

COLOMBIA

CRIC Issues Statement On M-19 Guerrillas

The Cauca Regional Indian Council (CRIC) has published the following statement on the military strife in southwestern Colombia in the latest issue of Unidad Indígena (Apartado Aereo 32395, Bogota, Colombia).

We reject the declaration of the M-19 guerrilla movement which was announced by radio September 6, 1986. The declaration, which was made after the group had militarily taken the community of Inza, stated that Indian people are in total agreement with the war that M-19 has declared against the government.

Indian organizations know that the interests of Indian people and our struggle are not compatible with the war now carried on by armed groups. We reject the war in Indian communities and territories that these guerrilla groups want to impose on us by force in clear violation of the rights of autonomy of Indian communities.

The M-19 movement falsely maintains that it represents Indian interests based on the fact that some Indians are active in this group. However, those Indians act as individuals and not as members of Indian communities.

Finally, we object to M-19's use of the names of Indian leaders to suit interests not compatible with those of Indian communities.

Popayan, September 8, 1986

Paez Leader Tells Pope Indian View Of History

The following comments were made by Paez Indian Guillermo Tenorio to Pope John Paul II before a gathering of about 150,000 people in Popayan during the Pope's visit to Colombia the first week of July.

Soon we will mark the 500th anniversary of the arrival of European conquerors in our land. Much has happened since then to shape the destiny of our people. We have experienced a complete upheaval of our culture. We complete 500 years of history made in the silence of pain, contempt, marginalization, of tortures which remain unknown because they are tortures of Indian people. Our history has been a struggle of life or death for our cultures. Many brothers and sisters have succumbed to the unceasing aggression of the conquerors, but many others have persevered in our struggle. The wild mountains of the magnificent Andes, the plains, and the thick Amazon jungles are deaf witnesses to all our sufferings and hopes. Our music, the sound and the image of Indian people, bears witness to the sadness caused by the pillage of our land, the undermining of our community organizations, and the undervaluing of our



Guillermo Tenorio's speech to the Pope was interrupted by a Colombian Church official, inspiring the above cartoon in CRIC's newspaper.