an absence of definitions or claims of territoriality".

In any case, a link to the traditional neighborhood concept is still apparent in the distribution of households within a Shuar Centro. In fact, a Centro does not constitute a village, for its population is scattered following the traditional settlement pattern of the Shuar. However, the structure of the Centro seems to be designed with the specific purpose of giving the Shuar more sense of community than the traditional neighborhood. Several features suggest that this may be the case. In the first place, all Centros have a plaza with some houses built around it, namely the school, the chapel, the health center (actually only a post for first aid), and the teacher's house. A few nearby houses may be inhabited permanently by Shuar families, but in general, it can be said that the plaza and its surroundings serve "communal" purposes. The plaza is used as a playground by the children attending school and, periodically, as a gathering place for religious and social activities of the adult population.

In the second place, each Centro is managed by a Council elected every two years by a General Assembly composed of all members of the Centro. The maximum authority of the Centro is the Sindico, who works closely with the Council in programs of social and economic development. In his position as leader of the community, the Sindico has to be aware of the problems and needs of his Centro which are periodically reported to the Salesian mission center and higher officials of the Federation.

According to the preceding discussion, and in order to stress the contrast with the traditional neighborhood as well as the change operating in the Shuar concept of community, I will define a Centro

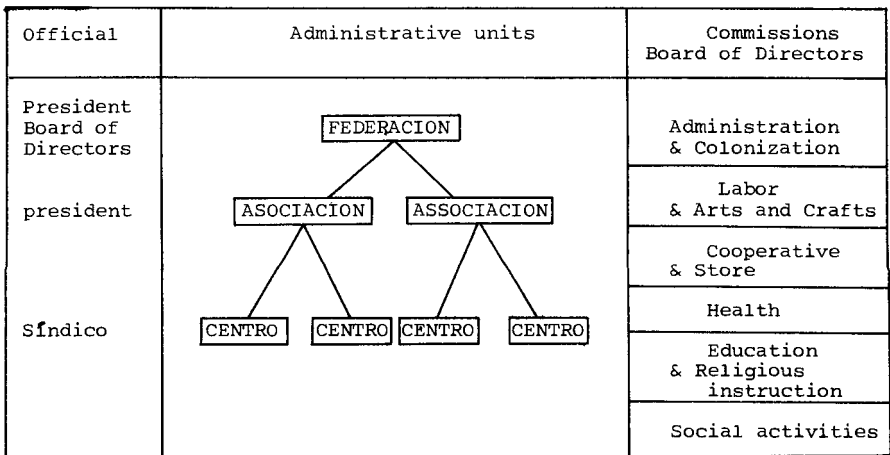
in the following terms: A political and administrative unit with a delimited territory, composed of a population with membership formally defined, and established under the authority of an elected Council for the socio-economic development of its members.

Since by its nature the Centro is designed to meet the needs of its members only, there seems to be an implicit risk of isolationism which is counter to the aims of the Federation. Consequently, in order to coordinate activities and to favor cooperation among the Shuar, all Centros have been clustered into geographically wider administrative units called Asociaciones. The number of Centros grouped into one Asociación varies from 2 to 15, with an average of 8 Centros per Asociación. This latter unit is managed by a president who usually lives in one of the mission centers located in his jurisdiction. The function of the president is primarily to see that the rules and policies issued by the Federation are met by the Centros under his authority. This is accomplished by periodic visits to each Centro, generally every three months. During these visits the president holds meetings with the Shuar community or the Council, gives technical assistance on legal matters such as property titles to the land, and gathers statistical data on population, cattle and land. He also receives information on needs and complaints of the Centro, all of which are later reported to the Federation and the mission center (Barrueco 1968:66). Topping this hierarchy of administrative units is the Federación, which coordinates the work of all Asociaciones in Shuar territory.

The legislative organism of the Federation is the General Assembly which consists of 3 delegates for each Asociación, plus 1 delegate for every Centro. The General Assembly meets once a year in Sucúa to review the activities of the preceding year, elect the President of the Federation and members of the Board of Directors, and set new policies, if necessary, for the coming year. The management

of the Federation is under the direct responsibility of the Board of Directors, which consists of 8 members including the President and Vice-president of the Federation, all of whom are elected for a two year period. In order to ensure efficiency in the managing process, each member of the Board of Directors is assigned a particular commission such as colonization, health, education, etc. (See diagram). Matters of a localized nature that do not affect the Federation as a whole may be resolved within the Asociacion by its president, or within the Centro by its Síndico, according to their own statutes. Otherwise, most activities are managed from, or take place in Sucua where the Federation owns a modern building equipped with radio station, a small library, and auditoriums for meetings and other social events.

DIAGRAM OF THE SHUAR FEDERATION



At present, the Shuar Federation counts 17,500 members distributed in 13 Asociaciones and 108 Centros. [A year after my field work, the Instituto Indigenista Americano (1976:414) has reported

that the Federation counts 130 Centros]. Most members belong to the tribe of the Untsuri Shuar, including those living in the Upper Zamora river valley under the influence of the Franciscan Mission. It is interesting to note that the Achuara, traditional enemies of the Untsuri Shuar, have recently joined the Federation. There is currently 1 Achuara Asociación composed of 2 Centros, and it is expected that more Achuara Indians will become members in the near future.

Publications of the Federation are not very explicit about the sources and amount of money that is required to maintain such an institution. The monthly quota of 5 sucres (1 dollar=25 sucres) required from each member does not seem adequate to carry out the different projects the Federation is engaged in, particularly those concerned with economic development. Federation sources (Chicham, May 1974) have reported that Ecuadorian banks have been reluctant to extend credit to the Federation. However, financial assistance has been obtained from government institutions such as the Fundación Ecuatoriana de Desarrollo, and from foreign ones such as the Deutsche Welt Hunger Hilfe, which has recently given a great amount of money (1,200,000 sucres) for the development of the Shuar cattle industry. The Salesian Mission never appears officially, but its influence on the Federation is strong. As a case in point, the latter has ruled that all administrative units must have "religious and moral counselors" who usually are missionaries or Shuar individuals with close ties to the Mission. Sindicos, for instance, are in general ex-pupils of the Salesian boarding schools. The general religious counselor of the Federation, and likely its founder, is the Salesian missionary Father Juan Shutka, whose activities are almost completely devoted to the Federation. Father Shutka maintains an office at the Federation building in Sucua, and the Shuar show a great deal of respect for him. Furthermore, it is obvious that his activities do not deal with religious counseling alone. In fact he seems



to participate actively in the decision-making process of the Shuar Organization. Indeed, Father Shutka can be considered the strong man of the Federation. (\*)

(\*) IWGIA (personal communication) has recently informed me that Father Shutka has attempted to participate as the spokesman for the Federation at the First International Conference of Indigenous Peoples (Port Alberni, Canada, 1975).

## THE SHUAR UNDER THE FEDERATION

The twelve year old Federation is an unusual instance of success in the struggle for Indian liberation in lowland Ecuador. Contrary to Father Barrueco's opinion, the Shuar have proved that they do have insight into the future and determination to survive in the struggle against the white invasion.

One of the first goals of the Federation was to establish with the Ecuadorian government legal possession of the land; a crucial issue in terms of Shuar survival. Property rights in colonization lands are granted by the IERAC (Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización), which is the official owner of the land under Ecuadorian law. According to information provided by the Chief of the IERAC delegation at Sucúa, Shuar territory has reservation status, which means that land is given to the Shuar for temporary exploitation, usually a period of five years. Seven Shuar reservations have been established, their size being variable according to the number of families exploiting each reservation, and even calculated for up to 25 years of demographic growth. It is a IERAC policy, unfortunately not always enforced, that colonists can not occupy reservation land. If for any reason a colonist is found settled in Shuar land, the current policy is to resettle him outside the reservation. However, the problem with reservation land is that it does not give security to the Shuar family. In fact, when the deadline for the reservation contract expires the land becomes automatically susceptible to sale if the contract is not renewed. Although as a

general rule these contracts are renewed, there is always the possibility for the Shuar of being eventually deprived of land. This situation is detrimental to the native economy for it prevents the Shuar from working with borrowed capital, since land ownership in the Oriente is the minimal requirement to obtain credit. This serious loophole in the colonization policy has prompted the Federation to press the IERAC into granting the Shuar legal titles of property to the land. The IERAC started working on legalization of Shuar property in the late 60's. Titles were given to each family, thus making this operation extremely lengthy and difficult, since under this procedure, the IERAC had to map family plots individually. The Federation has reported that during the first 4 years of existence of the IERAC delegation at Sucúa, the legalization of property had been completed for only two Shuar Centros. However, by September 1973, there were 20 Centros with legalized property reaching a total of 38,160 Has. But curiously enough, the IERAC also manifested its intention of taking 21,500 Has. of Shuar land in the Upano-Palora region for colonization purposes (CREA's Upano-Palora project). This inconsistency of IERAC policies forced the Federation to release a communique announcing that it intends to keep all the area which constitutes at present Shuar territory. It also requested an extension of land to be used to meet future demands of the Federation and argued before the IERAC for a modification in the procedure used for legalization of property. Specifically, it was requested that property titles should be granted "globally" to each Shuar Centro instead of "individually" to each family (Chicham, September 1973). This modification seems to have a twofold advantage for the Shuar: on the one hand it speeds up the operation, and on the other hand it allows the Centro to distribute the land to federated families according to their size and needs. Furthermore, it offers fewer risks in terms of losing land to the colonists. In fact, under the old procedure the plots of Shuar land

actually did not belong to the Federation but to the individual who obtained the property title. As a result, the latter, as legal owner of the land, could sell it to anybody he wished to. Needless to say, the prospective buyer was likely to be a colonist. However, under the global procedure, a Shuar family receives a plot of land for its own use and can hold it indefinitely, but sale is strictly forbidden without specific approval by the Federation. In the event that a Shuar family wishes to relocate, the Federation will take the necessary measures in order to provide such a family with a new plot of land at the new location.

The IERAC agreed to the Shuar request regarding the new procedure for the legalization of land property, but the task is far from completed. In 1974, global property titles were granted to 10 Centros for a total of 36,759 Has. of land. However, to date most Shuar Centros do not have legalized property. The size of land granted to a Centro depends largely upon the number of families it includes. Thus, while a sparsely populated Centro may receive 500 Has. of land, a more densely populated one may receive 7,000 Has. The size of the family plot may also vary from Centro to Centro. For instance, in the Asociacion of Sucúa the average family plot measures 32 Has.

Another important goal that the Federation has been concerned with is education. For nearly 70 years the Shuar have received a white-oriented education which, while pretending to "civilize" the lowland Indian, has instead turned him into a cultural beggar of the national society. This was achieved primarily by means of the missionary boarding school where Shuar children learned the white man's way of life which has brought all sorts of dissociating forces to the Shuar group. However, it appears that the Shuar have now realized that their cultural values could not be fulfilled in a white society which barely offers the "civilized" Indian a marginal status within the national culture.

In a letter to the Secretary of Education (published in Chicham, May 1974) the Shuar pointed out two basic problems regarding education in the lowlands. In the first place it was stressed that human and material resources used in teaching activities are not adapted to the realities of Shuar existence. The letter noted, for instance, that only two white teachers, out of 30 appointed by the government to Shuar schools, have expressed their intention of keeping their jobs. The reluctance to work in Indian or peasant communities is a common attitude among teachers in Ecuador, particularly those who have always lived in urban centers. Work in rural areas is often seen as a transitory job while awaiting reappointment to an urban school. Furthermore, white teachers lack training for dealing adequately with Indian children, particularly in certain communities where Spanish is not spoken. In the case of the Shuar, knowledge of the native language is an important asset for the instructor in order to make the teaching process more accessible to the children. The Shuar have also complained that Ecuadorian textbooks are not adequate for their children's education. In fact, most textbooks are designed for the urban child of the Coast or the Highlands and, accordingly, explanations are given using examples of objects and situations that are familiar to him. Needless to say, a Shuar child will find these explanations quite incomprehensible.

The second problem pointed out by the Shuar regarding the current educational system is that white-oriented education tends to project children prematurely outside their traditional environment. This seriously threatens the Shuar social structure for children become alienated and frustrated, thus constituting a potential loss for the community. Acculturated Shuar often leave the forest to work in the Coast or the Highlands.

Aware of this situation, the Federation has undertaken a project aimed primarily at establishing an educational system oriented

towards the values of Shuar culture. In order to accomplish this goal the Shuar have adopted the system of radio-schools (escuelas radiofónicas), which consists of broadcasting educational programs from a radio station. Radio schools are currently used by several Latin American countries as a means of promoting culture change in peasant and Indian communities located in areas lacking schools, or having a settlement pattern of scattered households. The aims and actual operation of these schools vary from country to country (Cf. for instance, Bandeira 1967, Torres and Cprredor 1971, and Early 1973), although there is a particular emphasis on literacy programs. The Shuar radio school is designed to satisfy the educational needs of the whole population providing instruction not only for elementary school children but for adults as well. In 1972, the first Shuar radio station (HCSK) was inaugurated at the Federation building in Sucúa. HCSK has two channels and is on the air for 16 hours every day. Literacy courses are broadcast three days a week from 3 to 4:30 p.m., while elementary school instruction is broadcast every morning from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The rest of the time HCSK is on the air with a variety of programs like any commercial radio station. It is worthy of note that HCSK is totally managed by Shuar personnel. Likewise, the radio school is under the direct responsibility of a permanent staff of Shuar teachers (telemaestros), who prepare and tape the lessons which are later delivered to the radio station for broadcasting. All Shuar Centros are also provided with a teaching assistant (teleauxiliar) who actually plays the role of intermediary between the radio set and the children (or illiterate individuals in the case of literacy courses). A typical morning in elementary school as witnessed at the Centro "Asunción" goes as follows: Both children and assistant arrive at school at 8 a.m. The portable radio set is tuned in, and the voice of the teacher from Sucúa can be heard ordering a review of the preceding lesson. Questions are followed by a moment of silence to allow

interaction between assistants and children in every Shuar Centro. Eventually, the teacher asks the children to leave the classroom to take care of their personal appearance (washing hands and face, combing hair, etc.). At 8.50 a.m. the children are back in the classroom for 10 minutes of religious instruction which is held in Shuar language. The lessons of the day take place between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Between lessons there are recess periods of 15 minutes which Shuar children spend playing in the plaza or finishing their homework. During these intervals the radio station plays Shuar music. The assistant sees that all orders from the radio are accomplished and writes on the blackboard whatever is necessary for the comprehension of the lesson. Teaching is done alternately in Shuar and Spanish. With regard to the educational background of instructors, I was informed that teachers are required to have a High School Diploma, while assistants need only to attend one of the training courses offered every summer at the Federation building in Sucúa. Other requirements for teaching assistants are that they be permanent residents of the Centro they are working in, and that they own a portable radio set for use in class. If for some reason an assistant does not own a radio, the Centro may provide one. Both teachers and assistants are paid employees, teachers receiving their salary from the government, and assistants from the Federation. Statistics recently published by the Instituto Indigenista Americano (1976:414) indicate that the Federation counts at present 130 radio schools serving 4,500 children. Assistants number 230 of which 70 are now paid by the government .

The radio school started in 1972 with the first grade only, but at present it is functioning with three grades. The assistant at the Centro Asunción works with 23 children attending the first two grades of elementary school (14 in first grade and 9 in second grade). The assistant manages to teach both grades simultaneously. In this regard I may add that instruction is broadcast in such a way that when

one class is in recess period the other remains in the classroom. Upper grades are taught in some Centros only, by a graduated school teacher who is not necessarily Shuar. This upper section is not broadcast and is held entirely in Spanish. The Federation has ruled that elementary education is mandatory among the Shuar. Parents who are reluctant to send their children to school are subject to a four day confinement in jail, according to the statutes of the Federation. Usually this matter is solved between the assistant and the child's parents, or the the president of the Centro's PTA. The teaching staff has prepared three textbooks especially designed for Shuar children attending the radio school. However, instruction in upper grades is given following the standard textbooks used in the rest of the country. The teaching process is supervised by both government and Shuar officials. The radio school has a Shuar coordinator who holds regular meetings with teachers and assistants. Particular attention is given to the assistant's report, since he is the instructor who deals directly with the children. The pre-recording of lessons also enables the teachers staff to visit several Centros in order to get feedback information for further recordings.

An overall assessment of the radio school indicates that so far, it represents the answer to the educational problem of the Shuar. The advantages of the radio school can be appreciated from a consideration of the following features, some of them already outlined by the Shuar in the letter to the Secretary of Education. In the first place, it appears that the most important feature of the radio school is that it represents a Shuar effort to serve the Shuar. The spirit of cooperation that, at present, transcends the boundaries of allied households and neighborhoods is perhaps one of the greatest achievements of the Federation. Furthermore, the radio school establishes uniformity or standardization in teaching. In other words, all Shuar children learn exactly the same things from the radio school. Although this



may be elsewhere a limiting factor, for the system precludes the personal initiative of teachers and assistants, it allows Shuar children to transfer from one Centro to another without noticeable detriment in terms of the child's progress. The Shuar radio school also has the advantage of being able to establish its own schedule according to the daily activities of the Shuar household. Harner (1973:53-55) has pointed out that adult activities take place in the morning, the Shuar couple usually getting home early in the afternoon, that is, when the children join the family after school hours. Thus, it is worthy of mention that, unlike the missionary school, the Shuar radio school prevents long term separations between parents and children. Furthermore, the establishment of a school in each Centro has made education more accessible to Shuar children who otherwise had to travel long distances in order to attend the missionary schools. Finally, I suggest that the Shuar radio school represents, in a way, an introduction to the white man's world, thus reducing the trauma of encountering western civilization. The fact that the Shuar radio school is relatively inexpensive needs also to be mentioned. According to Father Shutka, a Shuar child attending the radio school costs the Ecuadorian government half the expense of his counterpart attending public schools in the rest of the country.

The educational concern of the Federation is not restricted to the radio school alone. It has also established a program of financial assistance for young Shuar desiring to pursue their education in High Schools or Universities in any large city of Ecuador. At the beginning of 1974 the Federation counted 23 Shuar teachers with a High School Diploma, and 15 more graduated by the end of the same year with financial aid from the Federation. It was reported at this time that another 37 young Shuar (both male and female) were attending High School or College with Federation scholarships (Chicham, December 1974). As a general rule, the Shuar attend schools located in

lowland towns such as Macas, Archidona, and Zamora; although a few of them have gone to the Highlands, particularly to Quito or Cuenca. I know of at least 2 Shuar individuals who have obtained College degrees in Quito universities.

The official reporter of the Federation is a bilingual Shuar-Spanish newspaper called "Chicham" ("Message"), which appears irregularly. Chicham is devoted to accounts of the activities of the Federation, as well as general information on acculturation, government policies, and the situation of other Indian groups of both Ecuador and South America. This latter feature of the newspaper is particularly interesting, for it seems to indicate that the Federation is seeking to develop among its members the awareness that there is an Indian America of which the Shuar form a part. Furthermore, the Shuar have already established contact with the North American Indian movement, as well as other Indian organizations of South America. Other publications of the Federation include the statutes of the Shuar Organization (Federación 1974), a translation of the New Testament, the radio school textbooks, a short compilation of Shuar myths (Pellizaro n.d.) an ethnographic description of the Shuar (Pellizaro 1973), and a short analysis of the "spirituality" of the Shuar (Rosero n.d.); the latter three written by Salesian missionaries. All publications are printed in the Salesian publishing house of Cuenca. Finally, in 1973, the Federation produced a film called "The Sound of Rushing Water" (available from Tricontinental Film Center, Illinois) in which Shuar leaders give their opinion on the Federation and on the integration of the Shuar to Ecuadorian society.

Turning from the subject of education, I shall now consider the economic situation of the Shuar under the Federation. In this regard a major change has occurred with the shift from a subsistence to a market economy focused primarily on cattle raising. The management of the cattle industry is carried out by "development groups" which

have been established in several Centros. A development group consists of at least 12 individuals members of a particular Centro. According to current regulations, these individuals have to work three days a week in cattle raising activities, namely care of pastures and cattle. Members are also allowed to have stock in the development group by putting individual possessions such as money or land to the service of the program. Profit is distributed among associates according to a system especially devised for this purpose by the Federation. Acquisition of cattle is carried out primarily through credits extended by the Federation, which also provides technical assistance in Veterinary and Agronomy. The Federation has been encouraging the formation of development groups but, so far, only 40 Centros have joined the cattle industry. All these Centros have received credits ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 sucres totaling an ammount of 1,557,000 sucres. Although Centros have some cattle communally owned, most cattle is acquired as individual property. Statistics for 1974, for instance, show that 7,672 head of cattle were owned individually, while only 1,264 were owned communally (Chicham, December 1974). However, the major economic problem that the Shuar are presently facing is that the number of cattle is not enough to cover all the pasture available which reaches an extension of 19,450 Has. Bromley (1972:291) has pointed out that in the Ecuadorian lowlands three cattle can be grazed in 1 Ha. of land. According to this estimate, the area of unused pasture in Shuar territory is 17,472 Has. As could be expected, the Shuar resent the waste of pasture land and would like to have more cattle in order to produce meat for the national market. But the Federation has reported that, so far, Ecuadorian banks have been reluctant to extend credit (Chicham, May 1974). While this inability to utilize the available land is economically distressing, it represents a more serious problem in terms of a potential loss of pasture land. In fact, it is a IERAC policy that adjudicated land can be reclaimed if it fails to produce

in a period of five years after the concession of the land. This may explain in part the fact that some Shuar Centros with little or no cattle but lots of pasture rent it for grazing cattle of colonists, thus creating a situation of economic dependence upon the latter, which is precisely what the Federation is trying to avoid.

The last, but not the least concern of the Federation deals with health problems which often assume great proportions in colonization frontiers. It is known that contact situations with colonists are particularly dangerous to the lowland Indian, due to his lack of biological immunity against certain "western" diseases such as measles, polio and tuberculosis. There are still memories in lowland Ecuador of the series of epidemics that hit the Aushiri (Auca) in the late 60's, particularly the polio outburst that killed 16 Indians and crippled an equal number (Bledsoe 1972:151). Likewise, the Shuar have not forgotten the measles epidemics that killed 103 people in the region of Yaupi in the 1950's (Chicham, December 1974).

The Federation has reported that government attention to Shuar health has been minimal, since medical care in lowland towns is largely a privilege of the colonist population. As a result, the Federation Commission of Health has established its own program with the help of the Salesian Mission and the German Peace Corps, both of which have organized training courses for health promoters, nurses, and social workers. The emphasis of the Shuar health program is in Preventive Medicine. In this regard, the fostering of hygienic habits among the Shuar is of primary importance for the program. Information on health matters is provided through radio broadcasts and health promoters who manage the program in each Shuar Centro. Furthermore, a First Aid Kit provided by the Federation is available in all Shuar Centros. In the case of outbursts of contagious diseases, each Asociación has a special team of health officials to carry out vaccination campaigns. Finally, the whole program of Health is under direct

responsability of a medical team which manages the Federation Health Center of Sucúa recently provided by the government. The effects of the program can already be seen in the Shuar population; health has improved, and the child mortality rate has diminished. The Federation has reported that demographic growth has increased from 3.7 in 1971 to 4.25 in 1972 (Chicham, December 1974).

## INTERETHNIC FRICTION ON THE COLONIZATION FRONTIER

The establishment of the Shuar Federation cut, or at least severely limited, the colonists' access to Shuar land. As a result, interethnic relations became quite tense in the late 60's, particularly at Sucua where the Federation building is located. The colonists' resentment is not directed against the Federation only, but also against the Mission, which for all practical purposes planned and organized the Federation. In this regard, it can not be denied that the support of the Salesian Mission, a well established and influential institution in the lowlands, has meant a lot for the Federation. This can indeed be considered the most positive contribution of the Salesians to the well being of the Shuar. However, the Salesian participation also has a negative side, for it has made the Mission an influential force in Shuar affairs. It is possible that, at the present time, the Salesian intervention in the activities of the Federation is a necessary measure, at least until the Shuar can assume complete control of their own destiny. At any rate, this seems to be the attitude of the Mission as was manifested to me by Father Luis Carollo, Director of the Sucúa Mission Center. However, it is doubtful that the Mission will completely give up control over the Shuar. In fact, through newspapers and publications, meetings and radio station, the Federation has proved to be the most efficient instrument for the

indoctrination "en masse" of the Shuar. It is apparent that the radio school has greatly facilitated the missionary work (education and indoctrination) now carried out by the Shuar themselves. But curiously enough, the Mission has still kept the boarding school which, from the perspective of the Shuar, seems to conflict with their own educational program. It would appear then that the persistence of the boarding school is rather a political move on the part of the missionaries to prevent losing control of the Shuar population. To justify its continuation, a change of emphasis has become necessary for the boarding school. As Father Carollo pointed out, the missionary school is now focusing its efforts on the formation of leaders for future Shuar communities. The legitimacy of this activity is questionable, however, for what right has the missionary to decide who will be the leader of an Indian community? Moreover, is there not danger that the acculturated leader will become a docile instrument of the Mission and, by extension, of the dominant white society? It appears reasonable to think that if any institution was to assume the training of Shuar leaders, the Federation would be not only the most appropriate, but also the only institution to carry out this task successfully. In this context, the taking over of this activity by the Mission reflects clearly the Salesian determination to keep a hold on the native population.

From the point of view of the Federation, dissociating forces are strong on the colonization frontier as manifested by colonists' attitudes and white-biased activities of Ecuadorian institutions. For the colonist, the emergence of the Federation has meant, economically, the loss of cheap labor, for the Shuar now prefer to work on their own land. As a consequence, colonists argue that federated Shuar are arrogant and rich. It can be said that there is a feeling of frustration among colonists over the success of the Federation. The extent to which this frustration has been carried out may be seen in the colonists' frequent criticisms of the Federation. For instance,

a colonist pointed out to me that many Shuar are reluctant to join the Federation because of the rumor that funds are misused by Shuar officials for personal profit. It is difficult to assess whether this is a rumor propagated by colonists to prevent more Shuar from joining the Federation, or just a sad confirmation that the chronic disease of Ecuadorian institutions has finally reached the lowland Indian. However, the fact remains that many colonists do view the Federation with a great deal of contempt.

Both Franciscan and Salesian Missions have consistently tried to improve interethnic relations on the colonization frontier, but in general little has been accomplished. In the Vicariat of Zamora, the exploitation of the Shuar by Franciscan missionaries and colonists has generated deep resentment among the native population (Galarza 1973). Particularly questionable are certain procedures of integration based on coercion. The bishop of Zamora, for instance, has recently attempted to establish a "civic center" where both Shuar and colonists were to live side by side. Fortunately, the Shuar have openly rejected the proposal, despite the pressure exerted on them to move into the new settlement (Galarza 1973:53). In the Vicariat of Mendez the situation is somewhat variable from town to town. Macas, for example, has favored interethnic relations to a greater extent than Sucúa. This may be due to historic factors considering that Macas has been for centuries a center of White-Shuar interaction, while Sucúa grew out of the colonist migration in the present century only. Comparatively, Sucuan colonists are still "newcomers" and, in general, tend to be more prejudiced than those from Macas.

The problem underlying interethnic relations refers, basically, to the manner in which the Shuar should be integrated into the national culture. Whites advocate complete assimilation, that is, the Shuar should be "civilized" first if they are to function in Ecuadorian society. It is obvious that, given this position, no Indian values



can be incorporated within, or accepted by, the national culture. On the other hand, the Shuar position is also quite clear: there will be no integration if Ecuadorian society is not willing to accept the values of Shuar culture:

"If Ecuador is to become the country of the Shuar, it has to admit them as they are... If Christianity is to penetrate vitally the Shuar world, it has to become Shuar! (Federación 1971:17).

The Shuar are aware that they have changed forever and new ideas will still come to their world, but interethnic relations will definitely have to travel a "two-way road": from the Shuar to the White, and viceversa. The Shuar determination to keep their culture is vividly expressed in this excerpt from Chicham (September 1973):

"...before it happens to the Shuar what has happened to Highland Indians, before we become deprived of every right, they [the whites] have to burn the trees that cover our land, dry out our rivers, erase from our minds everything that is Shuar... in short, they will have to erase approximately 1,000 years of history, and the entire world will never consent to it".

Although the Ecuadorian government has recognized the Federation, its institutions have been operating in Shuar territory with a clear white-oriented bias. For instance, the Office of Vital Statistics has consistently been insensitive about respecting spelling of Shuar names. Names appeared on Shuar identification cards completely distorted. Brothers appeared having different family names, and in some cases employees seem to have been too busy to transcribe carefully the Shuar name, and instead typed the closest Spanish name that came to their minds. As a result, often when a Shuar Indian was asked to give his correct name, he would be threatened with a fine for "changing" his name. The Federation protested this lack of attention on several occasions, and finally was allowed to run its own identification card office.

The IERAC is known in Ecuador for its lengthy operations, and the legalization of Shuar property has not been an exception. Arguing

a lack of funds for mapping Shuar plots, the Sucua delegation has consistently delayed the granting of property titles to the land. The Federation decided to speed up the operation by doing part of the mapping at its own cost, and still most Centros do not have the long awaited title to property. In general, the Shuar keep an eye on the IERAC because of its colonization oriented policies. However, on this matter the most frequent frictions arise between the Federation and the CREA. The Shuar are basically opposed to CREA projects, but at the same time they are aware that colonization has become an inevitable process. In consequence, they do not oppose colonization per se as long as they are not deprived of the necessary vital space to develop their own economy and culture. An official of the Federation has pointed out to me that the CREA is either not aware of, or does not want to acknowledge the real presence of the Shuar in the Ecuadorian Oriente. This is an impression that I, myself, received when interviewing CREA officials in the city of Cuenca. The areas of colonization are said to be inhabited "only" by a few aboriginal groups with primitive technology, living scattered in the forest. In this context, while the existence of Indians is acknowledged, it is assumed that they do not, or rather they should not, represent an obstacle to colonization. A CREA official explicitly told me that the development of the country was not to be stopped because of the presence of Indian tribes. It is easy to understand now why the CREA has not provided financial and technical assistance to the Federation. Since the CREA is an institution almost completely devoted to colonization, to help the Federation would be detrimental to its goals. Such a move would involve diverting colonists' funds to assist the Shuar as well as the recognition of Shuar claims to the land, all of which conflicts clearly with CREA's interests. CREA's Morona project is ready and all activities for prospective colonists are outlined, following a rigorous schedule for the next 6 years upon resettlement (CREA 1974). The

colonization zone being located in the heart of Shuar territory, it is surprising to learn that not a single program has been devised for the development of the Shuar population inhabiting this area. In this regard, it is interesting to point out some contradictions of the Morona project report (CREA 1974). In the beginning (page 2), it is stated that one of the goals of the project is "to benefit immediately around 150 Shuar colonists [?] settled in the area". However, it is later pointed out that the only beneficiaries of the project will be "peasants from the provinces of Azuay and Cañar (page 18)". Also another figure is given for the Shuar population: "a small extension of the project zone is inhabited by a few Shuar families... it could be said that the native population does not exceed 100 families, that is a total of 500 people (page 12)".

The Shuar have repeatedly accused the CREA of distorting demographic data, but considering the Shuar settlement pattern it is difficult to question the veracity of these figures. In any case, the Federation, in a communique to Ecuador's leading newspaper, warned the CREA about making the mistake of ignoring the aboriginal population of the Morona project zone:

"The colonization zone does not constitute available land; it is occupied and worked by human groups of traditional settlement pattern and, consequently, any intention of ignoring this reality is an attempt against the inalienable rights of those groups, a mistake that CREA has made in its intervention in the region of Chiguaza [Upano-Palora project]" (El Comercio, July 9, 1975).

The dissociating factors from the outside are counteracted within the Federation by an increasing cohesiveness, a growing "esprit de corps" which, in the long run, will determine the success of the Shuar Organization. The Federation pursues two main goals: the recognition of Shuar culture as a constitutive system of Ecuadorian society; and economic self-sufficiency as the basis for a development free of pressures and influences from the outside. As a starting point, the Federation is engaged in developing culture awareness among its

members which is carried out through meetings and mass media communications. I have referred for instance to the Federation's concern with giving children an education adapted to the Shuar cultural heritage. Already, it is apparent that self-awareness is strong among young people. The Federation has established the Shuar Youth movement which periodically organizes congresses with the purpose of discussing government policies and analyzing the status of Shuar culture in the social context of the country. Furthermore, the radio station and the newspaper diffuse new ideas and, at the same time, enhance Shuar tradition. As a result, a sentiment of pride is born in young generations.

On the administrative level, the Federation maintains cohesion by exerting a tight control of its members. This is carried out through regular visits to Shuar Centros by Federation officials, including the President. It has also been ruled that members can not move to another Centro without the consent of the president of the Asociación if resettlement occurs within Asociación jurisdiction, or the consent of the Federation President if the move involves resettlement in another Asociación. Likewise, members can freely engage in small commercial transactions, but matters such as sale of cattle or land can not be carried out without special approval of the Federation. The Federation has gone to the point of regulating the names Shuar children should be given. In fact, according to a recent rule, newborn children must be given Shuar names instead of current Christian names. However, it is doubtful that this ruling will be accepted by all Shuar, since the last three generations have all received Christian names. A Shuar woman pointed out to me that Christian naming is already a custom among the Shuar, although in order to comply with the rule she has given her children Christian first names and Shuar middle names. A list of regulations has also been established carrying a penalty of up to four days in jail (Federacion 1974). In this regard I shall

point out that the statutes clearly reflect the degree of acculturation of the Shuar, for they usually include items of behavior considered unacceptable from the point of view of whites (i.e. public drunkenness, destruction of property, "bathing against the rules of decency", etc.). Unfortunately, I have no information on how the system works, or who enforces the rules. For one thing, I have no knowledge of the existence of jails in Shuar territory.

There are still a few thousand Shuar who, for various reasons, have not joined the Federation, although efforts are being made to attract them. The reasons for remaining independent are largely related to the structure of the Federation. For instance, some Shuar resent the contributions and restrictions forced upon its members by the Federation, and it appears that "independent" Shuar are economically better off by not joining the Federation. In this regard a Shuar official pointed out to me that the CREA has been extending credit to non-federated Shuar for amounts greater than the Federation can offer. It is obvious that for these individuals joining the Federation would be economically disadvantageous. It is for this reason that in the eyes of the Federation, CREA's credits are not regarded as an indication of a genuine assistance, but rather as a move aimed at preventing more individuals from joining the Shuar Organization. In any case, the rapid growth of the Federation has shown that there are more advantages in working together, particularly at the present time when dissociating forces are closing the circle around the Shuar. It is not known whether this Indian group will in the long run achieve a fair integration in Ecuadorian society, but it is certain that for many Shuar the Federation means, most of all, survival.

## CONCLUSIONS

I have attempted to analyze in this document the formation and activities of the Shuar Federation in the context of colonization in lowland Ecuador. In doing so I have focused on the factors directly involved in the current social change of the Shuar, at the same time pointing out their internal relationships which have determined the conditions of the confrontation between the Shuar and the moving colonization frontier.

The general issue this document deals with is the impact of colonization frontiers on tribal societies. In this context, the application of Frontier Studies theory to the Shuar case will be particularly helpful in explaining the nature of the colonist society in lowland Ecuador, and the emergence of the Federation as a response to the condition of dominance imposed by the colonists.

The study of frontier societies has become an important area of inquiry for social scientists and, accordingly, a vast body of literature is available, particularly from research carried out by historians and cultural geographers. Curiously enough, anthropologists have been concerned little with the subject, despite the advantages it offers for the study of culture change (Thompson 1973). The study of the frontier can be considered in Anthropology an outgrowth of research on acculturation, and in fact it has initially dealt with

the impact of the pioneer culture on native populations, although at present it tends to deal with social change in pioneer communities (Thompson 1973:4). This latter trend can be seen in the writings of American anthropologists studying South American colonization frontiers. As a result, little has been done towards the understanding of the ethnocidal process that tribal societies undergo in contact situations with colonists. The failure to see interethnic contact as the main feature of the colonization frontier has produced a unilateral view of the colonizing process, in this case the view from the dominant pioneer society. However, it can not be overemphasized the fact that colonization frontiers represent the encounter of a technologically superior society (the pioneers) with a less developed society (the native population) which immediately enter a colonialist relationship through forced acculturation of the latter by the former society. On this matter, I agree with Colombres (1976:130) that American studies of acculturation have, as a general rule, ignored the structure of dominance-dependence that is inherent to the acculturative process. In fact, it appears that American scholars have focused almost exclusively on the dynamics of acculturation, that is the process by which the borrowing society accepts or rejects culture traits, disregarding the concomitant process (the dynamics of deculturation) by which the same society loses its own culture, thus opening the path to assimilation. Latin American and European scholars have recently been focusing on the latter process, particularly with reference to Indian groups from lowland South America, and some literature is already available on the subject (Cf. for instance Bonilla 1972, D'Ans 1972, Reichel-Dolmatoff 1972, Jaulin 1973, and Colombres 1976).

I have made the preceding reflections with the intention of setting up a framework under which the Shuar Federation could be explained. The basic features of this framework are: 1) interethnic

contact, 2) colonialist relationship between the societies involved in such contact. However, in order to obtain a global picture of the events taking place in lowland Ecuador it appears that an adequate approach should be in terms of the concept of frontier system, which has the advantage of including all elements constituting the colonization frontier. According to Wells (1973:6), a frontier system is a "dynamic social network" characterized by the following features:

" 1) one or more foci, 2) territorial expansion of the people from the focus, 3) direct contact by the expanding people with culturally distinct societies, and 4) the presence of a single communication network which links the various societies of the frontier system together".

In the light of this definition, the colonization frontier in the southern lowlands of Ecuador can be said to constitute a true frontier system with three foci represented by the highland towns of Riobamba, Cuenca, and Loja. The expansion of these foci into the lowlands has been marked by two distinct types of human migrations: an early one characterized by squatters (spontaneous colonization), and a more recent one characterized by individuals participating in government projects of colonization (semi-directed colonization). With regard to social background, most settlers are poor and low middle class whites (actually mestizos), although recently Indian families have also resettled on the colonization frontier. Through migration, the pioneer society came into contact with the native population of the lowlands, in this case with the Shuar, a tribal society with a typical Tropical Forest Culture pattern. This inter-ethnic contact has generated a communications network, both economic and cultural, which has resulted in the imposition of the colonist population as the dominant society in the lowlands. The economic network has been established by means of western-manufactured goods such as guns, machetes, axes, kitchen utensils, etc., acquired by colonists at the highland foci of colonization, and eventually passed to the Shuar in exchange for labor, land, and Indian handicrafts.



The importance given by the Shuar to the technologically superior western goods has soon become the source of economic exploitation and dependence, intensified by the simultaneous acculturative process that the Shuar have undergone. It is interesting to point out that, while the "economic network" flows both ways, that is from the colonist to the Shuar and viceversa, the "cultural network" flows in only one direction, that is from the colonist to the Shuar. In other words, colonists have not become acculturated; on the contrary, it is their culture that is being imposed on the Shuar. However, this situation does not seem to be characteristic of the Ecuadorian colonizing process only, but rather a typical feature of all colonization frontiers. As Thompson (1973:2) has pointed out:

" In the long run... it has been the aborigines, not the settlers, who have been acculturated, assimilated, or annihilated in virtually every frontier situation in human history".

In this context, the colonization frontier does not seem to represent a typical area of acculturation where, eventually, a "new society" would emerge from interethnic contact. Cardoso de Oliveira (1972:79) is perhaps more realistic when he suggests that the basic feature of contact situations is not acculturation but "interethnic friction" inasmuch as the existence of one culture tends to negate the existence of the other. This feature is closely related to the phenomenon of internal colonialism that characterizes the national society of underdeveloped countries. The notion of internal colonialism (Gonzalez Casanova 1969, Pierdel 1971) refers to the perpetuation of a hierarchical social system in which the dominant society imposes its culture pattern on dependent societies and at the same time exploits them economically. It has been said that the colonial exploitation of Third World countries by foreign powers is reproduced in smaller scale within the national society where colonialism is apparent

in the exploitation of the lower class (particularly if it includes groups of different ethnic origin) by the upper class. The roots of internal colonialism in Latin America date back to the time of the Spanish conquest which imposed the first stratified system with the conquerors as the dominant society and the Indians as the dominated society. However, the end of the Spanish rule did not bring about the end of colonialism. In fact, Gonzalez Casanova (1969:224) has pointed out that the wars of independence have only marked the replacement of the dominance of natives by foreigners with the dominance of natives by the natives themselves. This situation is readily apparent in Ecuador, particularly in the highlands, where the stratified social system prevents low class mestizos and Indians from moving up in the social scale. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that a similar phenomenon has taken place in the lowlands as the marginal population of the highlands has moved into Shuar territory and become established there as the dominant society. Colonialist structures can easily be detected in the establishment of the highland stratified social system, the incorporation of the lowland Indian to the labor system, the imposition of new socio-economic structures, and acculturation (Robinson 1972b, Whitten 1976). Although the participation of colonists in the cultural change of the Shuar is rather indirect, as far as they are not concerned specifically with educating the native population, the bulk of the acculturative process is a responsibility of the religious mission which, historically, has always been related to colonialist enterprises. In fact, the religious mission arrives before any colonist settlement can take over a piece of land in the new territory. In most cases, settlements have grown around the Mission Center which, besides providing religious assistance to colonists, protects them from the "savage" natives. Particular importance has been given to the Mission by both the State and the Church. For the former, the Mission is an instrument of "pacification" and integration

of the native to the national society. For the latter, the Mission is an outpost of religious expansion whose function is to bring a new God to the natives, a new spiritual life which, usually, shakes the very foundations of the aboriginal culture. In both cases the Mission is a colonialist agent of deculturation of the lowland Indian.

For more than 50 years the Shuar have undergone the consequences of the colonialist expansion of the highland society into the lowlands. The situation has now become critical due to the lack of a consistent government policy aimed at the safeguard of Shuar culture. In this context, the establishment of the Federation constitutes a landmark in Shuar history in the struggle against complete assimilation by the national society.

At this point I shall deal with an important issue concerning the Federation. The reader who is familiar with the ethnographic literature on the Shuar may have noticed that the structure of the Federation seems to differ clearly from the traditional social organization of the Shuar. It is indeed surprising that a tribal society with a cultural pattern of relatively independent households had accepted a federated type of organization which is even somewhat centralized in administrative procedures. I have already made reference to external factors such as the advance of the colonization frontier and the participation of the Salesian Mission as immediate causes for the emergence of the Federation. However, it is also important to identify within the Shuar culture the operating mechanisms that may have been responsible for the unification of the Shuar.

I suggest that the Federation emerged from the need to consolidate the current Shuar economic structure which has been gradually encompassing wider segments of the native population. On the other hand, it appears that the structure of the Federation is clearly related to the degree of acculturation attained by the Shuar. In other words, I suggest that, culturally, the Shuar were "ready" to

adopt this type of organization.

The economic network set up by the frontier system has involved the Shuar in an ever increasing dependence on western manufactured goods which are subsequently distributed all over Shuar territory by means of native trading partners. Since Harner has discussed the subject in some detail it seems appropriate to quote him in length:

" The growth of this trade in recent decades has been made possible by the increasing involvement of the western Jivaro [Shuar] in the Ecuadorian socio-economic structure. The western Jivaro, primarily through their employment by Ecuadorians in manual labor, have acquired a surplus of factory-manufactured goods. At the same time there is a shortage of native-made goods among the Jivaro in the west, partially because of the near-exhaustion of their local wild game which supplied skins and feathers for dress and ornament. The eastern Jivaro, in contrast, have an abundant supply of aboriginal-type goods, but a scarcity of steel cutting tools and firearms. These complementary inequalities in supply and demand between the western and eastern Jivaro form the basis of a native trading system which supplies the eastern Jivaro with European-type technological items (Harner 1968:366)".

Besides trading partnership, shamanistic power is another factor of economic importance among the Shuar. Unlike the former, which flows from the west to the east and viceversa, shamanistic power flows in a North-South direction. According to Harner (1968:368), the most powerful shamans belong to the Canelos tribe living North of the Pastaza River. These shamans exchange their supernatural powers for western manufactured goods brought by Shuar individuals willing to become shamans. The latter, in their turn, can sell some power to prospective shamans living farther south, and so on. In this way, a north-south chain of shamans has been established, their power decreasing gradually towards the south. As result of this chain, a northward flow of factory-made goods has also been established.

The Shuar economic network has grown steadily in the last decades, as shown by the tendency among Shuar men to become trade partners or shamans. Trade partnership has been established even with the Achuara tribe which has been the traditional target of head

hunting raids by the Untsuri Shuar. The Achuara are well known suppliers of blowguns and curare poison, both greatly appreciated by the Untsuri Shuar.

In the social sphere, the Shuar economic network has brought about the increasing need for safe travelling across the forest. In fact, prospective shamans and trade partners are reluctant to make long distance trips to strange neighborhoods if they are not assured that their lives are not in danger. On this matter, both missionaries and the military have contributed greatly to safe travelling by enforcing Ecuadorian laws. As a consequence, intratribal killing and head hunting raids have become less and less frequent. For instance, Harner (1968:378) has pointed out that head hunting raids against the Achuara have steadily decreased during the present century, as shown by the present rate of 1 raid per year, as compared to 12 per year by the end of the 19th century.

According to the preceding discussion, the Shuar situation during the early 60's was characterized by an economic network embracing practically all Shuar territory, coupled with a declining frequency in feuding and warfare. At the same time, an external factor constituted by the advancing colonization frontier became a crucial issue for the survival of the Shuar. At this point, the Salesian proposal of establishing a Federation was certainly a welcome idea, for such an organization offered the double perspective of consolidating the current socio-economic situation of the Shuar and halting the colonist ambition for the land. That consolidation of Shuar economy was at stake is clearly supported by the fact that the Achuara have also joined the Federation.

On the other hand, it appears that acculturation among the Shuar (particularly the western group which is the promoter of the Federation) has been extensive enough as to favor the adoption of administrative structures characteristic of western institutions.

Indeed, with the establishment of the frontier system the Shuar became already involved in the administrative framework of Ecuadorian institutions. Although it is probable that the Salesian Mission may have actually imposed the structure of the Federation upon the Shuar, it was always possible for the Shuar to reject such structure had it proved operationally detrimental to their socio-economic situation. The fact that, so far, the Shuar have been successful in the management of the Federation is a clear indication that they were culturally and socially ready for this type of organization.

As seen from the framework of Ecuador's colonialist frontier system, the Shuar Federation has obviously introduced unbalance within the system. The colonist reaction against the Federation clearly reflects the search for a solution in order to counteract the perturbation operated in the status quo of internal colonialism. Needless to say, the pioneer society will attempt to desintegrate the Federation, or at least to prevent its development. Cardoso de Oliveira (1972:93) has pointed out that survival in interethnic situations is a function of the ability, on the part of the cultures in contact, to organize around economic goals. However, given the fact that the economic goals of societies in contact tend to be contradictory (in the sense that one society will tend to include the other in a colonialist relationship), the degree of organization becomes crucial for survival. According to this, the survival of the Indian society will be conditioned by a rather low degree of economic organization in the pioneer society, and viceversa, the survival of the latter will be a function of a rather loose organization of the Indian society (Cardoso de Oliveira 1972:91).

Since in lowland Ecuador both the Shuar Federation and the colonist society tend to a market economy, it is apparent that the success of either one will depend on the degree of organization developed towards this goal. However, judging from the present

situation, it can be said that the colonist society will continue to exert its dominance over the Shuar. And yet, should the government display a serious interest in the economic development of the Shuar, and modify its colonization policies, the lowlands could become the setting of an unprecedented parallel development of both pioneer and Indian societies. Eventually, economic links could be established which would gradually lead the Shuar to a fair integration in Ecuadorian society. Unfortunately, nothing like this can be foreseen in the near future, for integration of the Indian involves not only economic development, but also a complete change of attitudes on the part of the dominant society. And this is a long process that is unlikely to start under the social conditions of contemporary Ecuador.

As of now, the Shuar Federation seems to be struggling in a maze of contradictory forces. In the first place, the ambiguity of government policies is helping the Federation in some ways, but preventing its development in others. Secondly, the Salesian Mission is advocating self-sufficiency for the Shuar, but at the same time is attempting to keep a steady control over the Federation. Finally, the Federation itself is now developing a sort of administrative elite (reputedly composed of wealthy Shuar) which in the long run may be detrimental to the unity of the Shuar population. Indeed, the future of the Federation lies in the prompt resolution of these contradictions. In any case, a factor that can not be overlooked is the Shuar determination to survive both as an ethnic and cultural entity. This factor is already felt in the rest of the country and, eventually, could make a difference if further constraints operate negatively in the Shuar situation. In fact, considered in a wider perspective, the Shuar Federation constitutes one of the most active and promising Indian movements in Ecuador. It is a curious coincidence that the largest buildings in Sucua belong to the CREA, the Salesian Mission, and the Shuar Federation. These buildings will remain for

a while marking the silent confrontation of the jungle; the CREA house and the Mission center as symbols of the colonizing process, and the Federation building as a symbol of Indian liberation.



## NOTE

This document is partially based on field observations gathered during a short visit that the author and a group of students from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington made to the Upano River valley in June 1975. Quotations from Ecuadorian newspapers and other publications in Spanish are the author's translation. The terms "white" and "colonist" are used interchangeably, unless otherwise stated.

The author wishes to thank the collaboration and information provided by the CREA office in Cuenca, particularly through its President, Sr. Enrique Arizaga T., and the Chief of the Colonization Office, Sr. Augusto Abad. Valuable information was also obtained in Sucúa from the following individuals: Sr. Enrique Izquierdo, Chief of the IERAC office; Fathers Luis Carollo and Juan Shutka, Salesian missionaries; Sr. Ricardo Tankamash, President of the Shuar Federation; and Sr. Rafael Mashinklash, member of the Board of Directors.

Several individuals from the Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma, helped me in various ways during the writing of this document. I wish to thank Dr. Stephen Thompson and Ms. Peggy Flynn for useful comments and help with the English manuscript. Special thanks are due to Daniel Reff with whom I spent long hours discussing the issues raised by the Federation. His interest in this document was a constant source of encouragement during the various stages of my research.

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