

The Liberation of Mother Earth: More than Taking the Territory¹

[English Version]

La liberación de la Madre Tierra: más que la toma de un territorio

A libertação da Mãe Terra: mais do que a tomada de um território

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Abstract

Objective: this article reconfigures the dynamics of the process of the Liberation of Mother Earth by the Nasa people, making it visible in a commitment to re-territorialization that begins with the recovery of dispossessed lands. **Methodology:** this historical-hermeneutic research approach, involved participant observation, the use of techniques such as video and audio recording, the application of informal interviews with representatives of the Nasa community, and the documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources prepared by the community. **Results:** the research describes the main land disputes in the region, from colonization

to internal armed conflict. It presents the history of organization that the community

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has put into practice there, with special emphasis on the process of the Liberation of Mother Earth; based on the accumulation of organizational experiences, responding to the de-territorialization processes led by external agents against the indigenous people of Norte del Cauca has become possible. Finally, the scenarios and gambles that have resulted from this process, and their relationship with other social movements are analyzed. **Conclusions:** the reflections and experiences around the process of Liberation of Mother Earth raise hopeful horizons for the construction of autonomous ways of life. They are focused on a different relationship with the earth which allows inquiry and confrontation of the prevailing system.

Keywords: Indigenous population; Cultural diversity; Community action; Land use; Resistance to oppression.

Resumen

Objetivo: este artículo reconfigura las dinámicas del proceso de la Liberación de la Madre Tierra del pueblo Nasa, para visibilizarlo en una apuesta por la reterritorialización que inicia con la recuperación de tierras despojadas. **Metodología:** este trabajo investigativo de enfoque histórico-hermenéutico, implicó la observación participante, el uso de técnicas como registro de video gráfico y de audio, la aplicación de entrevistas informales con representantes de la comunidad Nasa, y el análisis documental de fuentes primarias y secundarias elaborados por la comunidad. **Resultados:** se describen las principales disputas en torno a la tierra en la región, pasando desde la colonización hasta el conflicto armado interno. Presenta la historia de organización que allí ha puesto en práctica la comunidad, haciendo especial énfasis en el proceso de Liberación de la Madre Tierra; pues a partir de este cúmulo de experiencias organizativas ha sido posible responder a los procesos de desterritorialización que han propiciado agentes externos a los pueblos indígenas del norte del Cauca. Finalmente, se analizan los escenarios y apuestas que han resultado de este proceso, y su relación con otros movimientos sociales. **Conclusiones:** las reflexiones y experiencias en torno al proceso de Liberación de la Madre Tierra plantean horizontes esperanzadores para la construcción de modos de vida autónomos, centrados en un relacionamiento distinto con la tierra, que permiten cuestionar y confrontar el sistema imperante.

Palabras-clave: Población indígena; Diversidad cultural; Acción comunitaria; Uso de la tierra; Resistencia a la opresión.

Resumo

Objetivo: este artigo reconfigura a dinâmica do processo de Libertação da Mãe Terra do povo Nasa, para torná-la visível em um compromisso de reterritorialização que se inicia com a recuperação das terras desapropriadas. **Metodologia:** este trabalho de pesquisa com abordagem histórico-hermenêutica, envolveu a observação participante, o uso de técnicas como vídeo gráfico e gravação de áudio, a aplicação de entrevistas informais com representantes da comunidade Nasa, e a análise documental de fontes primárias e secundárias elaboradas pela comunidade. **Resultados:** descreve as principais disputas de terras na região, desde a colonização até o conflito armado interno. Apresenta a história de organização que a comunidade ali colocou em prática, com especial destaque para o processo de Libertação da Mãe Terra; A partir desse acúmulo de experiências organizacionais, foi possível responder aos processos de desterritorialização que têm fomentado agentes externos aos povos indígenas do norte do Cauca. Por fim, são analisados os cenários e apostas que resultaram desse processo e sua relação com outros movimentos sociais. **Conclusões:** as reflexões e vivências em torno do processo de Libertação da Mãe Terra levantam horizontes esperançosos para a construção de modos de vida autônomos, centrados em uma relação diferenciada com a terra, que permitam questionar e confrontar o sistema vigente.

Palavras-chave: População indígena; Diversidade cultural; Ação comunitária; Uso da terra; Resistência à opressão.

Introduction

*“Liberation does not come alone,
it comes when boys and girls fall in love with the Earth,
when we see the Earth as mother.
It should be a liberation from being and thought”¹*

In the north of the department of Cauca (Colombia), the Nasa indigenous people have originated the so-called process of Liberating Mother Earth, the result of years of struggle and organization that constitutes a gamble in search of re-territorialization based on a cultural project built from ancestral roots. It involves recovering dispossessed lands, and influences and impacts the political, economic and cultural spheres of their communities.

This article reflects on the process of Liberating Mother Earth as a manner of resistance², in the face of the phenomenon of de-territorialization, and a way of defending the territory — a consequence of violent appropriation of indigenous lands in Cauca and the result of disputes between actors with economic interests outside the communities. It shows that building other hopeful worlds from organized collective actions is possible.

This manuscript aims to recognize the history, perseverance, and strength of the Nasa people as a model of resistance against the current situation of criminalization of social movements, against the fear systematically imposed through murders and threats of social leaders, and against the exacerbation of dispossession and land grabbing. Under this national context, highlighting the multiple resistances that are woven by native people from their ancestral wisdom is essential. It should be emphasized that such actions of struggle change over time; they are strengthened and mutated according to political, economic, and social conditions at national and local levels.

1. Words of a Nasa pedagogue during Food March I (Process of the Liberation of Mother Earth, March 30, 2018).

2. From an etymological perspective, resistance is defined as the action or ability to resist (RAE, 2020), however, for the purpose of this article, this concept is assumed in accordance with what Jaime Rafael told Nieto (2008), as he defined the concept as “a logic of collective action that is directed against any form of power, exploitation or oppression” (p. 267). It means that it is associated with different ways (mobilizations, popular education, protests, social mobilizations, strikes, among others) that a group of people carry out against invaders of territories, dictatorships or as Nieto (2008) states all forms of power or domination.

Methodology

The historical-hermeneutic research approach focused on understanding the social action of the Nasa community on the process of Liberating Mother Earth as a way of resistance and territorial defense. It constitutes a qualitative research technique, as it employed an approach to the social phenomenon aiming at describing, understanding, interpreting and reflecting on the knowledge and actions of different people involved.

Methodologically, it was carried out through fieldwork in meetings, marches, conversations, *mingas* and other spaces in which, through participant observation, collecting information to reconstruct the background and dynamics of the process of the Liberation of Mother Earth of the Nasa community was possible, taking into account cultural, political and social aspects from their manner of resistance and conception of territory.

Likewise, interviews with leaders and representatives of the Nasa community were conducted. They contributed in the construction of a memory of cultural knowledge and resistance, using techniques such as a recording videos and audios, reviewing bibliographic sources related to what is evidenced in the fieldwork with the theory. They also include the analysis of testimonies and documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources elaborated by the community to show the logic of the resistance in different territories as much the Nasa community as with MST-NQL³, ARISA⁴, and ASDECOIN⁵ organizations.

3. Landless movement: Grandchildren of Manuel Quintín Lame, made up of families from the municipalities of Caldono, Caloto, Toribío and Santander de Quilichao in the northern department of Cauca, Colombia. The actions of this Movement are related to the defense and liberation of mother earth, in addition to the participation of actions that answers to problems such as economic exclusion, agrarian exploitation, and privatization of education and health, among others.

4. Regional Association in Defense of Food Sovereignty ARISA, composed by community members from the Munchique and Caldono municipalities.

5. Association for Indigenous Economic Development

After the information collection, a hermeneutic analysis was developed based on the systematization of data, through thematic analysis as a relational thinking technique that allowed decomposing the different phenomena, processes, and concepts, through open coding and generation of conceptual categories in the qualitative information analysis software: *Atlas.ti*. The conceptual analysis and theoretical construction of findings at the ethnographic level was carried out based on different families and categories.

The development of this research from historical-hermeneutic and qualitative approaches, through ethnographic methods, involved fieldwork through participation in *mingas*, meetings, marches, conversations, meetings and other ways in which the researcher had access to information collection from participant observation that contributed in the development of the research purpose on the process of the Nasa Community's Liberation of Mother Earth. It considers cultural, political, and social aspects from its manner of resistance and territorial concept.

Additionally, the techniques such as the registration of audio and video recording, informal interviews with representatives of the Nasa community and documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources prepared by the community were used to show the logic of resistance in different territories from the community's perspective. Moreover, the review of bibliographic sources was carried out to relate what was evidenced in fieldwork with the theory.

Results

De-territorialization and Dispossession to Present

Nasa indigenous people, located mostly in the municipalities of Huellas, Toribío and Caldono in northern Cauca (see Figure 1), are among the 102 indigenous people recognized by the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC). According to Ducón Salas (2011), the Nasa were located in the valleys of the south of Colombia's central mountain range, then they were forced to move to high slopes of that mountain and ended up settling in northeastern Cauca. Their relocation began in the seventeenth century with a territorial institutionalization process directed by the Spanish Crown through the *resguardos*⁶ constitution to the end of the sixteenth century. This system was the foundation of territorial distribution in force to date with variations in mobility and in land extension.

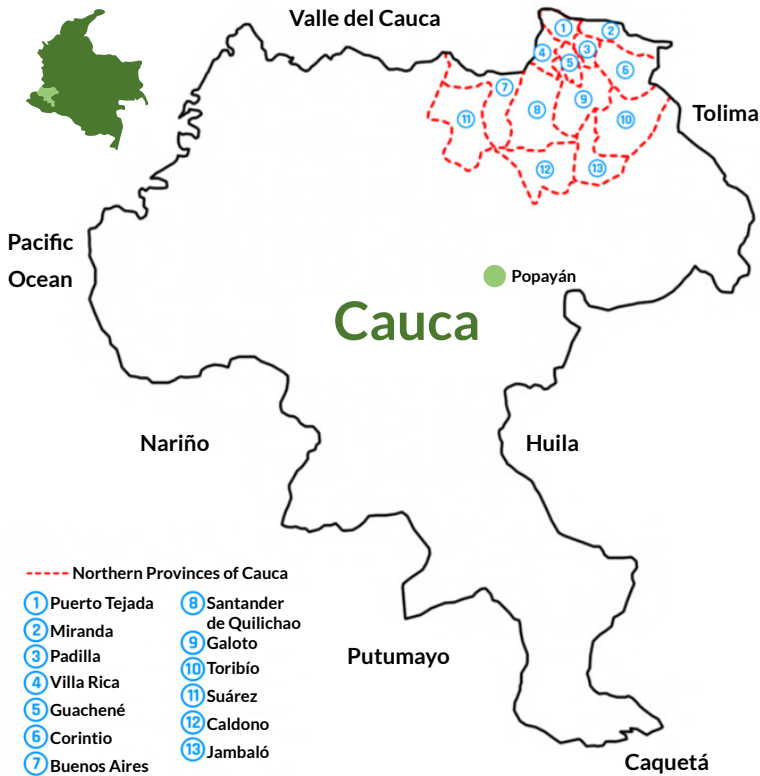
Figure 1. Process of Liberating Mother Earth



Note. Photograph taken by the researcher. Nasa Territory in the North of the Department of Cauca.

6. Indigenous reserves, according to the Constitutional Court of Colombia (2007), are defined as legal institutions of a special nature, composed by indigenous communities that own a territory, and are organized on the basis of indigenous traditions or guidelines.

Figure 2. Nasa Community Location



Note. Taken from Semanarural.com

Additionally, like other native people of Latin America, the Nasa had to face new social and environmental conditions that displacement created. They had to develop abilities for the creation of new instruments for action; this would have been impossible without an impulse in the development of thought that would lead to a response to the logic and rationality of capitalism. Thus, while retaining their traditional knowledge, they assumed a dialogue with modern Western knowledge and sectors of power (Ducón Salas, 2011, p. 13).

Later, with the imposition of land during the eighteenth century in New Granada, the indigenous people saw the community use of the land weaken: there was an individualization of land, parceled out, deprived of the possibility of its permanent possession. Landowners leased them a small plot of land

which had previously been a safe *resguardo*, which those landowners could easily appropriate at will. In this way, the tenants⁷ only had access to small plots of land to live on, planting domestic food crops, without the possibility of any permanent cultivation, in exchange for their free work on landowner estates.

The colonizers of America created the conditions under which servitude and vassalage relationships continued through the land with the *resguardo* concept. However, as land rent increased⁸coexistence on the *resguardo* became linked by collective identity in time and space, in the presence and belonging to the earth; for indigenous communities, this was the geographical setting for meeting with peers.

An imminent consequence of the de-territorialization process was uprooting indigenous people from land, ethnicity and language; these were and are grounds for rejection to support the permanence in the territories and to belonging by the colonizers through dispossession. Therefore, the segregation and exclusion of indigenous people from certain places is not unfounded, and it is done in development and in the market, it weakens the dynamics of ancestral people including their organizational processes.

In this way, it is possible to highlight de-territorialization — as the total or partial crumbling of territorial processes (Deleuze and Guattari, as cited in Farina, 2018, p. 5) — to which native peoples have been subjected. At present, since the Process of Liberating Mother Earth, it has been reported that land rent continues while indigenous people are still working as laborers or “slaves with wages for employers that cannot be seen” (Process of Liberating Mother Earth, 2016). In addition, the land dispute remains the core: sugar mills and extractive projects continuously cornered indigenous communities of the territory, as they are denied access to productive land and pressure is exerted to extend crops into environmental protection areas, as they relate in their own words:

Cornered between cane and mountain climate, between plane and mountain, subjected to reduction techniques, squeezed on our own land, it forces us to take part, to solve soon and easily. that’s the way it is here, there, and beyond. Northern Cauca is just a sample of the world (Process of Liberating Mother Earth, 2016).

7. According to Sofia del Mar Salazar Carvajal (2017) a tenant is considered the person (peasant or indigenous) who had to pay for using a small part of land, for cultivation.

8. As Luis Guillermo explains to Vasco Uribe, “the land rent was [...] a feudal, servile relationship, according to which an indigenous person had to pay in free work within the Land the right to live and enjoy a small plot of land, located on the same place that were taken from indigenous reserves by landowners, a relationship that persisted until it was definitively swept away by indigenous struggle that began to develop from 1970” (2008, p. 373).

This problem of dispossession and limiting access to land runs particularly deep within the context of the armed conflict, it has lasted in the region despite attempts by civil society and social movements to stop it. In September 2016, something happened in Colombia that was unthinkable during decades of armed conflict: an agreement between the national government and the country's oldest guerrilla group, FARC-EP. This agreement was intended to build peace in a nation of violence, forced displacement, lack of opportunities, lack of real possibility of political participation by the base population, systematic fear that has been transmitted from generation to generation, mandatory silence and indifference learned as a less compromising reaction to social change (since a more confrontational attitude could be read as threatening and be the cause of a military attack).

Despite the actions that have been carried out in Colombia within the framework of the peace agreement, especially in the department of Cauca, there has been no clarification of facts; therefore, it has not been determined precisely who have been armed actors behind constant persecutions, threats and murders of the Nasa community members and other actors involved in processes of territorial defense.

Even native people consider that the intensification of war that came with the post-agreement is part of a “policy of extermination” that is not accidental. On the contrary, it has been carefully designed to benefit foreign policies and interests that pursue the purpose of capital accumulation with the approval of the government of the current President, Iván Duque. Such a plan would seek to consolidate in Cauca territory the extra-activism of transnational companies, as well as drug actions of trafficking cartels — and Cauca Regional Indigenous Council⁹ (CRIC) has denounced the emergence of Sinaloa Cartel in the territory — and paramilitary groups.

CRIC has also reported that, in 2020, there have been nine massacres in its territory, 36 fatal victims; and, 47 indigenous leaders have been selectively killed. There are still threats, harassment and persecution of families and communities on ancestral territories. This organization has denounced the internal armed conflict as a result of the strategy of the “Democratic Security” policy that seeks to perpetuate itself in the country (CRIC, October 30, 2020).

The facts described show a systematic persecution of indigenous resistance with the intention of breaking the collective process of building autonomous ways of life in the territory. In addition, legal and illegal armed actors attack the cohesion of people by even recruiting indigenous members who are deceived

9. CRIC, according to Oscar Julián Moreno Cuesta (2012), has a main role in indigenous movements. It constitutes a reference on using different media, especially indigenous radio, for dissemination and communication of identity, diversity, and cultural richness.

and impoverished, agree to threaten and kill members of their own community; in the same way, they are used so that through their networks of informants they point out those who may be a barrier to their greedy interests (CRIC, March 13, 2018, para. 2). Therefore, from this view, these are not isolated events, but a strategy of war that involves external interests and that accentuates the process of de-territorialization against the Nasa people.

The Liberation of Mother Earth: a Gamble for Re-territorialization

Historically, there have been multiple “escapes” in resistance to violence imposed on daily lives of indigenous communities in general, and in particular the Nasa people. Such resistances have been marked by historical autonomies of this people, by the fact of being a constituted society and by its conception of territory without the divisions of borders.

In this way, it is not possible to speak of the Nasa community without referring to or recalling historical struggles waged jointly with other indigenous people and which have founded what is now known as the *Indigenous Social Movement*. In 60s and 70s of the twentieth century, actions of resistance were carried out by these native peoples; these actions gave rise to the organization of Cauca Regional Indigenous Council (CRIC), its importance lies in the fact that it brings together more than 90% of department’s indigenous communities.

CRIC is recognized as the traditional authority of indigenous peoples of this region, and it has led the collective projections regarding economic, social, cultural, territorial and environmental fields; in addition to leading decision-making and implementation strategies in the face of breached commitments from negotiations with the national government.

The dispute over the land has held a leading position in this history of struggle and organization of the Nasa people; therefore, from then until now, numerous exercises of resistance have taken place by dispossessed indigenous peoples. One of the most representative case is a Nasa leader Manuel Quintín Lame (born in 1880, near Popayan) who under the premise of recovery of the lands of which the indigenous had been dispossessed and the elimination of tenure payment, led actions to take land in northern Cauca. He fought against the liberation of territory and contributed to analyzing the denaturalization of a unidirectional vision legitimized for dominance.

The uprising led by Quintín Lame, in the early years of the twentieth century, has given strength and hope to landless indigenous people. Currently it is a reference in the struggle, as members of the Movimiento Sin Tierra-Nietos de Quintín Lame (MST-NQL). They organized themselves in searching for answers and strategies against economic exclusion, privatization of health and education, impunity and injustice, and land dispossession (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Grandchildren of Quintín Lame



Note. Nasa Territory in the North of the Department of Cauca. Taken from *El Aguijón* Edition 31, January 2017.

The Movimiento Sin Tierra-Nietos de Quintín Lame (MST-NQL), from 2005, the main purpose of which is defending the territory, has chosen to liberate Mother Earth through settlement and recovery of lands invaded by landowners, both local and regional political classes, in addition to multinationals that are in the department. It has been faced with attacks by security forces. Likewise, they have developed actions to contribute to the construction of national sovereignty as a fundamental step in reconciliation with peasants, African descendants and vulnerable populations to achieve agrarian reform.

As a result of this historic struggle against the dispossession of land and the legacy of organization of the Nasa, in 2014 the Process of Liberating Mother Earth was constituted; it arises with the aim of recovering the ancestral lands to heal them and deliver them to future generations. For this, the Nasa people invade the farms titled as the property of the sugar industry, divided by groups to assemble *cambuches* (makeshift dwellings) hidden within huge hectares that mark the area as territorial defense. In this way, liberation begins with the recovery of land usurped over centuries, currently used for sugar and agrofuel business, and which has subordinated nature to the development of capitalism.

By settling on these farms, the liberators see the need to put an end to the cane monoculture, so that it is cut and eradicated to make path for planting other crops that generate varied food for the entire population. This action not only represents a way of survival, but it is also the first step in restoring harmony of *Uma Kíwe* or Mother Earth, so that it can be healed. The Process has summarized its actions as follows:

During the recoveries, they cut cane, fertilize and sow the land, they reorganize lands to guarantee biological balance that has been destroyed for a long time. Allow animals to graze on empty land. It is a process of peasant reappropriation for autonomy and food self-sufficiency. It is a struggle that indigenous communities called “the liberation of Mother Earth,” a “simple contribution to world’s struggles to restore the balance of life, shattered by capitalist delirium.” “That’s why they murder us” and “that’s why we’re still standing up.” (Process of the Liberation of Mother Earth, 2020).

During the six years of liberation process (2014-2020), the Nasa community has faced and fought for several hours with little more than rubber tappers against public force, the National Army and the Mobile Anti-Riot Squad (ESMAD), that through excessive interventions with use of tear gas, bullets and stun grenades with all kinds of harmful material, has killed 11 liberators of the Nasa people (Process of the Liberation of Mother Earth, 2020)

Currently, the Process of the Liberation of Mother Earth is on seven farms that have been recovered:

In the North of Cauca and defended day by day by liberators of Mother Earth against attacks by the Colombian state and armed groups that want to take control of the area (Process of Liberation of Mother Earth, 2020).

To achieve liberation, permanent occupation of recovered lands is necessary. This allows for *re-territorialization*, that is, the process of rebuilding the territory (Farina, 2018), because in this way the practices and representations of the Nasa worldview and culture are extended to lands previously dispossessed. Thus, re-territorialization materializes in recovered lands when the ways of consumption, customs and habits are reproduced, as well as rituals, myths, stories and the word of the Nasa community.

For example, this re-territorialization is also enlivened through the use of the Yuwe language, a Nasa language whose learning remains a priority despite the whitening of culture. That is why the processes of recovery of traditions and their ancestral value are mainly reproduced in oral tradition that is kept with Yuwe language and with relational practices of its social organization.

On the other hand, the cultural project of life of the Nasa people is framed within cosmological guidelines of a territorial life plan and basically seeks to maintain harmony between nature, the cosmos, the earth and its human community, that is, mutual coexistence with all the spiritual beings, underground and in cosmic space; this is how all beings can fulfill their role of enduring life. This mutual coexistence is achieved through meeting spaces, traditional ritual practices that guide young people, children, and adults. There, traditional authorities and the elderly help to understand the meaning and essence of life that the earth offers.

This shows that the dispute over the territory and the search for recovery of dispossessed lands is based on the relationship that the Nasa people have with the earth and worldview that unfolds from there. A comprehensive understanding of these aspects makes it possible to identify the bases of Nasa struggles, particularly the Process of Liberating Mother Earth because, as Federico Ulcué states in his testimony: “We are territory because we are rooted in the sun, the moon, the water. To defend the territory is to defend our body [...] Our dream is to feel the territory again” (as quoted in Sulé, 2013, para. 3, 5).

This particular link that the Nasa has with the earth and the territory is created from the day of birth. Dora Muñoz, a young Nasa communicator, in conversation with Puerta Restrepo (1987), explains that, when a baby is born, the umbilical cord is buried outdoors with plants and at the foot of the stove; symbolically this gesture allows us to recognize that human beings are part of nature and our umbilical cord connects with it, since it is our origin. The entire life of an indigenous Nasa revolves around the territory. It leads one to consider that a landless indigenous is nothing, so he is willing to give his life in its defense.

Thus, far from understanding land as accumulation of property or under a desire for profit, the territory is conceived of as self-reason, as life itself. This set of representations and practices makes it possible to strengthen projects

of collective struggle that are based on respect for and defense of the territory as an ancestral mandate. This is the mandate in which the Nasa conceive of themselves as Kiwe Thegnas or caretakers of the territory, because according to Edinson Peña:

We would rather die in our territory in peaceful resistance, of unity, of organized struggle than to go begging in towns, in cities. We have been trained to defend mother earth and if necessary to die in our mother earth. That is why, they could not displace us and never will (Sulé, 2013, para. 4).

The Process of Liberating Mother Earth described here constitutes one of the forms of collective resistance of subjectivation that indigenous communities have created. The process is based on the organization for defending the earth, everything it has and what is developed in it, that is, what is planted in the earth and produced from it. The earth is the beginning of ancestral life, the foundation of a search for autonomy, in that constant de-territorialization – re-territorialization that crosses the territorial dynamics of the Nasa people.

New Seed Sprouts Hope

Figure 4. Resilience of the Nasa Community



Note. Photograph taken by the researcher. Nasa Territory in the North of the Department of Cauca.

In its political actions, far from depending on negotiations with the Government, the Nasa community continues in its Process of Liberating Mother Earth. It embodies the proposal to extend ways of relating to territory and nature that make it possible to curb dispossession, precariousness and exploitation that have resulted from the imposition in northern Cauca of an economic model focused on accumulation of capital.

From the Process of Liberating Mother Earth, it has been possible to generate collective gamble between the countryside and city, as well as between the organizations of the Nasa people and other communities, civic and political organizations in the country and abroad, they participate in International Meetings of Liberators of Mother Earth convened within the framework of a Liberation Process that take place in northern Cauca. This is a meeting that has been held three times, in 2016, 2018 and 2019. Knowledge is shared between

foundation organizations in several fields (agroecology, technology, communication, etc.) to confront the capitalist system (CRIC, 2019).

Another of the collective wagers that has been made through the Process of Liberation of Mother Earth has been called the “Food March.” It has been held three times, in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The intention of the Food March is to carry out a mobilization and recognition from different cities of the country. The Nasa people share with others the fruits of popular processes in foods and learnings that have been harvested on recovered lands (Contagio Radio, 2019). It is a way of circulating the proposal for Liberating Mother Earth that the Nasa people have built through solidarity, as stated by the Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (ACIN):

As seen, it’s been a difficult four years. Murders, injuries, persecution, repression, military attacks, legal attacks, media attacks, threats, attempts to control us, offers to leave, malicious comments, accusations, intimidation. This food that we share has cost blood. In times of truce, it has been four years of growth, learning, seeing mountains, animals, water, people grow. We have harvested a lot of food and we still harvest. There has been no lack of weaknesses, they are typical of a process such as the monster we are fighting against. We have also faced them, and we have much to do. Anyway, in four years we do not fall (sic) in several attempts to control ourselves, we do not allow ourselves to be tempted by offers of projects or lands in exchange for abandoning, we maintain self-management. [...] The liberation of Uma Kiwe, of course, is not a fight among Nasa people. We have already said: “for other beings to be, we risk our being.” And the beings are very grateful: for the lands in the process of liberation across caravans of insects, toads, frogs, snakes, guatines, birds, dogs, cats, cows; banana bushes, corn, beans, cassava, *rascadera*, pumpkin, tomato, coriander, stubble, and bush; people from different lands, energies, and struggles. And to see the face of all these beings that we draw strength from, to say that we are liberating Uma Kiwe and that this fight is not only for us (ACIN, 2018, para. 3).

In addition, these collective gambles, materialized in several scenarios of struggle and organization, are accompanied by a particular interest in maintaining their own education system. Currently with globalization and access to information with a click, one of the greatest challenges the Nasa community faces is to maintain the *tulpa* (traditional stove) as the main stage for transmitting knowledge, a meeting place and to experience everyday life.

To this end, initiatives such as *V Encuentro de Semillas de Identidad* (A Meeting of the Seeds of Identity V) and *Autoridad y Defensa Territorial* (Territorial Authority and Defense), on July 2020, have been consolidated. These spaces

aimed to experience the collective memory of Nasa people from autonomous exercise of self-government in a pedagogical manner and, through this, to cement and strengthen the role of children as seeds of identity in the fabric of thought to create wisdom.

This concern to ensure the survival of collective processes and the Nasa manner of thinking is also shared by the Process of Liberating Mother Earth. From there, children, young people, and teenagers (NNJA) are given leading roles, while criticizing the ways in which educational institutions have accentuated their disassociation with the territory. On this topic, a Nasa pedagogue reflected on this during the talk (space to share knowledge from dialogue) in the Food March:

Liberation does not progress by itself, it progresses when children fall in love with the Earth, when we see the Earth as a mother. There must be a liberation from being and thought. We are colonized men and women, they bleached our hearts and those who whitened our hearts were the school and maybe the university. Today we don't want to plant the earth, we want a computer. We have to be honest, liberation begins with children. What strategies are we going to use for a child to become a caretaker and sower of the earth? (Process of Liberating Mother Earth, 2018).

Conclusions

The Process of Liberating Mother Earth constitutes a form of resistance to the process of de-territorialization that the Nasa people have faced to this day in the north of the department of Cauca. It is a process that has allowed for the strengthening of the internal organizational processes of the Nasa people through the recovery of land dispossessed by sugar mills. This is reflected in the impact that the Process has had as a commitment to the reconstruction of territory, the consolidation of its own economy based on solidarity and balance of life, the strengthening of its own educational system, among others. In short, it is a commitment to re-territorialization built from ancestral roots that allows for consolidation of some own ways of being that confront the prevailing capitalist system.

This process has also made building networks based on solidarity and knowledge, and shared with other popular processes in Colombia and in the

world possible. In meetings convened by the Process of the Liberation of Mother Earth, it has been possible to recognize the potential of these forms of resistance and to present proposals for the construction of hopeful horizons.

However, there are several and complex challenges the process faces. They range from the relationship and dispute with state institutions (including the armed forces), social stigmatization encouraged by hegemonic media, criminalization, continuity of armed conflict in the territory and other phenomena that put the life and integrity of liberators of Mother Earth at risk.

This situation is worrisome because in recent years, all possible forms of violence against the Nasa people have become more acute, and there have been many reports of targeted assassinations, threats, massacres, displacements, rapes of girls and other forms of violence against indigenous people. There seems to be no interest in understanding and solving these problems, since President Iván Duque refused to meet with indigenous people during the most recent mobilization of indigenous movement, the *Minga* for the Defense of Life, Territory, Democracy, Justice and Peace, which had the participation of the Nasa people and moved from Cauca to Bogotá, in 2019.

Despite the adverse circumstances, the Process of Liberating Mother Earth is undoubtedly a reference for struggles and resistances of indigenous movement and, in general, for the social movement in the country. For this reason, the academy must reflect on its role in the visibility of these practices, based on understanding the indigenous worldview that, although permeated by Westernization and colonization, has at its center a different relationship with nature, completely rooted in an undeniable interconnection with all social, cultural, and spiritual phenomena.

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