

Amazonian Indian Visits the United States

Gilberto Macuxi, an Indian from the territory of Roraima in the Brazilian Amazon, came to the U.S. in May. His trip was sponsored by the Lummi Indian Council in Washington State and by SAIIC.

Roraima is the scene of an increasing wave of violence affecting Native people. Arbitrary imprisonment of Indians and exploitation by large landowners, or *fazendeiros*, occur frequently. About 40,000 Indians live in Roraima from the Yanomami, Ingariko, Taurepang, Wapixana, Wai-Wai-, Waimiri-Atoari and Macuxi nations.

The following are statements by Gilberto Macuxi regarding the situation in Brazil, and by Tuchaua Luis, the Macuxi chief from the Maloca do Piolho, and by Julia Macuxi, Gilberto's wife, concerning conditions in Roraima:

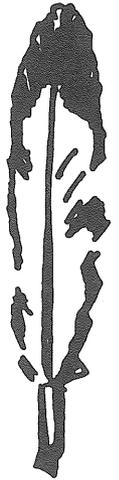
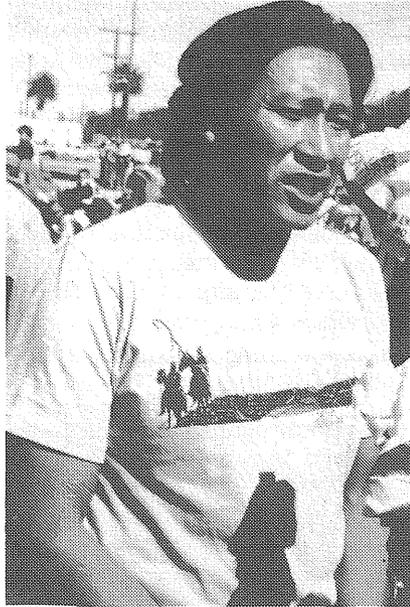
Gilberto Macuxi

Indigenous Religion: "Indigenous religion still exists in Brazil because the Indians do not surrender, because the Indian is still Indian. The Indian must hold on to his religion and preserve his culture and language. So we are working to encourage this too—to have children who are bilingual. The government has always destroyed the indigenous languages in order to discriminate against the Indian through laws. But, the Indian doesn't know how to live by these laws. We must form alliances among ourselves in order to move forward in our struggle, so that we may survive.

Denunciations: I'm the first person who is coming here, putting forth everything to show in the United States that in Brazil they are destroying the life of the Indian, destroying the forests, destroying the waters which are contaminated. In addition, among the Tikuna, 14 Indians were killed and 27 were wounded by loggers—Oscar Castelo Branco sent 20 people, all armed, and killed the Indians. Besides this, in the indigenous area of the Pataxo, in Bahia, a rancher killed an Indian leader.

Calha Norte: I have already made various denunciations against the authorities of Brazil,

principally the military, because the military wants to include in their project the border zone of 150 kilometers in width and 6,000 kilometers in length, where Indians exist and have lived for a long time, preserving nature—the forest—for their subsistence. So, the military wants to take everything saying it is an area of national security. They want to create an Indian colony as part of this, instead of demarcating the lands. They also want to create mining colonies, and the forest would become a National Forest. But, it is my feeling that Calha Norte is the destruction of our culture, the destruction of our life. And Calha Norte will provide protection to mining companies, because the mining companies want to enter the area. The prospectors within the area are being used by the mining companies. President Jos Altino Machado of the gold miners' union is linked with these companies.



Gilberto Macuxi from Roraima State, Brazil, speaking in the San Francisco Bay Area, May 1988.

Nature and the Amazon: We want support. We are sad because the natural world in Brazil, especially in Amazonia, is going to be destroyed. In Amazonia, there are many indigenous medicines which could save many lives in the whole world. The Indians must be preserved, in order to provide this future, to improve human life for all of us—Brazilians, Indians. This could save the lives of millions in many countries.

The Future: We would like to form alliances with all the Indians of the Americas, including

here in the United States. We want that alliance because it is a way to protect our people—through such an international alliance, between Brazil, America, Canada, and other countries. Here, I met with the Lummi and Canadian Indians. The Canadian Indians gave me a lot of support in my struggle. We want to live as Indians. Always the Indian will be a good example for whites, because he is a person who is not after private gain; he is a person who speaks the truth in this world.

AMAZONIA

Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Hold International Meeting

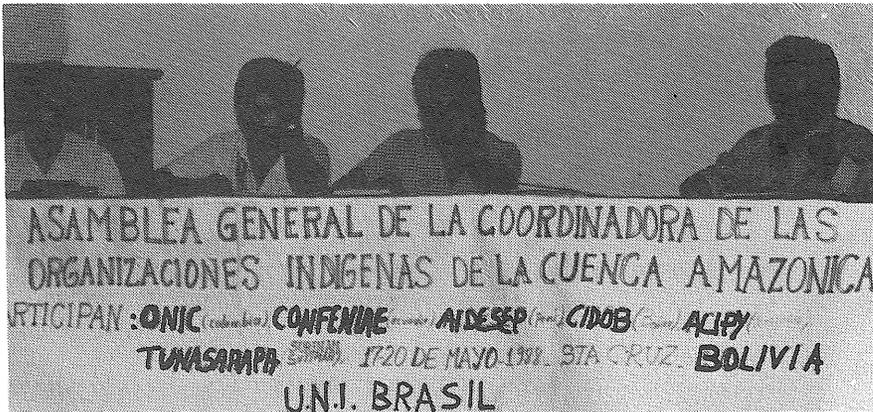


photo: Aguirre/Switkes/Amazonia



Amazonian Indian leaders address the Coordinadora meeting, May 1988.

Sixty delegates from Indian organizations of seven Amazonian countries—ONIC, Colombia; CONFENIAE, Ecuador; AIDSESP, Peru; UNI, Brazil; CIDOB, Bolivia; ACIPY, Venezuela; and TUNASARAPA, Surinam met in May in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia to hold the third meeting of *La Coordinadora*—the Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin.

The *Coordinadora* was originally formed in 1981, after Indian organizations of the Amazon

region rejected a proposal by the Interamerican Indigenist Institute and the eight countries that had signed the Treaty of Amazon Cooperation. According to Evaristo Nugkuag, Aguaruna from Peru and President of the *Coordinadora*, "We realized that the most serious threat might be from the eight countries that signed the Amazon Pact—who resolve to exploit the resources of the rainforest without taking into account the existence of Indigenous people who live there.