



NEWSLETTER

South American Indian Information Center (SAIIC)

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are grateful for your subscriptions! Your response made it clear to us how necessary our information center is. Thanks for your letters and good wishes.

This is our second bi-monthly newsletter. It is dedicated mainly to the General Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples held last September in Panama. We hope to hear more from you, and urge those that haven't subscribed yet to do so.

Sincerely,

The SAIIC Committee

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples was founded in 1975 in Canada. It encompasses five regions: the Eastern Region (the Samis from Scandinavia and the Inuit from Greenland), the Northern Region (Alaska, Canada, and the United States), the Central Region (Mexico and Central America), the Southern Region (South America), and the Pacific Region (Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Islands).

WCIP's main objectives were to create a communications network for indigenous people worldwide. This would facilitate their struggle against the oppressive neocolonial nation-states in which they live. Also it would help educate international public opinion about the Indian situation throughout the world, and especially in the Americas.

For diverse reasons, the WCIP did not meet all these expectations agreed upon during its founding. It did, though, continue to function and hold General Assemblies every three years. The second assembly was held in 1977 in Samiland (Lapland), the third



in 1981 in Australia, and the last one this past September 23 through 30 in Panama. Two members of SAIIC, Nilo Cayuqueo (Mapuche from Argentina) and James Muneta (Navajo, U.S.), were invited to participate in this conference.

Indian organizations at a regional level have gained experience and political maturity during their struggle for survival. They attended this meeting offering clear and precise proposals as to the role international Indian organizations (especially the WCIP) should have towards the genocide and ethnocide facing Indian peoples. These problems are brought about by colonial states, or dominating societies, that carry out the interests of local elites and the large transnational corporations.

During the last day of the conference, the new executive members of the WCIP were elected for a period of three years. They are: Clams Chartier from Saskatchewan, Canada, President; Hyden Burgess from Hawaii Sovereignty Committee, 1st Vice President; and Donald Rojas Moroto from Costa Rica, 2nd Vice President. There was also an executive representative from each region elected. The next WCIP General Assembly will be held in South America. The current address is: WCIP-Secretariat, 555 King Edward Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5.

Representing the American Indian Movement at the WCIP Conference was Larry Anderson, who spoke about recent resistance to relocation at Big Mountain in Arizona. His presence was greatly appreciated.

SAIIC member James Muneta made the following comments concerning the Conference on KPFA radio in Berkeley on October 12:

"I was very enlightened by this experience, in being a North American Indian to travel to Central America to find people similar to me and people that had the same beliefs and values in the earth and in the children and to find people who want to preserve their culture and tradition. When the Europeans came, when the white people came, their governments created different boundaries which through time divided the indigenous people. I have been told by my elders and the old people, that in our history, the Indian people migrated from South to North America and they traded goods and shared cultures with each other. But in the contemporary world, the political boundaries have separated the people. We have almost lost total contact with our brothers and sisters in Central America and South America. To go down there was like finding a lost brother or sister. We can be physical and spiritual support to each other.

"It brought to mind the vision of Black Elk. He saw in his vision the sacred hoop that is the unity of all indigenous people of the Americas. And within that hoop was the growing tree that was blossoming, meaning that through unity we will gain strength. We will be able to have strength in supporting each other in creating a better future for our children and to start to create peace for our people who are struggling in Central and South America. I feel it is important for more of our indigenous nations in North America to go to South America to establish that unity in brotherhood and sisterhood to bring forth this peace."