



Salasacan Teenagers

Photo by Lynn Meisch

kidnapped by the family of the executed thieves and brought to the police. It was verified that he is not the person on the list, but he is still being held anyway.

In June of 1988, after a plague of robberies in the community, Rudio Masaguiza woke up and surprised thieves who were robbing his house. Sr. Masaguiza roused his neighbors and together, they captured the thieves. In the process, one Salasaca was stabbed. After discovering that the thieves who were mestizos from a nearby town, were part of a gang responsible for robberies in many Salasaca houses, a faction of Salasacas killed them.

This led to many racial tensions and outright attacks between the Salasacas and the Mestizo communities. Rudio Masaguiza was arrested, stripped and beaten with a hose and remains in jail one and one-half years later.

Salasacas have lost land, lives and property through the mestizo legal system; community self-defense and enforcement of their own laws have been their only defenses. UNIS (the Union of Indigenous Salasacas) is handling the case. The President of UNIS, Jose Maria Masaguiza took the position that the Salasacas are not morally bound to obey laws and a legal system in which they had no hand in making, in which they continue to be exploited. In the subsistence economy that is pervasive among the Salasacas, to steal the sheep, tools, hand-made clothing and seed corn from a family is to rob them of years of labor, and to condemn them to years of hunger. In the plaza, when the Salasacas united to defend themselves against the racial attacks they were facing, they frequently reasserted the legality of their action by citing the laws of Tahuantinsuyo, "Do not steal. Do not be lazy. And don't lie."



BRAZIL

Invasion of Yanomami Lands Provokes International Outcry

Brazilian Indian leaders travelled to Roraima to observe the effects on the Yanomami people of an invasion of 40,000 gold miners. The commission was composed of Ail-



ton Krenak and Marcos Terena of the Union of Indigenous Nations (UNI). Kayapo leader Paiakan, Yanomami leader, Davi Kiriana, and Otoriguete Txcummarae denounced a process of "extermination" being carried out against the Yanomami.

The Native leaders revealed that 15 Yanomami have died in recent weeks at the government health post in Boa Vista run by FUNAI, the national Indian foundation. Most of the deaths were caused by malaria, a disease brought by the miners, and compounded by acute malnutrition. The miners' invasion has drastically disrupted the subsistence activities of agriculture and hunting of the Yanomami,

the largest Indian nation in the Americas still not in complete contact with the national society.

According to Amnesty International, the Yanomami have also been victims of violence, with two women and a child killed on August 11th near an airstrip used by the miners. Amnesty International also says it has received reports that between one and five Yanomamis were killed the first week of November near the headwaters of the Mucujai River.

In addition, rivers in the area are now polluted with mercury, which is used in

goldmining, and venereal disease is now widespread. Over 90% of the population of Paapiu Village is reported suffering from onchocerciasis (commonly called 'river blindness').

According to Raimundo Yanomami of Paapiu, the health worker from FUNAI (the government Indian Protection Agency) left the area, saying "It's these people, the gold miners who from now on, are going to give medicines to you. We're not giving anymore."

Hundreds of small planes are taking off each day to bring miners and supplies to the Yanomami area. The Brazilian military has arbitrarily cut the size of Yanomami territory by 70% as part of their Calha Norte program. On October 20th, a federal judge issued a preliminary directive ordering the removal of gold miners from the Yanomami area. Federal police are charged with carrying out the eviction to remove the miners by air and relocate them to areas where gold mining is allowed by law.

The Governor of Roraima, Romero Juca Filho, ex-president of FUNAI, has announced he will press for legalization of the gold miners' right to continue working within the Indian territory.

URGENT ACTION BULLETIN!!!

The federal court ruling ordering the removal of gold prospectors from Yanomami territories is being defied by the Brazilian government. This is in total disregard of the federal constitution. On January 9, 1990, the Brazilian government met with gold prospectors to discuss the ruling and reached an accord whereby the prospectors would be voluntarily relocated within Yanomami territory! This accord was reached without consulting the Yanomami people.

Please write letters of protest to the Brazilian Embassy or your local Brazilian Consulate.

***Brazilian Embassy
3006 Mass Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008***

