

PETROLEUM IN PERU 2003

1. SHELL IN PERU

The region of Bajo Urubamba constitutes a very complex and fragile ecosystem, for its biodiversity and also for its cultural richness expressed in diverse collectiveness of the human population that have inhabited the area since ancestral times; the Matsigenka, the Nahua, the Nanti, the Kirineri and another population yet to be identified (probably Mashco Piro). Since several decades ago growing threats against the conservation of this ecosystem come from the development of extractive activities (wood and hydrocarbons) that could irreversibly impact the region.

The threats in the 1980 correspond to the entrance of oil companies such as Shell and Chevron and timber companies, many of which are associated with the oil companies.

“Shell carried out seismic prospecting, the first campaign between 1983 and 1985 with Geo Source and a second campaign between 1986 and 1987 with SSL. They also carried out drilling work. The first drilling campaign was between 1985 and 1988, when they drilled the Sepa, Segakiato, Armihuari, San Martín and Cashiriari wells, and a second campaign between 1996 and 1998, when they drilled San Martín 3, Cashiriari 3, Armihuari (6 cashiriari2) and Pagoreni wells. (EIA, 2001).

The populations that live in this area are: Yora or Nahua, Kirineri, Matsiguenka, Nanty o Kugapakori and a non-identified group, possibly Chintonahua or Mashco Piro. Within these populations there have been cases of contagious and mortal diseases (Nantis, Kirineris), alteration of traditional natural resource access (Yora, Nantis, Kirineris, Matsiguenkas), aggression because of undesired contact of cultural alteration (Matsiguenkas, Kirineris), unauthorized use of territory, as well as general stress caused by forms of self-defense (all).

a) ETHNOCIDE IN THE NANTY (OR KUGAPAKORI) POPULATION

Data and demographic tendencies in the Nanty population demonstrate their high vulnerability to disease and sickness:

- According to Lev and Michael (2000), some 30% and up to 60% of the population of high Timpía died in the 70s and 80s.
- In 1997, a visitor introduced malaria to the communities of Nanty de Marankiato, where the Montetoni come from.

In the humid season, the Nanty suffered malaria for almost two months and several children died before health assistants came from the distant state health post (CAP, 1999)

b) THE ISOLATED MATSHIGUENGA POPULATION

This population is located along the middle of the Camisea River. According to references, this population mixed with the Matsiguenka of Segakiato and Cashiriari, and has maintained a traditional way of life, evading permanent contact with members of national society. The proximity of the Matsiguenka to gas exploitation wells along the Cashiriari river, places them in a highly vulnerable situation.

c) THE KIRINERI

During the research, the “Kirineri” family from the high Kipatsiari river was displaced to the indigenous community of Matsiguenka Nueva Luz, asking for medical assistance because of the delicate state of health of their three daughters, because of the cold they had resulting in bronquitis. The family also stated that there were other sick people in high Kipatsiari, but did not know their actual state of health, but was afraid that there were deaths. Cases like these have been frequent over the past two decades.

This family, as well as the population of Nueva Luz, says that the increase of cold epidemic is due to the increasing presence of timber companies. “The men do not have to be close for the sickness to be contagious. It is enough that they pass by the general area in order for us to get a cold.

Based on the information given by the indigenous community Nueva Luz, and reports from specialists, there have been emergency cases among the Kirineri.

- Between 1983 and 1987, Shell carried out seismic exploration in the Kirineri area.
- Between 1990 and 1992, several children from one family were moved to Nueva Luz and died from colds.
- In 2002, members of the community Nueva Luz asked for help from the company Veritas so that they could use a helicopter to help those sick in Kipatsiari.
- In December 2002, one family and possibly more Kirineri were affected with bronquitis. It is feared that it is producing deaths.

d) ETHNOCIDE IN THE YORA (O NAHUA) POPULATION

Perhaps as a response to the massive arrival of white invaders into their territory from Mishagua, the Yora intensified their attack campaign against the Matsiguenka of Manu starting in 1980. Attacks against the populations of Matsiguenka in Cumerjali and Jerinapango in 1984 and 1985 resulted in several deaths on both sides. Following the footsteps left by Shell and motivated by the economic boom in the region, timber companies in Sepahua continued to deeply penetrate Yora territory. In 1984, four Yora men were captured and moved to Sepahua by timber companies working close to the Dorado ravine. The Yaminahua population of Sepahua was able to communicate with them and the Sepahua showered the Yora with gifts. They were taken back to their territory and set free, but a month later, the Sepahua came back wanting gifts. This was the beginning of the process that would lead to the extinction of the Yora population.

A little while after the first contacts in 1984-1985 a respiratory infection epidemic (convulsive coughing, colds, flu, tuberculosis, malaria= reduced the Yora population to almost half, changing the history of this group forever. In their first medical visit to the Yora territory in 1984, medical missionaries from ILV treated 130 patients, of which 40 or 60 died (Zarzar 1987:95). The ILV employed acculturate Yaminahua guides to look for and treat sick people in disperse populations, entering the territory from Mishagua. From 1986, medical assistance began to arrive to the Yora communities from the Manu river, especially to the community of Cashpajali (Hill y Kaplan, 1990). According to a family tree analysis carried out with survivors in 1996, Shepard (1999:39) confirmed a death rate of 40-50% of the total population between 1984 and 1990. During the first years of the epidemics, the Yora population was so reduced and weakened that it was difficult for them to collect food and cultivate products.

“The ILV, associated with Shell’s management base in Sepahua, insisted that the chief of the Yaminahua talk with the Nahua. The objective was to persuade them to not obstruct the work of Shell workers or of the timber companies, and to convince them to not feel aggravated by the depredation of their territory, but give them machetes and other tools and have them believe that they will receive more benefits from the company when they stop being hostile” (Clousdey, 1991) At the beginning of 1980, in the middle of the national hydrocarbon crisis due to a deficit in oil production, the inefficiency of the state company Petroperú and the lack of investments, the Peruvian government approved a contract for oil operations to be carried out by Shell Prospecting and Development in Camisea river region, by way of Supreme Decree N° 17.81-EM/DGH. This began a long history characterized by workers, machines, and installation of infrastructure, execution of explorations in an area that for a long time had been peaceful. The remoteness of the place had made it a refuge for indigenous populations who opted to keep themselves far from national society, after experimenting genocide by the State in the when rubber was cultivated.

Shell began its operations immediately. They installed two bases, one in Sepahua and one in the community of Matsiguenka Shivancoreni and began seismic explorations, resulting in the discovery of 3 gas wells, two in Cashiriari and one in

Segakiato. The company also entered into Manu National Park with the objective of carrying out seismic explorations in 1983, but were met by indigenous and environmentalist protests. A little while after entering the park, a series of tragic events caused deaths among their own workers and also among the isolated indigenous population that were against the presence of the company.

The hostility of the indigenous population and the fear that it instilled in the workers prompted the company to look for solutions to this problem, which slowed down operations. The oil companies found a group of people and institutions interested in contacting and pacifying the indigenous population with diverse motives: studying their language (Summer Linguistic Institute) and evangelizing them (ILV and catholic missionaries), employing them as work force (timber companies) or simply wanting to carry out their work in peace (oil companies). A strategic alliance was then formed to initiate contact. "One year before definitive contact, Shell, who has been operating in the region since 1981, by use of helicopters gave away machetes, while the Yaminahua chief of Sepahua emitted from the helicopter, a tactic that had the objective of impeding greater Nahua incursions in the Alto Mishagua camps" (Zarzar, 1991).

Between 1984 and 1985, after several intents from all parts, four timber men came into contact with a group of Yora who had attacked them previously, producing the contact that was so hoped for. The Yora were taken to the oil company camp and afterwards to the Sepahua population, where they received gifts from oil companies, missionaries and the local population. However, upon receiving gifts (clothes), they also received diseases and in a short time produced the death of around 50% of their population.

Functionaries from Manu National Park did what they could to help, but their resources were extremely limited. The indigenous and mestizo population of Boca Manu were also generous with clothes, food and other gifts, at least at the beginning. Others made jokes and rude comments about the traditional way of dress and hairstyle. Finally, a medical team took the group to a medical post and then back to their homes.

The surviving Yora were taken to the timber town of Sepahua, apparently convinced by a Yaminahua that intervened in the contact that a little while afterwards, taking advantage of the crisis that the Yora population was going through, that he would become chief of the group. "This of course was in Shell's interest, even though the manager of the base nervously denied the situation. The boats and gas used were given by a worker of the company, who did it on personal initiative to "help" the Nahua" (Clousdey, 1991). The missionaries were satisfied with this move.

The presence of the Yora in Sepahua was traumatic. After an enthusiastic welcome by the Sepahua population, the Yora felt abandoned. Accustomed to eating from the forest, they were suddenly enclosed within four walls and became desperate. "While Shell refused to give them food, they denied having anything to

do with the situation, and to so would create expectations of dependence in the natives” (Ibíd.).

The violent and steep decline in the population, as well as accelerated sociocultural, geographic and economic changes that the Yora were not prepared for, lead to serious organizational, economic and cultural problems that lead them to the edge of sociocultural extinction. The Yora became trapped in a very vulnerable situation and for several years were exposed to all types of abuses from those who because their authorities and the timber workers, mainly.

Afterwards, a few anthropologists received testimonies from the Yora in which they narrated the serious problems caused by the presence of foreigners in their territory before definitive contact, among them, the displacement of populations and the bloody conflicts with isolated indigenous populations and not so isolated neighbors, such as the Matsigenka, while trying to obtain new vital space that would assure their physical and cultural continuity. These conflicts caused many deaths, among both the Matsigenkas and the Yora.

At the same time of this tragedy, large gas reserves were found in the area, communally known as Camisea.

In spite of having had 17 years of contact and receiving severe sicknesses and diseases from this contact, the Yora are still easily affected by these diseases, especially those common to outside populations, such as colds and flues.

e) ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

Since 1980, the Urubamba population has been experiencing the environmental impacts from hydrocarbon operations, such as the decline of flora and fauna resources, the contamination of ravines and rivers, among others. The direct impacts are caused by seismic work, construction of pipelines and gas plants, and affect the communities of Camisea, Cashiriari, Segakiato, Timpía, Shivankoreni and Chokoriari that, precisely, are on the border of the Nahua Kugapakori State Reserve. The indirect impacts affect a broader radius of indigenous communities.

There is also the noise provoked by thousands of workers opening thousands of square kilometers of seismic lines, including the 800 Km² belonging to Plus Petrol, and the hundreds produced by Shell and Chevron in the last 20 years, as well as the tens of thousands subsoil explosions.

Another impact is the deforestation that is generated by colonizers whose entrance is provoked by gas operations. Their economic-productive rationale for land use is forestplot-pasture and then more deforestation. The effect of this work seriously destroys tropical ecosystems, and in particular, land and air fauna.

In terms of fauna y flora, besides the theoretical arguments, are the testimonies and direct experiences of indigenous populations, which indicate that “before the gas operations at the beginning of the Tsiabeti river, one could find animal species such as *paujil*, *sajino*, *pava*, just walking for three hours, but now, after they put in the gas pipeline, one needs a whole day or more to find even one species. The elderly think that this area could become a pajonal, like in Ecuador.

“When I came here 40 years ago, before the companies, there was an abundance of fish, everyone had enough. When the companies came, there wasn’t very much, and now it is even worse, there is nothing here, no fish not even animals. The animals run away because of the noise from the machines and company vehicles, which make noise all day. Only if you walk at night then maybe you will see a deer” (Erisio Simón Ababa, CN Chokoriari, 2002).

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