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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1570s5sx>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 40(2)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

2016-03-01

DOI

10.17953/aicrj.40.2.crossen

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Safe Haven for an Indigenous Fugitive: Indigenous Internationalism and Illegal Protests

Jonathan Crossen

Over the past forty years, the movement of indigenous internationalism has grown remarkably.¹ The creation of a number of indigenous international organizations in the 1970s, namely the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), helped generate a broad base for collaboration between peoples. The establishment in 1982 of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, and in 2008, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, has secured stable centers for continued efforts. Anthropologist Ronald Niezen, among others, has correctly asserted that despite these rapid developments, scholars have too often overlooked indigenous internationalism (or to use Niezen's term, "international indigenism"). Niezen complains that violent local insurrections tend to draw a great deal of attention, even though the "international indigenous peoples' movement addresses many of the same issues that lie behind rebellions and insurrections, but without violence or even illegal forms of protest."² Formal elements of indigenous internationalism—that is, indigenous participation in existing international bodies, as well as the creation of international organizations by and for indigenous peoples—make up the largest (and likely the most effective) part of the movement. Consequently, what little attention has been paid to indigenous internationalism has focused primarily on contact between indigenous peoples and international organizations like the League of Nations³ and the United Nations,⁴ and, somewhat less frequently, on indigenous international organizations such as the IITC and WCIP.⁵

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These studies frequently fail, however, to investigate the precise nature of the relationship between the international indigenous movement and local or grassroots activism, including the rebellions, insurrections, violence, and other “illegal” forms of protest, all of which remain important elements of indigenous activism. In this article, I demonstrate that these two forms of indigenous action are not mutually exclusive. Indigenous internationalists have not always limited themselves to legal means; rather, they can maintain a highly nuanced relationship with state-run criminal justice systems and they may evade, bend, and break laws when doing so is seen to further indigenous sovereignty. Indeed, international networks of indigenous solidarity can be used precisely for this purpose, and thus this article also draws attention to those activities of the international indigenous movement that extend beyond creating and participating in formal international organizations. Indigenous internationalism also manifests on a local and personal level and contributes to the individual identities of those who build strong transnational relationships with other indigenous people.

This article will demonstrate these activities and their effects through the story of Niillas Somby, a determined Sámi activist. Deeply rooted in his own indigenous culture, Somby went to great lengths to oppose the devouring of Sámi lands by the Norwegian government’s Alta-Kautokeino Hydroelectric Project (AKHP). When faced with the state’s reaction to his protests, Somby relied on an international network of indigenous sympathizers willing to circumvent state laws in order to maintain his freedom. Somby’s story also showcases the ways in which internationalism can be exercised by indigenous peoples not only in international forums, but also at grassroots and individual levels. Somby’s position as an indigenous internationalist not only benefitted him personally, but allowed him to lend his support to the sovereigntist, cultural resurgence of other indigenous communities.

BACKGROUND: THE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT AND THE SÁMI ACTION GROUP

Somby’s transnational experience began with his participation in protests against the planned AKHP. The project planned to dam the Álttáeatnu/Guovdageainatnu (Alta/Kautokeino River) which stretches from the coastal town of Áltá, through the predominantly Sámi communities of Máze (Masi) and Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), the latter some 140 kilometers inland.⁶ As announced in 1970, the original plans proposed the complete flooding of Máze. The project was scaled back in response to local protests, but nevertheless, in November 1978 the Norwegian parliament approved a smaller hydroelectric project. Norwegian Hydro would build a 100-meter-high dam across the large river canyon by way of a new thirty-six-kilometer access road from Stilla along the small Fállelohka River (Tverrelva).⁷ For Sámi reindeer herders, both the flooding created by the dam project, and especially the riverside access road, threatened a significant loss of pastoral land. Spring grazing on the first snow-free land and marsh alongside rivers is particularly important for pregnant and nursing reindeer before the long annual trek toward summer pastures, and the area in question was an important “waiting area” for herds in the autumn.⁸ Local Sámi worried not only about

the immediate effect of the project on the productivity of reindeer herding, but also about its impact on their personal relationships, culture, and way of life.⁹

Although the older Sámi leadership was not always supportive of state policies, it had tended to be fairly quiet and conservative. Upon approval of the project, however, demonstrations against the AKHP began to signal a shift in the longstanding Sámi relationship with the Norwegian government. They were loud and public in a way that previous Sámi protests had rarely been. For example, early protests against the dam featured the first-ever use of banners by Sámi activists.¹⁰ Further protests managed to briefly raise the issue in the Norwegian Parliament in June of 1979, but ultimately the matter was not reopened to debate and construction was scheduled to begin the following month. Throughout that summer, a People's Action Group, including both Sámi and non-Sámi activists, predominantly environmentalists, established a blockade of road construction crews. Yet Niillas Somby and a number of other Sámi activists who supported the blockade were concerned that the environmental aspects of the protest—efforts to save a river—were overshadowing the particular danger the project posed to the Sámi people.¹¹ To present an indigenous-focused response to the dam, they formed the Sámi Action Group (SAG) and sought a different means of resistance.

The SAG was established with the idea that “something big had to be done—by us Saami,” but at first the precise nature of their protest was unclear.¹² It was at this juncture, in June 1979, that indigenous internationalism, by way of the world's first international indigenous cultural festival, made its first significant impact on Somby's efforts to oppose the dam project. The Davvi Šuvva festival was organized by the prominent Sámi cultural leader Áillohaš (Nils-Aslak Valkeapää) in cooperation with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and hosted by the community of Gárasavvon.¹³ During the opening ceremony, Hans Pavia Rosing (Inuit), Greenland's WCIP executive council member, declared his hope that the festival would serve to assist the international indigenous movement.¹⁴ In fact, it would inspire an alternative means of protest for the Sámi opposition to the AKHP.

At the festival, Somby was among those who attended a presentation by ethnic Kurds who described their hunger strike in Stockholm to protest the attacks on Kurds in both Iraq and Iran.¹⁵ Members of the SAG decided that this tactic could prove useful in their fight with the Norwegian government. In October, following a wave of mass arrests of protesters at the blockade in Stilla, they travelled to Oslo. Somby and at least four other men and two women erected a Sámi *lávvu* tent at Eidsvoll's Plass next to the Parliament buildings, and formally announced that they were starting their own hunger strike, the first in Norwegian history.¹⁶ Their written ultimatum to the government demanded that AKHP construction be halted until the issue of Sámi status and rights were settled.¹⁷ As well as providing the idea for the means of protest, indigenous internationalism also inspired the nature of the demands to some degree. Henry Minde contends that the conception of Sámi as an indigenous people was a largely new idea, one which had resulted from Sámi participation in the WCIP and the UN's “Martinez Cobo” Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations.¹⁸ Growing Sámi self-identification as an indigenous people helped to provide a basis on which to justify claims to land title and to generate a cultural resurgence.

The Sámi rights movement was largely united in its opposition to the hydroelectric project, but increasingly divided on protest tactics. The hunger strikers were taking quite a radical step by the standards of both Sámi and Norwegian societies, and despite the indigenous focus of their action, they received little if any formal support from any Sámi organization.¹⁹ In fact, the protests over the construction of the AKHP had highlighted (or even created) political tensions within the Sámi community. Established Sámi organizations like the Norwegian Sami Association (*Norgga Sámiid Riihkasearvi*) tended to focus their demands “on cultural matters, in preference to land and water rights.”²⁰ The increasing politicization throughout Sápmi²¹ even led to the 1979 creation of a new National Association of the Sami (*Samenes Landsforbund*) in Norway, which insisted that Sámi people “should have respect and esteem for Norwegian authorities” and which “rejected all actions in connection with the Alta affair.”²² Others, including future Sámi leaders like Ole Henrik Magga, were inspired by the slogan *Čájehehket Sámi Vuoiŋŋa* (ČSV; “show Sámi spirit”) to reclaim their language and culture with pride, and to fight against the hydroelectric project primarily with words, through established Sámi organizations.²³ Still others, such as Niillas Somby, interpreted the ČSV slogan to entail more drastic and more direct action, if necessary, to prevent the flooding of Sámi lands.

In comparison to the mixed reaction of Sámi society to the direct action protests at Stilla and the hunger strike in Oslo, international indigenous representatives were rather more supportive of the more radical segments of the Sámi population. Notably, Cree musician Buffy Sainte-Marie showed her support for those blockading the road at Stilla. According to Somby, her presence “gave us lots of power, but it also woke up society.”²⁴ Additionally, WCIP President George Manuel (Secwepemc), among the most notable representatives of indigenous internationalism at the time, had already signaled his allegiances long before the blockade began. In June 1976, following his speech to the Ninth Nordic Sami Conference in Anár, he ended with a declaration of “ČSV” which, according to Manuel, was “met with cheers from the young and the very old, but met with stoney faced coldness from the middle-age Sami generation of conservatives.”²⁵ Although George Manuel was not particularly radical in his own protest tactics, his support for indigenous internationalism as a movement had helped create a broad network where one might find like-minded allies outside one’s own community. Although Norway’s national Sámi organizations never officially supported the hunger strikers, Somby and his colleagues began to receive letters of support from other indigenous organizations around the globe.²⁶ In less than a week, they achieved significant results: on October 15, the Norwegian government agreed to postpone construction of the dam until “the Sami’s legitimate rights” could be investigated.²⁷

In January 1980, however, the government decided to proceed with development, and protests resumed. The conflict continued through 1981. Police began another (and much larger) series of mass arrests. Protesters launched another hunger strike in Oslo, and a group of Sámi women occupied the office of the newly elected prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland.²⁸ In the face of the government’s continued hostility toward protestors, the encampments at the site were disassembled in January 1982. On February 26, a unanimous Supreme Court decision upheld the right of

the state to build the dam: “The Court did not consider the Saami living in the area affected by the project to be an indigenous people under the terms of International Common Law. . . . Alta was under Norwegian jurisdiction.”²⁹ For Niillas Somby, the decision was a slap in the face. He had, in his own words, naively believed in a universality of justice and had expected that “because this land always had belonged to us . . . used for reindeer herding . . . from time immemorial,” the courts would rule in favor of the Sámi.³⁰ Although the movement against the dam project seemed to be collapsing, Somby’s accumulated frustration with the government’s apparent hostility toward the Sámi—starting with his personal experiences of the country’s assimilationist Norwegianization policy while in boarding school and culminating with the Supreme Court decision—left him full of pain and anger, and pushed him toward a new means of resistance.³¹

A HARD STATEMENT

Having experimented with different forms of political action that had ultimately yielded minimal results, some Sámi activists formed what Somby calls a “hard group” that decided to make a “hard statement.”³² Not long after the Supreme Court decision, Somby and a radical Sámi activist named John-Reier Martinsen chose the focal point for their demonstration: a bridge over the Fállejohka (Tverrelva River), part of the service road to the planned power plant.³³ On the night of March 19, 1982, they traveled there by snowmobile with two sticks of dynamite and some flares. While there is some debate about their intentions, Somby insists that it was never in their minds to actually blow up the bridge with such a small amount of dynamite. Rather, they wanted to make a show with loud explosions and flashes of light as a signal to the government where the protests might go “if you take it further.”³⁴

Somby realized they did not have the resources to fight the Norwegian state in actual combat. On the other hand, he knew that various members of parliament were preoccupied with Cold War fears of Soviet intervention, especially because of their shared border, and were worried that the Sámi might have allies behind the Iron Curtain. As Somby recalls, “they could easily arrest us, the whole of Sápmi if they wanted, but they were very scared if there were other bigger groups behind, that were supporting us. And that string we played on.”³⁵ Somby was able and willing to exploit those concerns without needing any actual Soviet allies for the work.³⁶ Indeed, at least for a time, the chief of the Police Surveillance Agency for northern Norway, Helge Claussen, was convinced that the KGB had assisted Martinsen and Somby in their plans.³⁷

The demonstration at the river did not go as planned. Somby and Martinsen placed the explosives under the bridge, having already connected them to alarm clocks so they would explode at 5:00 a.m.³⁸ That night, however, the temperature had dropped very low, and Martinsen noticed that the battery for one of the clocks had frozen. Somby had a fresh, warm AA battery in his pocket to use as a substitute, but when he removed the old one from the clock, the explosives detonated right in front of him.³⁹ Martinsen struggled to get his injured friend to the health center in Áltá, and from there Somby was transported to the hospital in Romsa (Tromsø). By the time

he arrived, doctors needed to amputate half of his left arm, and he also lost the vision in his left eye.⁴⁰

When Somby awoke in the hospital, he was surrounded by police. His communication with the outside world was greatly restricted, and even doctors were closely monitored.⁴¹ Somby was transferred to prison, where he was charged with Norwegian Penal Code section 148, which provides for those who cause “fire, collapse, explosion, flood . . . which may easily result in loss of human life or extensive destruction of another person’s property.”⁴² The charge carried a maximum sentence of twenty-one years of imprisonment. Terrified of spending the next two decades in prison, convinced the Norwegian courts would not treat him fairly, and refused bail in the meantime, Somby looked for an escape: “I had to trick them to get out from jail before the court case.”⁴³ He stopped eating the meals provided to him, claimed he had seen the guards poisoning his food, and eventually convinced his captors that he was going insane in prison.⁴⁴ After some months, Somby was informed that he would be released on bail out of concern for his mental and physical health.⁴⁵ Yet Somby’s trial still loomed. He was convinced that if he stood trial, he would spend at least the next ten to twelve years in prison.⁴⁶ If he was to avoid the trial, he would need to escape the reach of the Norwegian police. That meant finding a place to go and someone to host him.

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS ASSISTANCE FOR A FUGITIVE ACTIVIST

Somby’s international escape resulted from the use of a combination of personal and international networks. The latter was, in many ways, a new possibility. Indigenous peoples whose territories and communities are divided by colonial borders have often used that position to their advantage when possible, but in Somby’s case, the connection was far more remote: rather than relying upon traditional ties, it was the product of the international indigenous movement. First, to evade the Norwegian police Somby relied on the help of those within his own community. Together with family and close friends, Somby devised a plan and in early September, once the twenty-four-hour daylight of the arctic summer had passed and darkness could conceal Somby’s nighttime departure from police surveillance, they put it into action. He traveled to Kárášjohka, where his hair was bleached to match the passport he had acquired and he donned a dress suit.⁴⁷ He then crossed the Finnish border, covertly switching cars in case he was being followed by police. Somby caught a night train to Helsinki, then a transatlantic flight to Toronto, Ontario with a connecting flight north to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.⁴⁸ Believing their telephones to be tapped, Somby’s friends and family tried to mask his absence by calling each other to give short fictional accounts of his daily activities (going fishing and so on).⁴⁹

Somby’s destination of Yellowknife was largely determined by informal international ties between indigenous artists that had also originated at the Davvi Šuvva festival. After seeing Niilla’s brother Ánde Somby perform at Davvi Šuvva, a Cree hoop dancer named Bill Brittain invited him in July 1982 to *joik* at an event called the World Assembly of First Nations in Regina.⁵⁰ While there, Ánde met and gained enormous respect for Th̄ch̄q leader James Wah-Shee; later, when devising his brother’s

escape, he suggested Wah-Shee as a potential host.⁵¹ Wah-Shee did not appear to be particularly radical, but to Ánde, he seemed to have a good grasp of the system and to be very trustworthy.⁵² Wah-Shee had already demonstrated his commitment to the idea of indigenous internationalism, in part through his participation in the 1973 Arctic Peoples' Conference, which made him a good prospect for assistance.⁵³ Somby arrived in Yellowknife with a letter addressed to Wah-Shee, in which Ánde introduced his brother Niillas and asked the Tłı̨ch̨ leader to take care of him.⁵⁴ Although Somby spent a few weeks in Yellowknife, Wah-Shee felt he did not have the resources to support his surprise guest, so he reached out to the most logical source of assistance: the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP). Although George Manuel was the WCIP president at the time, Marie Smallface-Marule (Káínawa) served as the executive coordinator of the organization's secretariat, headquartered at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta. Wah-Shee arranged to transfer Somby into the care of Smallface-Marule in early October.⁵⁵

Smallface-Marule organized an unofficial planning meeting, which included Manuel, to decide how best to support the Sámi fugitive. They were in a delicate situation. Surely they risked some legal ramifications by assisting someone who was wanted by the police and who had crossed the Canadian border under false pretenses. Moreover, they needed to demonstrate due respect for the Sami Council. Aslak Nils Sarah, who represented the Sami Council as WCIP vice-president, had formally disassociated himself from Somby's actions.⁵⁶ By contrast, Somby and his fellow hunger strikers, never mind his smaller "hard group," had no affiliation with the World Council, so Manuel and Smallface-Marule had no formal obligation to help him. Nevertheless, they went to rather extraordinary lengths to secure his safety. Somby was transported to Vancouver Island and the WJOLELP (Tsartlip) reserve on Brentwood Bay, where he stayed in the longhouse of Philip Paul, a close friend and adviser of George Manuel's, and a founding member of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, of which Manuel had recently served as president.⁵⁷ While wary of appearing to be openly involved in Somby's case, indigenous internationalists such as Wah-Shee, Smallface-Marule, and Manuel nonetheless arranged for him to be housed with a sympathetic indigenous community, regardless of his legal status with the Norwegian and Canadian states, or the legality of their own efforts to assist a fugitive.

INDIGENOUS INTERNATIONALISM AS A PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EXCHANGE

Although studies of indigenous internationalism tend to focus on the benefits of cooperation between formal indigenous organizations, Somby's story demonstrates that international cultural exchange can also have a profound personal effect on one's private indigenous identity. Beyond the personal security it offered, Somby found that the time he lived in Phillip Paul's longhouse strengthened his Sámi identity. Every evening, Paul would visit and they would have "long talks about spirituality."⁵⁸ Somby was a relatively rare individual among his people to have much interest in the topic, since the vast majority of Sámi were Christian. He had gained knowledge of Sámi spirituality during the summer he spent at his grandfather's side near the village of

Buolbmat, and later through contact with Knuvtt Ovlla, “a traditional spiritual man” in the coastal village of Stuuravuonna.⁵⁹ As a result, Somby conversed with Paul as an equal, and came away feeling “a much stronger person spiritually” than he had previously.⁶⁰

The main Sámi political organizations in Norway were not officially Christian but many of their members were, which contributed to Somby’s distrust of those organizations and their leadership.⁶¹ A notable exception among prominent Sámi activists was Áillohaš, an enthusiastic spokesman for international indigenous cooperation, who also was critical of the colonizing influence of Christianity. In *Greetings from Lappland*, Áillohaš quotes an adage from Africa: “‘The whites came to Africa with the Bible in their hands, when the blacks controlled the land. After a while, the blacks had the Bible in their hands and the whites had the land.’ The same sort of thing can be said of Samiland and the Samis.”⁶² Somby shared this understanding of the relationship between religious conversion, cultural assimilation, and the colonization of indigenous land, but his conversations with Phillip Paul greatly developed his thoughts.

Somby’s view of Christianity was also affected by a funeral he attended elsewhere on the West Coast during his time as a fugitive. When the guests arrived at the cemetery, the family was shocked to find a priest waiting for them. The man was kindly escorted out so that a traditional indigenous ceremony could take place. As Somby recalls, that was the first time he had ever seen a priest chased away from a burial, something he expects “has never happened, and . . . will maybe never happen in Sápmi.”⁶³ Yet the forceful rejection of assimilation that he witnessed inspired him with hope for the survival of indigenous spiritualities. Although these experiences occurred far from Somby’s homeland, they deeply affected his view of Sámi spirituality and his criticisms of Christianity. Rather than any participation in a formal international organization or event, it was this exposure to very local circumstances and a transnational indigenous cultural and spiritual exchange that actually served to strengthen Somby’s sense of Sámi identity, as well as to build a new (and international) indigenous identity based on a common resistance to colonialism.

ADOPTION OF A STRUGGLE

Only later did Somby realize the conversations he had with Paul were partly an examination of his character and beliefs.⁶⁴ Evidently, Somby passed the test, as a special ceremony was later arranged for his adoption by several indigenous nations. Somby was transported to his adoption ceremony in the back of a truck with five armed men.⁶⁵ The ceremony was conducted on November 27 on the Secwepemc “Sugar Cane” reserve near Williams Lake, British Columbia, and attended by approximately three hundred people.⁶⁶ The precise reason for this choice of location is unclear, but it likely resulted from the influence of two Secwepemc leaders, WCIP President George Manuel and his son Robert (Bob) Manuel, who was then serving as president of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). Somby was formally adopted by the Nuxálk, the Xai:sla (Haisla), the Mowachaht, and the Tsilhqot’in peoples, with the ceremonial adoption conducted by a hereditary Nuxálk chief, Nuximlayc (Lawrence

Pootlass).⁶⁷ At the ceremony, one of the elders in attendance gave Somby the adopted name of “Pinquid,” which roughly translates to “mountain goat warrior.”⁶⁸ His adoptive nations “pledged to treat him like a brother, to help him under all circumstances.”⁶⁹

The purpose of the adoption was threefold. Firstly, it was intended to aid in securing Somby’s safety from any potential threat of extradition by the Canadian or Norwegian governments. Secondly, it was intended as a proud assertion of indigenous sovereignty rights. Because neither the Canadian nor the Norwegian police knew where Somby was living, the adoption ceremony cannot be seen as a reaction to any immediate threat of state action. Rather, it was an act of indigenous resurgence and a reclaiming of traditional culture. It was an opportunity for those involved to practice an adoption ceremony and to demonstrate their indigenous sovereignty to themselves. This suggests, as Taiaiake Alfred has proposed, a collapsing of the distinction between ends and means—in other words, living out cultural resurgence while simultaneously asserting indigenous sovereignty in the face of colonial suppression.⁷⁰ Thirdly, despite this inward focus, the ceremony was at least partially a public challenge to the claimed sovereignty of the Canadian government, aimed at putting the Canadian state on the defensive. Although Canadian journalists were not invited to attend the adoption ceremony, limited details were announced in advance in the Canadian media.⁷¹ The international adoption of Niillas Somby gave these indigenous nations the opportunity to challenge the Canadian government’s claim to sovereignty while simultaneously assisting a man they perceived to be a peer and strengthening their own sense of indigenous nationhood.

Upon hearing about the adoption ceremony, the immigration and passport section of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Calgary began a formal investigation into Somby’s location and the legality of his residence. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples was immediately suspect.⁷² Just days after the adoption ceremony, police questioned Shane Houston (a Gangulu man from Australia who spent a year working for the WCIP) about Somby after he told a government immigration clerk that he was staying at the home of Marie Smallface-Marule.⁷³ Apparently, it was a bit of an “open secret” that the World Council’s secretariat was assisting Somby in spite of his legal status with the Canadian government. In early December, Somby’s wife Dagny traveled to Lethbridge with their children Anja (age eight) and Risten (age six), hoping to reunite the family.⁷⁴ Upon her arrival at the nearby Calgary airport, immigration officials questioned her for more than six hours. According to Dagny Somby, when they found out where she was planning to stay during her visit, officials became suspicious. She “gave them [Smallface-Marule’s] name and at once there were problems.”⁷⁵ Smallface-Marule helped secure a \$1,500 bond from a friend which, together with Dagny Somby’s \$500 bond and promise not to outstay her visitor’s visa, convinced authorities not to deport the mother and her daughters. Smallface-Marule may have been acting unofficially, but her position as executive coordinator for the World Council is a logical reason for her role in aiding the Sombys.

In early January, the reunited family was happy to learn that the Norwegian government had made a formal statement that it would not request Somby’s extradition.⁷⁶ Moreover, the government’s charges against him had been drastically reduced

the previous November. Instead of facing a maximum of twenty-one years in prison for arson, Somby was now charged with destroying government property, which carried a maximum sentence of two years.⁷⁷ John-Reier Martinsen had been convicted in court at Hammerfest, but received only a very minimal sentence and no actual prison time, proving that Somby no longer needed to fear long-term incarceration.⁷⁸

Despite the reduced charges by the Norwegian government and the mounting investigation by Canadian officials, the Sombys opted not to return home. Eventually, the family was relocated again, to the reserve of the Dakelh nation of Lhooskúz, located directly south of Fort Fraser and west of Quesnel, British Columbia. Situated at the southern end of the Nechako mountain range, the Lhooskúz made up a small, isolated community determined to maintain its independence. At the time Somby and his family arrived, there were only a handful of houses on the reserve, and no road in; access was by horse, foot, air, or snowmobile. Furthermore, frustrated with the government and its policies, the Lhooskúz people had decided to refuse state funding. Between 1980 and 1986, they rejected any government funds for the community except welfare payments for elders, and the community was deeply reliant on the environment for survival.⁷⁹ Without much money, the Sombys shared a home with another family and lived primarily on moose and fish, which Niillas hunted and caught himself.⁸⁰ He helped trap mink and other small fur-bearing animals to sell, which provided their only real source of monetary income for basic necessities.⁸¹

Such a drastic change surely proved challenging for the family, yet Somby still refused to return to face Norwegian courts. The explanation for this difficult decision lies in his growing sense of indigenous identity and the associated loyalty he felt to his new community and their struggle. For the Nuxálk and other nations to agree to adopt and protect Somby was a rare honor. Now these indigenous nations were determined to use the case as a means to demonstrate their sovereignty to the Canadian government. To use Somby's own words, the Nuxálk people "claimed that they had the right to give asylum to whomever, because it's their land. And that became, then, the issue, to have a fight about that, because my fight was already over."⁸² He felt that to give up and go home would undermine Nuxálk efforts to assert their sovereignty. Originating with the Davvi Šuvva festival and the WCIP, the international linkages that had provided a means of escape for Somby in the summer of 1982 had been thin, but his personal relationships strengthened these ties enormously, creating a united effort to defend indigenous sovereignty.

PUBLIC ASSERTIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND SOLIDARITY

The dénouement of Somby's story showcases the ways in which he and the Nuxálk people were able to collaborate for mutual benefit. Despite being announced in the media, the demonstration of indigenous sovereignty enacted by Somby's adoption was largely evoked for those involved rather than for the Canadian state. As time wore on, both Somby and his adoptive nations chose to make their challenge to the state more public, demanding recognition of their indigenous sovereignty—first in the media, and then in the courtroom. Throughout 1983, attention to Somby's presence cooled.

The Norwegian government never made much comment about his whereabouts, likely hoping to avoid further negative international attention to the Alta-Kautokeino Hydroelectric Project. The Canadian government seemed to lose interest as well. While media coverage had been scarce in 1982, it dropped off completely the following year. Somby asserts that UBCIC President Bob Manuel had struck a quiet agreement with External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachern: so long as Somby was keeping a low profile, immigration officials were happy to avoid conflict.⁸³

The situation changed when Somby's sister became ill and his parents were having difficulties, which gave him increased reason to return home.⁸⁴ Around the same time, *W5*, a Canadian television news magazine, requested an interview about Somby's adoption. Before agreeing, Somby arranged a meeting with Nuxálk elders and explained the situation. Some media attention would allow a more prominent public statement of Nuxálk sovereignty and a challenge to the Canadian state. If the case came before Canadian courts, a loss would likely mean deportation, but since Somby wanted to return to Sápmi anyway, it seemed worth the risk. The Sombys moved from their home with the Lhoosk'uz to Nuxálk territory on the coast in the spring of 1984.⁸⁵ There, Dagny, Anja, and Risten were also adopted in a second ceremony and given Nuxálk names.⁸⁶

Somby's whereabouts were voluntarily made public in May, and immigration authorities were effectively dared to take action. The authorities responded to the challenge, asking Somby to report to an immigration office in Kamloops or Prince George for an interview. He again consulted the Nuxálk leadership, who asked him to stay; they would request a meeting with Immigration Minister John Roberts and proclaim, once again, their sovereign status.⁸⁷ In a newspaper interview, Elected Chief Qwatsinas (Edward Moody) was explicit about the Nuxálk challenge to Canadian immigration laws: "The question is whether he, as one of our adopted people, can be deported."⁸⁸ For his part, Somby asserted his loyalty to his adopted nation: "I would be undermining the tribal authority if I asked for a Canadian passport. If I need one, I'll ask for a Nuxálk passport."⁸⁹ In late July, Roberts replied with another letter, again asking Somby to report for an immigration hearing. In August, Chief Nuximlayc announced that the Nuxálk nation refused to turn Somby over and insisted that the federal Government should not interfere in Nuxálk internal affairs.⁹⁰ The statement emphasized that the Nuxálk people had declared their position on citizenship in July in a statement to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations.⁹¹ Now they were acting out that sovereignty in practice, not through an international forum, but in international solidarity with an adopted Sámi member of the Nuxálk nation.

Late that summer, the *W5* crew arrived for two days of filming. It was a tremendous opportunity not only for Somby to explain his case and the protests of the Sámi, but also for his hosts to publicly assert their own sovereignty. In just a fourteen-minute news story, Somby and his network of allies were able to introduce the concept of international indigeneity as a shared experience of resistance to invasion and colonization. The show's anchor introduced the story by acknowledging the global interest in indigenous rights: "The struggle for Native rights is not an exclusively Canadian issue. Native people worldwide are fighting for self-government and financial independence.

Sometimes that struggle crosses international boundaries.⁹² The reporting journalist characterized the history of Sámi/Norwegian relations as one of “colonization,” and an interview with Sámi activist Bjarne Store-Jakobsen only reinforced the comparison with indigenous peoples from the Americas, describing an oppressive relationship with Norwegians who “looked on us as savages and as people they would like to civilize. They tried to take away our culture and our language and our way of living . . . and tried to assimilate us into the Norwegian system.”⁹³ Certainly, this history would have sounded very similar to anyone familiar with Canadian state policies towards indigenous peoples.

The broadcast also stressed the similarities in their means of resistance. Somby’s determination to protect Sámi culture and language was compared with the Nuxáلك language schools set up for local children. Somby was explicit in the comparison: “I know people here are working for the very same thing that we are doing at home. They are struggling about having self-determination here. And with me being here, it’s just a part of that self-determination.”⁹⁴ Because their fight was the same, Somby’s presence among the Nuxáلك reinforced both Nuxáلك and Sámi sovereignty through a shared demand for indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination.

While the bulk of the broadcast focused on the details of Somby’s story, it featured a brief interview with Bill Tallio of the Nuxáلك Nation Council that made explicit the intertwined relationship between the adoptions of the Somby family and Nuxáلك resurgence. Tallio described the action as “a way of demonstrating that we are going ahead with what we want to do for our people . . . to make sure our people survive. If a little act of adopting some people from another country is gonna help then we’ll have to do it.”⁹⁵ Thus, the adoptions were not just political pageantry, but an effort to sustain, restore, and strengthen indigenous culture and sovereignty precisely by exercising them. Furthermore, Chief Nuximlayc seemed unworried by the Somby family’s potential deportation, emphasizing that both Nuxáلك cultural practice and Somby’s indigenous identity were beyond the reach of the Canadian or Norwegian states. The Sámi adoptee would always be Nuxáلك, and “they can’t take that away even if they put him in jail . . . or send him back to his homeland in Samiland.”⁹⁶ Resurgent indigenous culture, identity, and spirituality would continue to fortify indigenous people like Somby, even in the face of continued colonialism.

On October 1, 1984, the Sombys had left Nuxáلك territory and were visiting their friend Bjarne Store-Jakobsen in Fort MacLeod, Alberta, when the police arrived and arrested Niillas and Dagny.⁹⁷ Dagny was quickly released on bail and she returned to the Nuxáلك nation with her children, but Niillas was kept in prison and refused bail.⁹⁸ He was charged for not possessing a passport; for overstaying his visitor’s status; for not declaring, upon entering the country, that at the age of eighteen he had incurred an impaired driving charge in Norway; and for being “a political subversive.”⁹⁹

The hearing afforded Somby and his allies a tremendous opportunity. It allowed them to challenge the Canadian state directly in the courtroom, and, just like the W5 news story, to publicize the Sámi conflict with the Norwegian government, make local assertions of indigenous sovereignty, and promote the broader concept of indigenous internationalism. They brought as much media attention to the hearing as

they could. Somby's legal counsel Louise Mandell, the in-house lawyer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, had to fight to ensure the hearing would be open to the public so that more people could attend, including journalists.¹⁰⁰ According to Mandell, the intention of the case was not to set legal precedent, but rather to "demonstrate that Indigenous peoples still demanded the right to exercise their own laws, asserting their own jurisdiction in a conscious way."¹⁰¹ Both at the hearing and in the media, Somby's allies accused the Canadian state of hypocrisy in rejecting the legitimacy of Somby's adoption, and also argued for the sovereign right of any indigenous people to adopt whomever they chose. Chief Nuximlayc commented publicly that Sir Alexander Mackenzie was adopted by the Nuxálk people, who helped him complete his famous transcontinental trek in 1793.¹⁰² Traditional Káínawa Chief Shot Both Sides added that "Canada's first Indian senator," James Gladstone, "wasn't born an Indian but was adopted . . . by Crop Eared Wolf" of the Káínawa nation.¹⁰³ Mandell also attempted to make the case that the Canadian government's wish to deport Somby violated fundamental principles of constitutional and international law.¹⁰⁴ There were precedents, including the 1867 Quebec Supreme Court decision in *Connolly v. Woolrich*, to show that "Indigenous laws and legal orders preexisted and survived the assertion of crown sovereignty, affirming customary international law."¹⁰⁵

Indigenous internationalism was conspicuous during the hearing, both in and outside the courtroom. Somby again received support from the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, this time formally. Clem Chartier, the recently elected president of the WCIP, announced that he had sent a telex to Canada's Immigration Minister requesting Somby's release on bail while some kind of deal was negotiated.¹⁰⁶ Hans Pavia Rosing, an Inuit former member of the WCIP Executive Council, requested that the Government of Greenland grant Somby asylum.¹⁰⁷ Other prominent Indigenous internationalists like George Manuel and Marie Smallface-Marule testified at the hearing.¹⁰⁸

Both in the preparations and the hearing itself, Somby managed to showcase his new complex identity not only as both a Nuxálk and a Sámi, but also a committed indigenous internationalist. His testimony echoed the World Council of Indigenous Peoples' understanding of indigenous internationalism as a shared experience of, and ongoing resistance to, invasion and colonization.¹⁰⁹ From early on, Somby declared his intention to bring attention to the similar situations of all indigenous peoples: "I'm trying to expose the colonizers and the treatment put on the indigenous people. It's very much the same as in other countries."¹¹⁰ His later testimony further emphasized the colonial oppression of indigenous peoples through a variety of means around the globe, effectively calling into question the impartiality of the court: "The Colonials are always trying to kill the indigenous peoples' way of living—that is our religions, our economics, our laws, our languages and our self-respect. There [*sic*] killing tools have always been the colonial churches, their war machines, their courts and legal systems—or rather their illegal court systems."¹¹¹ Somby's emphasis was plainly on the colonial nature of the Canadian government, with the intention to undermine the Canadian state's narrative of a specific "domestic" relationship with "its" indigenous peoples in

favor of an indigenous internationalist narrative of colonialism, with particularities that varied only by degree around the globe.

Others who were called to testify also attempted to represent both their local and internationalist identities, drawing links between their own people's sovereignty and oppression and those of indigenous peoples everywhere. George Manuel "reaffirmed Somy's statements about oppression of Indigenous peoples throughout the world" but also described the history of Secwepemc interactions with Europeans.¹¹² The testimony of Piikani elder and researcher Albert Yellowhorn stressed that indigenous sovereignty had never been relinquished to the Canadian state, and then questioned the legitimacy of Treaty Seven, which concerned the very lands upon which the hearing itself was being conducted.¹¹³ In short, the hearing showcased the strength of indigenous internationalism as a framework to understand indigenous/state power relations in various contexts.

SUCSESSES AND FAILURES

In some ways, the results of this case might suggest a complete failure of indigenous protest, legal or illegal. Somy's hearing was completed on November 19, 1984, and the adjudicator delivered his decision against Somy one week later.¹¹⁴ Somy and his family were deported to Norway in early December. Their adoptive indigenous communities were unable to convince the Canadian state to respect indigenous law and sovereignty. Moreover, Somy's "hard statement" ultimately proved to be no more effective in convincing the Norwegian government than legal protests had been. The barricades at Stella, the hunger strike, and Somy and Martinsen's action at the Fállelohka bridge all failed to prevent the Alta-Kautokeino Hydroelectric Project. The power station was running by 1987.¹¹⁵

Nevertheless, by legal and illegal means, Somy and his supporters did achieve some real, albeit limited, successes. Somy's semi-public adoption undoubtedly drew unwanted attention both to the AKHP and to the state's severe initial reaction to the explosion. Although the hydroelectric project was not halted, the Norwegian prosecutor's decision to substantially reduce the charges against Somy and the Norwegian government's decision not to seek his extradition suggest that this negative international attention was not without effect. Upon his return, Somy was convicted by a Norwegian court, but sentenced to the six months' time already served, so he was not required to return to prison.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, by adopting and protecting Somy and his family, Nuxálk and others effectively exercised their sovereignty for more than two years, by which time their new Sámi members wanted to return home.

The actions of Somy and his hosts make it clear that indigenous internationalists and international organizations are not necessarily opposed to actions that contravene state laws in all cases. Whatever the intention behind Somy and Martinsen's "hard statement" at the bridge, the action itself was not within the boundaries of Norwegian law, and these actions received no direct support, in planning or implementation, from any indigenous organization, international or otherwise. On the other hand, Somy's escape from prosecution by the Norwegian state and his concealment from

the Canadian state were indeed supported by committed indigenous internationalists and, albeit quietly, by the secretariat of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. The WCIP collaborated with the Nuxálk and other indigenous peoples to shield Somby from deportation as much as possible, in ways that were quasi-legal at best.¹¹⁷ As indigenous internationalists, they were motivated to bend or even break state laws partly to support Somby, but also to insist that indigenous law has not been superseded by the law of the colonizers. Defying the Canadian criminal justice system was not merely a means to protect a man from punishment, but a conscious act of indigenous sovereignty.

Somby's personal experience also helps demonstrate that indigenous internationalism produces results that go beyond the creation of new international bodies, instruments, or agreements. Somby's adoption had a profound effect on his spirituality and sense of identity. Of his time as a refugee, Somby later recalled, "I learned what is the most important thing in my life: that one must honor his ancestors."¹¹⁸ Significantly, he increasingly recognized how the historical case of his relative Mons Aslaksen Somby represented the oppression of Sámi who had fought for their rights more than a century earlier. In 1854, Mons Somby had been convicted of leading a small insurrection against increased Norwegian government, church, and business intrusions into Sámi society.¹¹⁹ Mons Somby and his co-accused, Aslak Jacobsen Hætta, were executed by beheading. Their bodies were buried near Áltá, but their skulls were shipped to Oslo and added to the collection of the Anatomical Institute at the Royal Frederick University (now the University of Oslo).¹²⁰ The fate of his nineteenth-century relative echoed Niillas' own experience—the Norwegian police retained his severed arm as criminal evidence during his entire time abroad—and apparently, his sympathy for Mons Somby's dispersed remains had grown since 1982.¹²¹ Ánde Somby still remembers waiting at the airport alongside members of the Nordic press upon his brother's return to Sápmi. After the plane landed, one reporter shouted, "Mr. Somby, what now?" Niillas held up his arm, and declared, "I lost an arm. Mons Somby lost his head. We were in the same fight. I want my arm back and I want Mons Somby's head back."¹²² After a failed battle with Canadian immigration authorities, Somby chose not to abandon his political resolve. Rather, he moved on to a new fight, one rooted in Sámi history. The struggle to return the skulls from Oslo served to illustrate that the Norwegian state's relations with the Sámi people had long been violent and coercive, subverting the government's narrative of itself as a positive civilizing force.

Personal transformation resulting from indigenous internationalism was not unique to Somby. As testimony given at Somby's deportation hearing demonstrates, he and his supporters attempted to express a new part of their identity, not merely as members of their family, clan or people, but as indigenous people, a new global concept. Although only Somby was formally adopted, fervent indigenous internationalists like Marie Smallface-Marule and George Manuel felt a sense of duty and solidarity that extended beyond their own nations. Moreover, support from the WCIP and the adoption of the Somby family helped to demonstrate to the Sámi that their conflict with state governments was not unique, but part of a broader movement of global indigenous resistance. As Ánde Somby sees it, his brother's story was important

for the Sámi because it managed to prove that “Indigenous peoples can [also] have foreign policy.”¹²³ Sámi activists have continued to be involved in indigenous internationalism (both within and outside the Sami Council) long after the collapse of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1997.

Acknowledgments

I extend my thanks once again to the numerous interviewees who agreed to speak with me, both on and off the record, for their patience, generosity, and support. Many of these interviews were made possible by a research stay at the University of Tromsø's Centre for Sami Studies, funded by the Research Council of Norway's Leiv Eiriksson mobility program.

NOTES

1. Given that indigenous peoples are nations unto themselves, indigenous internationalism extends back into time immemorial. For the sake of this paper, however, I will be discussing indigenous internationalism as a modern global movement.

2. Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 15–16.

3. See, *inter alia*, Grace Li Xiu Woo, “Canada's Forgotten Founders: The Modern Significance of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Application for Membership in the League of Nations,” *Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal* 2003, no. 1, http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/ugd/2003_1/woo/.

4. See, *inter alia*, Jens Dahl, *The Indigenous Space and Marginalized Peoples in the United Nations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

5. See, *inter alia*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indians of the Americas: Human Rights and Self-Determination* (New York: Praeger Pub, 1984), 27–69.

6. In 1982, Robert Paine asserts that more than 80% of the 2000 community members in Guovdageaidnu used Sámeigiella as their mother tongue, and nearly all of Máze's 400 villagers did as well. Robert Paine, *Dam a River, Damn A People? Saami (Lapp) Livelihood and the Alta-Kautokeino Hydro-electric Project and the Norwegian Parliament* (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1982), 2, http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0102_45_Dam_a_river.pdf.

7. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

8. *Ibid.*, 16–18, 44.

9. *Ibid.*, 81–89, 96–97.

10. Harald Eidheim, “Ethno-Political Development among the Sami after World War II: The Invention of Selfhood,” in *Sami Culture in a New Era: The Norwegian Sami Experience*, ed. Harald Gaski (Karasjohka: Davvi Girji OS, 1997), 48.

11. Robert Paine, “Ethnodrama and the ‘Fourth World’: The Saami Action Group in Norway, 1979–1981,” in *Indigenous Peoples and the Nation State: “Fourth World” Politics in Canada, Australia and Norway*, Social and Economic Papers No. 14, ed. Noel Dyck (St. John's: Institute for Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1985), 193–94.

12. *Ibid.*, 194.

13. Áillohaš had been chosen as the first and only cultural coordinator for the WCIP at the organization's second General Assembly in 1977. September 29, 1977 letter from George Manuel

(WCIP) to Leif Rantala (Nordic Sami Council), Sami Archives, Nordic Sami Institute Fonds, Series Db (Organization) 003, Sámiráđđi (Ark2.2), Box 62, Folder 17. For more on Áillohaš, see Kathleen Osgood Dana, "Áillohaš the Shaman-Poet and his Govadas-Image Drum: A Literary Ecology of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää," PhD dissertation (University of Oulu, 2003), 69. For a detailed history of Davvi Šuvva, see Synnøve Angell, "Davvi Šuvva 1979: Being Sámi, Becoming Indigenous: Vocal and Musical Manifestation of Sámi and Indigenous Movement," MA thesis (University of Tromsø, 2009).

14. Rosing would soon serve as the first president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. Angell, "Davvi Šuvva 1979," 56–57.

15. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013; Angell, "Davvi Šuvva 1979," 72. Unfortunately, I have been able to find almost no information on the delegates or this protest and its precise purposes. Kurds do not generally identify as indigenous peoples but they were nevertheless invited to attend the festival. Angell, "Davvi Šuvva 1979," 57, 94.

16. The number of hunger strikers is commonly given as seven, but Somby insists there were actually more participating. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013; Paine, "Ethnodrama and the 'Fourth World,'" 194; Ánde Somby, "The Alta-Case: A Story About How Another Hydroelectric Dam-Project Was Forced Through in Norway," *Indigenous Affairs* 3–4 (June/December 1999): 58, http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/IA_3-4-1999.pdf.

17. Paine, "Ethnodrama and the 'Fourth World,'" 195.

18. Henry Minde, "The Challenge of Indigenism: The Struggle for Sami Land Rights and Self-Government in Norway, 1960–1990," in *Indigenous Peoples: Resource Management and Global Rights*, eds. Svein Jentoft, Henry Minde, and Ragnar Nilsen (Delft: Eburon Publishers, 2003), 85–90.

19. The Alta protests, generally, have been described as "one of the most dramatic political confrontations in Norway in the post-war period" and the hunger strike was a particularly dramatic moment within the larger protests. Svein S. Andersen and Atle Midttun, "Conflict and Local Mobilization: The Alta Hydropower Project 1," *Acta Sociologica* 28, no. 4 (1985): 320, doi: 10.1177/000169938502800402.

20. Minde, "The Challenge of Indigenism," 84n13, 86.

21. Sápmi refers to all territories traditionally inhabited by Sámi people, an area spanning Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.

22. Minde, "The Challenge of Indigenism," 84n13.

23. According to Magga, ČSV was coined by Anders Guttormsen in 1972, who challenged his audience to fill the acronym with meaning, and over time it "became an absolute success" and was "used as a greeting and 'words of struggle' . . . a symbol of Sámi willpower." Angell, "Davvi Šuvva 1979," 44.

24. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.

25. George Manuel's unpublished diaries, June 14, 1976 (courtesy of Doreen Manuel).

26. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.

27. Minde, "The Challenge of Indigenism," 91.

28. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013.

29. Paine, *Dam a River*, 98.

30. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.

31. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013; Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013. For more on Norwegianization policy, see Henry Minde, "Assimilation of the Sami—Implementation and Consequences," *Gáldu Čála Journal of Indigenous People's Rights* no. 3, (2005), 6–31, <http://www.galdu.no/getfile.php/3307993.2388.dvstfwfxw/mindeengelsk.pdf>.

32. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013

33. Lars Martin Hjorthol, *Alta—kraftkampen som utfordret statens makt* (Oslo: Glyndendal akademisk, 2006), 159; Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013. Martinsen's own perspective can be found in his book, *Brua: ei fengselsdagbok* (Deatnu: Jårgalæddji, 1983).
34. Hjorthol, *Alta*, 160; Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
35. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
36. Martinsen did, however, have a history of involvement with Norway's Marxist-Leninist Workers' Communist Party (AKP). Hjorthol, *Alta*, 159.
37. Hjorthol, *Alta*, 162.
38. Ibid., 160; Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
39. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Norwegian Ministry of Justice, Legislation Department, "General Civil Penal Code," 2006, <http://app.uio.no/ub/ujur/oversatte-lover/data/lov-19020522-010-eng.pdf>.
43. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Hjorthol, *Alta*, 161.
47. For more on the mysterious source of the passport, see Jonathan Crossen, "Decolonization, Indigenous Internationalism and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples," PhD Dissertation (University of Waterloo, 2014), 188–89.
48. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013; Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
49. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid. Niillas recalls that Wah-Shee was his sister Marry A. Somby's contact. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
52. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013.
53. Indeed, Wah-Shee is credited as the primary inspiration behind the conference. Inge Kleivan, "The Arctic Peoples' Conference in Copenhagen, November 22–25, 1973," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 16, nos. 1–2 (1992): 228. It is possible that Wah-Shee was already known to Ánde's relatives and friends; Wah-Shee's speech at the conference so impressed the Sámi delegates that it was quoted at length in the Sámi newspaper *Sáogat*. Minde, "The Challenge of Indigenism," 83.
54. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013.
55. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013; *Lethbridge Herald*, November 26, 1982.
56. Veli-Pekka Lehtola, *The Sámi People: Traditions in Transition* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2005), 77.
57. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013. Somby also spent some time living with the Lil'wat Nation near Mount Currie, but his recollection of the dates or length of his stay are fuzzy after so many years have passed.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. The photos featured in this edition of the book were all taken by Niillas Somby, and the introduction acknowledges a symbolic meaning in his demonstration and dismemberment. Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, *Greetings from Lappland: The Sami—Europe's Forgotten People*, trans. Beverly Wahl (London: Zed Press, 1983), 4, 102.

63. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013. I have limited the inclusion of details here for the privacy of the family.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 29, 1982; *Globe and Mail*, May 31, 1984.
67. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 4, 1984; *Lethbridge Herald*, November 29, 1982. The latter source reports that two indigenous nations from Vancouver Island had already adopted Somby through band council resolutions passed in advance, but of the four nations listed later, only the Mowachaht are from Vancouver Island, so it is possible a fifth nation was also involved.
68. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 30, 1982. The name is elsewhere spelled *Penquit*, *Punquid* and other variations. The indigenous language to which the word belongs is unclear.
69. CTV Television Network, W5, "Native Son," television news series episode, October 1984.
70. Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 157; Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005), 22.
71. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 26, 1982 and November 29, 1982; *Globe and Mail*, November 27, 1982. The ceremony attended by Arvid Bryne (*Dagbladet*) and Sulo Lemet Aikio (Finnish Broadcasting Company) who filmed the proceedings. Footage appears in *Oaivveskaldjut! (Give Us Our Skeletons!)* documentary film, 1999, prod. and dir. Paul-Anders Simma, dist. Icarus Films. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013; *Lethbridge Herald*, November 26, 1982.
72. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 30, 1982.
73. Although Houston had not personally seen Somby, he told police that he supported the right of indigenous peoples to adopt whomever they wanted, and later provided the local newspaper with a telexed pledge of support for Somby from an Australian indigenous organization. *Lethbridge Herald*, December 2, 1982.
74. *Lethbridge Herald*, December 10, 1982.
75. Ibid.
76. *Lethbridge Herald*, January 4, 1982.
77. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 26, 1982; *Kainai News*, October 1984, no. 2, <http://digitallibrary.uleth.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sanews/id/30456/rec/51>.
78. Somby recalls that Martinsen was only sentenced to five months, time served. An article in the *Lethbridge Herald* states that Martinsen had pled guilty and been given a fourteen-month suspended sentence. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 7, 1984.
79. Dennis L. Thomson, "The Political Demands of Isolated Indian Bands in British Columbia," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 5, nos. 3–4 (1999): 219–20, doi: 10.1080/13537119908428577. Thomson asserts that until 1986 "there was only one house on the reserve," but Somby remembers there being about ten.
80. Niillas Somby, personal interview, October 15, 2013.
81. Ibid.
82. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
83. Ibid.; *Lethbridge Herald*, November 6, 1984.
84. Niillas Somby, personal interview, April 3, 2013.
85. Ibid.; CTV Television Network, "Native Son."
86. *Kainai News*, October 1984, no. 2. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 4, 1984.
87. Though the specifics of the occasion are somewhat unclear, several articles mention that the Nuxálk nation had proclaimed their sovereignty in 1975, in response to the failure of the federal

government to recognize their rights. They had made a similar proclamation at a potlatch ceremony in December 1981, a year before Somby's adoption. *Globe and Mail*, May 31, 1984.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid. Deskaheh Levi General traveled to Europe on a Haudenosaunee passport in 1923, as had Emerson Hill in 1970. Fred Plain had attended the 1977 WCIP conference in Sweden with an Anishinaabe passport. *Regina Leader Post*, August 29, 1977.

90. "Indian Jurisdiction over Citizenship Denied by Minister," *Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Up-Date*, 7 (September 1984), 2–3, <http://gsdl.ubcic.bc.ca/cgi-bin/library.cgi?p=about&c=ubcicupd>; *Globe and Mail*, August 16, 1984.

91. "Indian Jurisdiction over Citizenship," *UBCIC Update*, 2–3.

92. CTV Television Network, "Native Son."

93. Ibid. Bjarne Store-Jakobsen was a friend and colleague of Niillas Somby's who had been involved with the second hunger strike in 1981. Ånde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013.

94. CTV Television Network, "Native Son."

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

97. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 5, 1984.

98. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 10, 1984.

99. *Kainai News*, November 1984, no. 2, <http://digitallibrary.uleth.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/sanews/id/25546/rec/53>.

100. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 12, 1984. While Louise Mandell was paid as the full-time counsel of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Somby's legal costs were paid for by the Nuxálk nation. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 6, 1984.

101. Louise Mandell, personal interview, September 24, 2013.

102. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 12, 1984.

103. Ibid. For more on Gladstone, see Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Gentle Persuader: A Biography of James Gladstone, Indian Senator* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986).

104. *Kainai News*, November 1984, no. 2.

105. Louise Mandell, personal interview, September 24, 2013. John Borrows and Leonard Rotman briefly examine the *Connolly v. Woolrich* case, and argue that the judge held that European laws brought to the North West "did not automatically abrogate existing Aboriginal laws." The decision "ensured [for a time] the continuity of indigenous law in the wake of a new legal and political order." John Borrows and Leonard I. Rotman, "The Sui Generis Nature of Aboriginal Rights: Does it Make a Difference?" *Alberta Law Review* 36, no. 1 (1997): 9–45, <http://hdl.handle.net/1828/7058>.

106. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 13, 1984.

107. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 22, 1984.

108. *Kainai News*, November 1984, no. 2.

109. Crossen, "Decolonization, Indigenous Internationalism and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples," 92–96.

110. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 17 and 23, 1984.

111. Ibid. Somby also asked the adjudicator to consider if he himself was truly a legal immigrant to the lands in which he lived. *Lethbridge Herald*, October 10, 1984.

112. Ibid.

113. *Lethbridge Herald*, November 16, 1984.

114. *Kainai News*, November 1984, no. 2; "Nuxalk Citizens Deported," *UBCIC Update*, January 1985, 11, <http://gsdl.ubcic.bc.ca/cgi-bin/library.cgi?p=about&c=ubcicupd>.

115. Much later, former Prime Ministers Brundtland and Nordli, who were responsible for the AKHP, would publicly acknowledge that the project had been unnecessary. Gunnar Grendstad, Per

Selle, Øystein Bortne, and Kristin Strømsnes, *Unique Environmentalism: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC, 2006), 40n50.

116. Niillas Somby, personal interview, October 15, 2013.

117. The collaboration continued in May 1985, when Nuxálk representatives described the case before United Nations Human Rights committees, claiming that Somby had been illegally deported. *Globe and Mail*, April 19, 1985.

118. Simma, *Oaivveskaldjut!* Somby's remarks from the film here have been translated by the author.

119. Niillas Somby himself is unclear on his precise relationship to Mons Somby, but the Somby family is quite small. Niillas Somby, personal interview, October 15, 2013.

120. Simma, *Oaivveskaldjut!*

121. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013.

122. *Ibid.* Somby's severed arm was eventually returned by police after his return to Sápmi. His new fight would prove more successful than his opposition to the hydroelectric project: the skulls of Mons Somby and Aslak Hætta were eventually returned by the University of Oslo and reburied with their bodies in 1997. Simma, *Oaivveskaldjut!*

123. Ánde Somby, personal interview, February 25, 2013.

