

NEWSLETTER

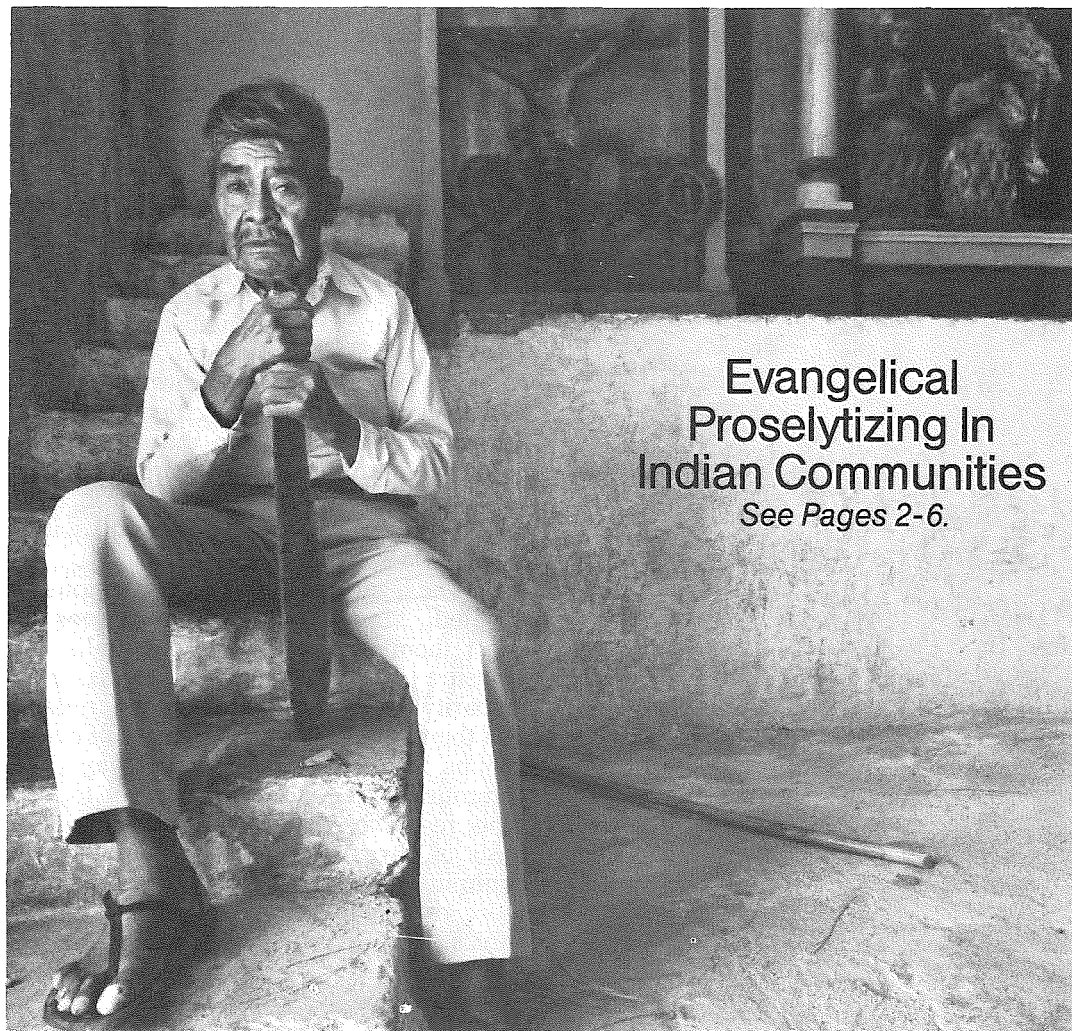
# South and Central American Indian Information Center (SAIIC)

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## Evangelical Proselytizing In Indian Communities

*See Pages 2-6.*

# Evangelical Proselytizing

*Missionaries, missionaries, go and leave us all alone . . .  
We've got a God of our own.*

—Floyd Westerman, J. Curtiss

Throughout the Americas, fundamentalist Christian missionaries, often called evangelicals, have proselytized for many years among both rainforest tribal people and highland agricultural Indian communities. Their aggressive missionary work has had a widespread impact in the Amazon basin, the highlands of southern Mexico, western Guatemala, Ecuador, and around Lake Titicaca between Peru and Bolivia.

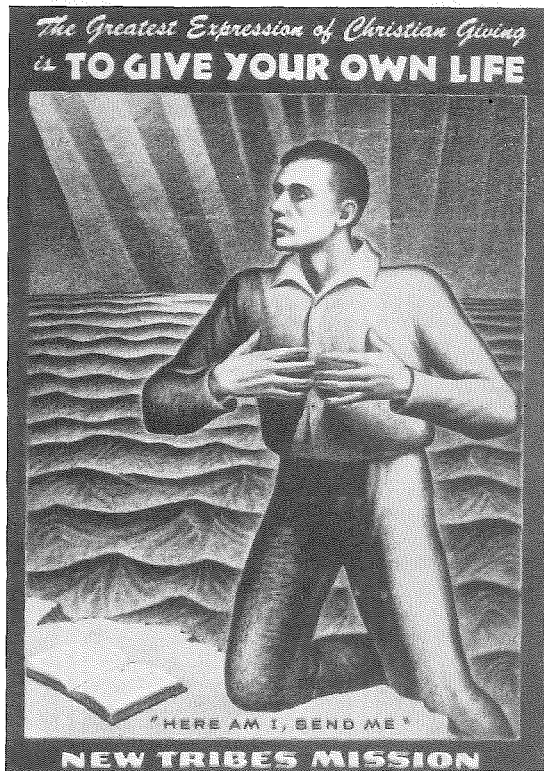
According to David Stoll, a North American who has conducted extensive research on evangelical proselytizing among Indian people, conservative Protestant missions have surpassed the Catholic Church in influence among many tribal people. By reaching the last and the smallest groups, evangelicals hope to fulfill a prophecy in the Christian bible and bring a second coming of Christ.

The misnamed Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), one of the largest of such evangelical organizations, has worked in 370 native languages in South and Central America. SIL, which raises funds in the United States under the name of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, has tried to

avoid opposition to its work by entering countries as linguistic scientists. It has secured contracts from national governments to conduct linguistic work and then proselytized among the communities to which it has gained access.

The more fundamentalist New Tribes Mission operates in 79 languages. It has often been criticized for its zeal in attracting nomadic hunter-gatherers to more settled lifestyles without protecting them from the consequences of cultural disruption. In recent years it has pursued contacts with Yuqui, Ayoreo, and Ache bands in Paraguay and Bolivia and with Macu and Jaarua in Colombia.

The legacy of evangelical missions is complicated. Many Indian organizations angrily reject them, tiring of their paternalism, of the pressure to adopt evangelical beliefs, and of the disparity in wealth between the missionaries and themselves. The conservatism of evangelical groups has often stood in the way of Indian communities defending their right to land and other resources. Yet, there is also an underlying basis of support for the missionaries in some communities. The missionaries are sometimes more reliable providers of schools and health clinics than governments, and where the Cath-



olic Church is allied with local elites against Indian interests the evangelicals sometimes provide welcome support. The following articles describe relations between evangelicals and Indian communities in various areas of South and Central America.

## Ayoreo Deaths In Paraguayan Chaco

Late last year in Paraguay missionary activities of the New Tribes Mission caused conflict between Indians which resulted in five deaths and four injuries. According to *Hoy*, a major Paraguayan newspaper, a group of Ayoreo Indians who are a part of the New Tribes Faro Moro mission went into the forest in search of Totoviegosode, other Ayoreo Indians who have refused to abandon their traditional lifestyle. The Totoviegosode ambushed the New Tribes converts, resulting in deaths and injuries. News of the incident was first reported on the Mennonite radio station ZP30, which led other media in Paraguay to suspect that the Mennonites, large landowners with a history of antagonism to Indian people, had distorted the news to protect New Tribes proselytizing.

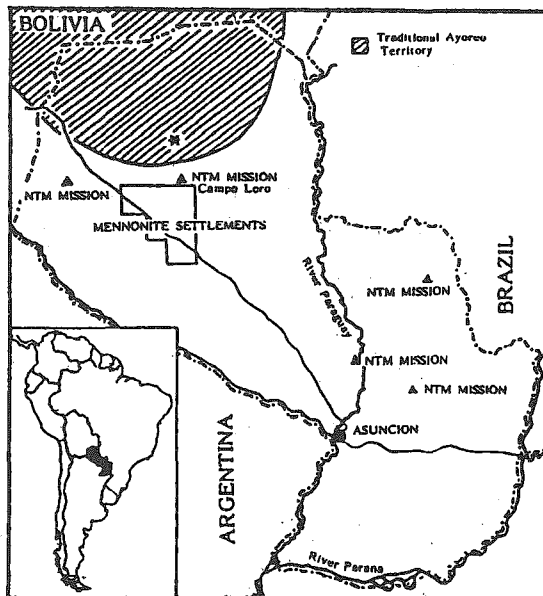
A Catholic priest in the area, Father José Sanardini, blamed the New Tribes Mission for the deaths of the Ayoreo. He said, "It is possible that there is a relationship between the New Tribes missionaries and large landowners who covet land where the Totoviegosode live."

According to a report by the Ayoreo Project, which is sponsored by the Indigenist Association of Paraguay, missionaries first contacted the Ayoreo Indians in 1967. In addition to bibles, they also supplied rifles and traps, encouraging the Indians to become professional hunters. The missionaries acted as middlemen in charge of the commercialization of skins and administrators of the income generated from the project.

By 1971 Ayoreo people had begun approaching the Mennonite settlements in the Chaco in search of work, marking the transition from independent life to rural workers. By 1974 it was no longer possible to make a living from hunting and more Indians became wage laborers subjected to low pay and subhuman treatment.

Project Ayoreo provided the following description of the area on the periphery of Filadelfia where some Ayoreo live: "The place has no shelter and no bathrooms. During the summer thousands of flies accumulate around the encampment, and during the winter the Indians sit very close to each other by the fire and cough all night long.

"In the mission itself, the missionaries practice a simple plan. They force the Indians to obey a rigid work discipline. They cannot rest before the day ends. They cannot drink *tereré* [a traditional tea] during work hours. The routine is reinforced with biblical readings about sobriety, hard work, family, and property in order to make them work harder for the bosses."

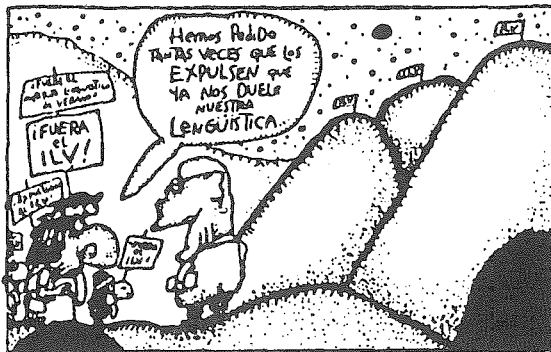


# SIL Serves Government Interests In Brazil

*The Summer Institute of Linguistics has operated in Brazil since 1959. The following statement on their activities was presented by the Union of Indian Nations (UNI) to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1985.*

"From the point of view of the government, they had everything to offer: personnel skilled in technology and methodology, experience working in similar situations in 21 countries, and the fact that they provide their work for free. And SIL textbooks served the development policies of the government, like trying to convince Indians that a road cut through our land would benefit us.

"In order to change the influence of SIL, bold moves are needed. Indian education should not be limited to the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic. We must also redeem the past, not only to retain certain myths and narratives, but also to ensure the perpetuation of our body of scientific knowledge, of our knowledge of the world, of our own ways of accounting and measuring, and of our relationship with nature. Education should offer more than just an understanding of the world of whites. We need to move around and defend ourselves within it."



*"Those Summer Institute of Linguistics people are really a pain in the mouth."*

## Many Sects Seek Indian Converts In Ecuador

*Juan Aulestia, Oxfam America associate program representative for South America, made the following comments in an interview with SAIIC.*

"The government is focusing on how to disarticulate the Indian organizations. They have been utilizing many strategies. One is allowing an open-door policy to religious sects. The fundamentalists, such as the Jehovah Witnesses and the Pentecostals, have been able to penetrate to every corner of the country, which is steadily dividing Indian organizations and communities. In Ecuador there are about 300 different religious sects, most of them from the United States, as well

"We are not against a belief in God. We are very religious, very religious. We believe that people are the same as the plants, as all of the natural world. All have life and are brothers."

—Floriberto Diaz Gomez (Mixe) of Oaxaca, Mexico

"Most primitive tribal people are steeped in cultural practices initiated and motivated by superstition and fear. Religion . . . is generally a spiritist form of worship which is energized by satanic forces."

—New Tribes Mission

as the Unification Church [Moonies], which has over 150,000 followers.

"The people who belong to these churches no longer relate to the rest of the community people. They do not participate in traditional events and will not participate in community organizations. The social base is being divided.

"Under President Roldos, the Summer Institute of Linguistics was expelled from Ecuador, but the current government has been doing everything possible to bring them back. These sects do much work on the government's agenda in terms of providing basic education and controlling the level of Indian community unity and organizing.

"There have been three pillars of colonial rule: the state, the military, and the Catholic church. The Catholic church has maintained that position, a power position. There has been a spiritual gap and a lack of direct attention. So in some instances, the evangelical churches have responded to some of the direct needs of Indian communities."

## SIL Divides Indian Communities In Mexico

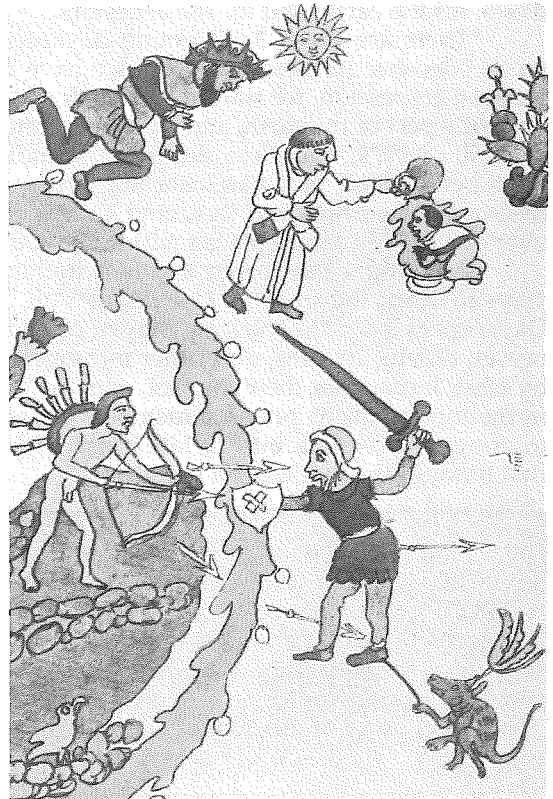
*Floriberto Diaz Gomez of the Assembly of Mixe Authorities in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, recently described to SAIIC the activities of SIL in his community.*

"The Summer Institute of Linguistics came into the Mixe region in 1936 during the Cárdenas era. They came first to work as linguists. When we were little kids, we were very frightened of the gringos because our parents told us that they ate people. Our families tried to protect us any way they could. The Institute introduced a different religion and their consciousness began to intrude into the communities. They sent Mixe to study at Mitla, which was their training center. After a while it was even Mixe who were pushing their religious belief while doing linguistic work.

"They have made bible translations, but they haven't made their linguistic work useful to the people. Even though they have been working here since the 30's, Mixe people still don't read and write in Mixe. If they really had an interest in teaching us to read and write our language, there would have been two or three generations reading and writing by now.

"We consider that religion is something

*Attempts by outsiders to impose religious beliefs on Indians has a long history, as shown in this Indian painting from the first years after the Spanish conquest of Mexico. A Spaniard with a sword fights one Indian while a priest baptizes a child.*



that should unite us, not separate us. Their work in the end divides our communities. They always try to provoke problems in the communities. Each one with their interpretation that people shouldn't eat meat, or participate in community celebrations, or that children shouldn't go to school to get this kind of education or that kind of education, or that we shouldn't participate in community work. They present the communal life as oppressive. *Tequio* [community work] is free labor. They say no one should work for free, so we should not participate in *tequio*. But we say we should in this case, because the work is for the community as a whole. This is a collision between a collective approach that is the basis of our communities and an individual approach."

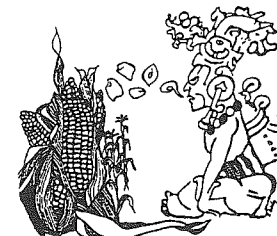
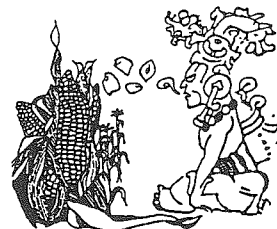
## Rebirth Of Mayan Spirituality

Last year, for the first time in decades, hundreds of Mayan Indians gathered in the mountains of Guatemala to celebrate the Mayan New Year. In sacred places priests called daykeepers offered tallow candles and marigolds, burned incense and spices, and gave thanks for the dawn, for the earth, and for the ancestors.

"There are about 3,000 young daykeepers now," explained one of them. "Because in these last years we have been paralyzed by so much fear and repression, we started looking for something real that belongs to us, that's part of the earth, and that we haven't found in other religions."

Since 1979, countless numbers of Indians have disappeared and have been killed in Guatemala and many Indian villages have been destroyed. Two hundred thousand Guatemalans are living in exile and over one million are displaced within the country.

Becoming a daykeeper involves training with an elder for several years to learn the traditions of Popul Vuh, the ancient Maya scripture. Daykeepers learn the intricate Mayan calendar and how to interpret illnesses, omens, dreams, and other messages. Daykeepers are sought out by other Indians for their counsel, and they fast and conduct pilgrimages in the mountains to pray for members of the community. Their work is to bring what is dark into "white clarity," just as the gods of Popul Vuh first brought the world itself to life.



"It is very hard for prisoners to keep up with most of what is going on 'back in the world.' You can watch television and see things on the news, but that is usually not the TRUTH, and very often it is only part of the whole story that is told to give people an incorrect impression of what is really going on. The facts and information that you shared with us are very important. Without this knowledge that you brought to us, that you shared with us, we would remain very ignorant about the things that are happening to our brothers down south, to you and to your people."

—David Leavitt, Native Spiritual Circle, Folsom State Prison, in a letter to SAILC.



## CHILE

# Mapuches Present Views to Pope

"We, the Mapuches, want to make our own present and future history. We do not want to fight or to be fought. We want understanding, and along with it peace, justice, liberty and adequate lands for development in our own style, culture, and capacity."

These words are part of a letter presented to Pope John Paul II at Pampa Ganaderos during his recent visit to Chile. The letter also says that, "Five hundred and fifty years ago, our people lived on this land which nourished us both physically and spiritually. We were defeated militarily and placed on small reservations where the land is poor. Because of this we have had to change certain aspects of our culture and our social and economic systems. Forms and styles have changed with time, but our situation as a segregated ethnic minority has been constant and becomes more intense."

"Peñi [Brother] John Paul, we are not even considered a people. The laws and the constitution of the Republic of Chile do not recognize our existence." The letter explains that although the Mapuche are a people, "legally we do not exist in this society."

"We, the Mapuches, want you to know that we are a very religious people, that we have deep faith. Our god Ngenechen Kimnei

knows this. We trust that you understand and support us, but we need you to listen to our cry and pray to your god, Jesus Christ, to intervene before those who do not want to listen to our problems."

The Mapuche want "respect for our traditions. We want to continue celebrating our religious ceremonies, our Nguillatunes, and speaking our language, Mapudugún. Through it, we transmit to our children our values, habits, and customs. To not speak our language would be like not breathing, not living."

In Pampa Ganaderos, where the Pope made a public appearance and mingled with people of the Temuco area, a large *rehue* (Mapuche altar) was built. The Mapuches who carved it and the *machi* (spiritual leader) who blessed it hope that it will later be put in a central location in Temuco to remind everyone of the Pope's encounter with Mapuche people.

In another letter to Pope John Paul II, the Mapuche organization Nehuen Mapu asks support in their struggle for restoration of Mapuche land, recognition of the land titles granted by Spain centuries ago, programs of bilingual education and technical assistance, loans for agricultural development, and political autonomy.

## Mapuches Occupy A Farm In Puren

A farm of 380 hectares was occupied by two Mapuche communities comprising 160 people in Puren on April 5, 1987. The Mapuches said that the act is "part of a movement which intends to recover the land that legitimately belongs to us because it belonged to our ancestors. Our current conditions force us to find a way to survive."

The farm was occupied by members of the Loncoyán Grande and Pichihueico communities, who say they are heirs of Cacique José

Manuel Catrileo Inal, who had legal authority over the land. Members of the Mapuche organization AD-Mapu, who helped organize the takeover, said, "We offer our support and solidarity as we feel this is a just struggle to recover land legitimately theirs and necessary for their survival." AD-Mapu also noted that the presence of elders, children, and animals of the communities demonstrates how desperate their situation is and how inadequately the national economy serves their needs.

The Mapuches were removed on the evening of April 8 by Angol police led by the governor of Malleco province. The removal was not as violent as the previous year, when some of the same people occupied the farm and four Mapuches received gunshot wounds.

Other events involving AD-Mapu include the convening of its Fifth Assembly April 13-16 in the headquarters of the Catholic bishop of Temuco. In Santiago, the capital, AD-Mapu recently held a press conference at the office of

the Chilean Commission for Human Rights to denounce a summons issued by the Ministry of the Interior as "unjust and immoral political persecution."

"While there is one Mapuche left in Chile, he will defend his people so as to fulfill the ideals of justice and liberty."

—Antupillan, in 1641

## BRAZIL

# Struggle For Indian Rights In New Constitution



The Union of Indian Nations (UNI) is facing a critical period as Brazil's new constitution is being written without the participation of official Indian representatives. UNI and many national and international groups are watching the process closely and pressuring the constitutional assembly to guarantee Indian rights and protect Indian land.

Ailton Krenak, national coordinator of UNI, writes to SAIIC: "It is criminal what they are doing to contain the Indian population now at the end of the 20th century, especially regarding our territorial rights and the use of our resources.

"The project Calha Norte, a project of the National Security Council, provides for the military occupation of the Amazon, especially in the areas of the Solimões, Negro, and Bravo rivers. This implies the establishment of military bases and the presence of civilian workers throughout 6,000,000 square kilometers of our land. It's 40 per cent of all Indian territory and

"It is very important for us to know that your organization exists there in the United States and that you make information available and encourage exchanges among Indian people of South and North America. It's very important to expand the knowledge and understanding of our peoples. Please keep us informed of the ways we can help with these goals."

—Domingos Veríssimo (Terena), UNI leader, in a letter to SAIIC.



home to 60 per cent of Indian people in Brazil."

The plan, based on a North American model, allows 100 square kilometers for each Indian family, "as if we were like a white family—father, mother, and child—instead of Indian communities. This can only force Indians to integrate into non-Indian society, establishing such a degree of dependence that we will no longer be able to live without whites."

Such forced integration is consistent with long-standing policies of the Brazilian government. Indians are forced to participate in political life, such as the writing of the new constitution, on the same terms as the non-Indian majority, whose vastness overpowers Indian voices. FUNAI, Brazil's bureau of Indian affairs, attempts to exercise authority over every aspect of Indian lives. FUNAI is attached to the Ministry of the Interior, which is also responsible for economic development, which often works contrary to Indian interests. FUNAI has issued illegal permits for mineral exploration in Indian territory as well as neglected its responsibility to define the boundaries of Indian land so it can be protected from outside encroachment.

UNI, which includes 120 of the 170 Indian nations in Brazil, has heightened its activities on behalf of Indian rights as the new constitution is written. On March 31, UNI met with CIMI (the Indian Missionary Council of the Catholic Church), the Pro-Indian Commission, the Ecumenical Documentation and Information Center, the Brazilian Association of Anthropologists and the National Institute for Social and Cultural Studies in Brasília to elaborate a unified proposal regarding Indian rights in Brazil. The proposal demands the demarcation of all Indian land to secure the

survival of Indian traditions and languages. It has been presented to the Subcommittee for Blacks, Indians, Disabled People and Minorities of the constitutional convention.

During an international telephone conference call on June 11, Ailton Krenak also said, "In Brazil today there is a generalized concern regarding land distribution, and the Indian situation must be put in this context. The rubber tappers of the Amazon region as well as hundreds of thousands of landless peasants throughout the country are also discriminated against."

Ailton also said that, "Indians have advanced in this struggle due to increased public awareness and support from national and international non-governmental organizations." In addition to Ailton, the telephone conference call included José Carlos Saboia, member of the Brazilian national legislature; Dr. Julio Gaiger, a lawyer from CIMI; David Maybury-Lewis, president of Cultural Survival; Richard Smith of Oxfam America; Steve Schwartzman of the Environmental Defense Fund; and Maria Sousa and Nilo Cayuqueo of SAIIC.

"It is important," said Saboia, "that national and international organizations work together to mobilize the media and make the Indian struggle in Brazil known. Public support is fundamental to success in defending the rights of Indian people at the national constitutional assembly."

Letters of support for the UNI position should be sent to Deputado Ivo Lech; Presidente da Subcomissão dos Negros, Populações Indígenas, Pessoas Deficientes e Minorias; Câmara dos Deputados; 70.160 Brasília, DF Brasil.

## Yanomami Land Claims Not Yet Recognized

An article in the Winter, 1987, issue of the *SAIIC Newsletter* mistakenly stated that the president of Brazil had granted official recognition to Yanomami land claims in the Amazon

near Brazil's border with Venezuela. In fact, the president only announced his intention to grant such recognition, which may conflict with military plans for the area.

## PERU

### Women's Voices

"You must understand that, in the countryside, things are really different. The *campesina* is like a slave to her husband. Her life is the kitchen, the animals, the fields. She gets up at 4 a.m. to cook, carry water, make the *chicha* [fermented corn drink] and work on the farm. Even if it's pouring rain she has to cover up with plastic and go out to bring in the sheep. Many nights we don't get in from the fields before 8 or 9 p.m. and then we begin supper for our children."

—Marta, 36, married and the mother of 7 children, the only woman leader in the Agrarian Federation of Apurimac in the Andean highlands.

"We've formed our women's committee to defend our interests, because we want to defend our rights. As women, we want to be respected by the men; they should at least let us participate freely in different organizations and also let us be leaders too. Don't you think? . . . They tell us . . . that we have formed our committee because we want to get out of the kitchen. But that's not true. We want to get things done, like real people, just like the men."

—Presentación, who participates in a women's committee in her community.

"The most conscious women are the ones who participate and fight with their husbands to try to make them understand. To do this they must be fully aware of the need to participate, that they have the right to do so, that they have to fight it out with their husbands, and make them understand that this situation of exploitation, misery and oppression must be confronted by both of them."

—Nelly, 43, mother of 11, general secretary of the women's committee of her shantytown.

Quotations and photo from *Women in Peru: Voices from a Decade*, published in English in 1986 by the Ecumenical Committee in the Andes, 198 Broadway, #302, New York, NY 10038.

### New Federation Forms In Peruvian Amazon

On March 28, leaders and representatives from seven organizations of Indian people met to form the Confederation of Amazon Nations of Peru (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Amazonicas del Peru*, CONAP). The goals of the new group include "representing our people and addressing our fundamental rights" and acting "in the long struggle against all forms of colonialism."

Groups comprising the new organization include the Federation of Yanesha Indian Communities (FECONAYA), Federation of Cocama-Cocamilla (FEDECOCA), Federation of Indian Communities of the Ucayali (FECONAYY), Federation of Campa-Ashaninca Indian Communities (FECONACA), Federation of Indian Communities of Madre de Dios (FENAMAD), Federation of Piro Indian Communities (FECONAYA), and the governing council of the Nomatsiguenga Indian communities.



# Massacre Of Prisoners Documented

Amnesty International (1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, England) has issued a report titled *Peru: Disappearances, Torture and Summary Executions by Government Forces after the Prison Revolts of June 1986*. The report estimates that about 280 prisoners were killed by the Peruvian government in three prisons and concludes that a deliberate cover-up by both civilian and military authorities has attempted to obscure the massacre. Many of the dead were Indians from the Andean region who were accused of involvement with the Shining Path guerrilla movement.

## Indianismo!

Listen! Can you hear the warm southern air  
flowing through the bamboo and  
reeds? Making music out of this  
confusing noise. Can you hear the  
silent heartbeat of all those massacred?  
Reach down and touch the tortured  
bodies! Touch the tortured bodies  
hidden deep within the Peruvian  
dungeons. Dungeons. . . .

The sacred hoop is whole once again! We are  
all related! . . .

We will liberate the natural world.  
Indianismo! . . .

But now, we will reunite the family of life!  
We who love life, as a way of living,  
now we live. . . .

We will come alive dancing to the same song.  
We will liberate the natural world.  
We who live, as a way of living, now,  
we live.

—Tom LaBlanc (*Sisseton Dakota*), 1986

¡Escuchen! ¿Pueden oír el aire tibio del sur,  
pasando a través de los junquillos y los  
bambúes, transformando este ruido  
confuso en música? ¿Pueden oír el  
silencioso palpitar del corazón de  
todos los masacrados? ¡Estiren sus  
manos y toquen los cuerpos  
torturados! ¡Toquen los cuerpos  
torturados escondidos en los  
profundos socavones peruanos, tan  
profundos! Socavones. . . .

¡El círculo sagrado es completa de nuevo!  
Somos una misma familia. . . .

Liberaremos la Madre Tierra. ¡Indianismo! . . .  
Pero reuniremos la familia de la vida. Nosotros  
los que amamos la vida como manera  
de vivir. ¡Ahora vivimos! . . .

Renaceremos danzando la misma música.  
Liberaremos a la Madre Tierra.  
Nosotros los que vivimos como  
manera de vivir. Ahora vivimos.

(Translation: Lobo/Padilla)

## ECUADOR

# Earthquake Disrupts Many Indian Communities

On the night of March 5, an earthquake measuring between 6.8 and 7.2 on the Richter scale struck southeastern Ecuador. The epicenter of the earthquake was in the Amazonian province of Napo. The tremors caused mudslides and avalanches which dammed rivers with debris. When rising waters burst through the dams, floods devastated downstream areas. Entire communities disappeared as mudslides swept away houses, livestock, agricultural land, and people. Reports indicate that between 2,000 and 3,500 Indian people are missing and presumed dead from the earthquake and its aftermath.

In the mountains the worst damage occurred in the densely populated Indian regions of Imbabura and Pichincha. Although crops and roads remain intact, between 10,000 and 12,000 homes were destroyed, leaving at least 25,000 people homeless. People are now living in improvised shelters made of sticks, plastic sheeting, and cut grass.

Immediately after the earthquake, CONAIE, the Confederation of Indian Nations of Ecuador, which includes organizations from both the Amazonian and mountain regions, went into action. Indian leaders from all over Ecuador gathered in Quito to work through CONAIE to assess damage in isolated areas, handle public relations, and formulate proposals for relief and reconstruction.

In Amazonia CONAIE is concentrating



relief efforts to help Indians rebuild canoes, most of which were lost during the initial flooding, so people will be ready to navigate the rivers when the waters have subsided. In the mountain regions, CONAIE is working with local cooperative work teams called *mingas* to rebuild destroyed houses.

According to Cristobal Naikiai, general secretary of CONFENIAE, the organization of Amazonian Indians which forms part of CONAIE, "virtually none of the aid sent by the United States government is reaching Indian people. The North American and Ecuadoran governments are targeting their efforts at rebuilding roads for oil corporations and African palm plantations, while ignoring the needs of the people in the region. The attitude of the North American army reserve units which are doing relief work is to discredit the Indian confederation, thus causing more confusion and conflict."

At the request of CONFENIAE, SAIIC is soliciting funds for earthquake relief which will go directly to Indian communities through CONFENIAE. If you are interested in helping, please contact SAIIC at (415) 452-1235 or by mail. Checks for financial contributions should be made payable to Capp Street Foundation and sent to SAIIC at P.O. Box 7550, Berkeley, CA 94707. Oxfam America and Catholic Relief Services are also raising money in the United States to be sent directly to CONFENIAE in Ecuador.

## COLOMBIA

# Indian Struggle For Land In Cauca Intensifies

The Colombian government has declared the department of Cauca a "zone of national rehabilitation," a term used to designate areas where special measures must be taken as a result of human actions or natural events. In Cauca, the "disaster" that has occurred is increasing social tension caused by the old problem of land.

The Cauca is the only department in Colombia where the majority of the population is Indian, but the region has long been controlled politically and economically by a coalition of landlords and a conservative Roman Catholic church. The power elite was shocked in the early 1970's by the creation of the Cauca Regional Indian Council (CRIC), which is among the most successful grassroots political organizations in Colombia in recent years.

CRIC has been central to the struggle of Indian people throughout Colombia. It was a key contributor to the creation of the National Indian Organization of Colombia (ONIC) in 1980, which includes 18 regional federations representing 75 per cent of the Indian population of the country. Each organization publishes its own newspaper, and the 10-year-old *Unidad Indígena*, formerly published by CRIC, is now the official publication of ONIC. *Unidad Alvaro Ulcúe*, CRIC's current newspaper, is named in honor of the only Indian to become a priest in Colombia. He was killed two years ago as a result of his participation in the Indian struggle.

Although Indian people have been expelled from their land and forced to integrate into non-Indian society for centuries, the formation of regional and national Indian organizations has meant that the "Indian conflict" has been forced onto the government's agenda of major problems. The situation is complicated by the armed struggle being waged between government forces and non-Indian guerrillas.

An editorial in the CRIC newspaper in November, 1986, states that "the guerrilla groups have declared war from Indian territory on the current government." CRIC condemns this development because of its negative social and political consequences for Indian people. Indian organizations reject the militaristic solution which has been proposed by, among others, former president Carlos Lleras Restrepo, who recently called for the organization of patrols by military veterans in the countryside. This would result in the institutionalization of para-military organizations which have been responsible for murder and destruction in the area. Faced by two armies, ONIC adopted a neutral position at its national congress last year, but from an editorial in a fall, 1986, issue of *Unidad Alvaro Ulcúe*, it seems that CRIC is more inclined to support the government initiative as the best way to maintain the autonomy of Indian organizations and to defend Indian land.



## EL SALVADOR

# "An Indian With Land Is An Indian With Title"

*Adrian Esquino (Nahuat) from El Salvador was interviewed by SAIIC during a recent visit to Washington, D.C.*

**SAIIC:** What region in El Salvador are you from?

**Adrian:** The Nahuat are located in the western part of the country. The Lencas live towards the east, and the Mayas occupy a part of Chalatenango, in the north.

**SAIIC:** So there are three Indian groups in El Salvador?

**Adrian:** Yes. Thirty-six per cent of the Salvadorean people are Indian.

**SAIIC:** What is the general situation presently?

**Adrian:** Well, brother, the current situation in El Salvador has deteriorated, especially for us Indian people. Violence has come again. Well, why not say it. Since 1932 [when 35,000 people were killed] until the 80's, even up to today, the population that has been repressed the most, that has been massacred the most, has been Indian. On February 22 [1983], 74 Indians from a single cooperative in Las Hojas were assassinated [see *SAIIC Newsletter*, Spring, 1985, pp. 4-5]. In 1982 in another community, 36 people were killed. Generally speaking, it is the Indian people who are in the worst situation.

**SAIIC:** Who are the assassins?

**Adrian:** Generally our brothers are killed by members of the armed forces.

**SAIIC:** Is the government involved in this?

**Adrian:** Yes, and that's why we have come to Washington. During the electoral campaign, Duarte [the president of El Salvador] promised to prosecute Col. Elmer Gonzalez Araujo, who was responsible for the Las Hojas massacre.

**SAIIC:** And what happened to the colonel? Has he been prosecuted?

**Adrian:** No, the opposite has occurred. As a reward, he has been appointed chief of logistics of the armed forces.

**SAIIC:** What are the claims of Indian people?

**Adrian:** The principal claim is to the land. Most of us do not have professions. We live off the land. We say that an Indian with land is an Indian with title, and an Indian without land is an Indian without title. So our main objective is to keep our land. We also have other claims. Most of us do not have houses. There is no education, no schools, no medicine or clinics for us, no work. We have many problems in El Salvador.

**SAIIC:** How do you feel that your people will overcome





this situation? Are you in contact with non-Indian people who can assist you?

*Adrian:* Yes, the National Association of Indigenous Salvadoreans (ANIS), as we call our organization, has joined the Salvadorean National Workers Unity (UNTS). UNTS is a coalition of all grassroots organizations, including unions, cooperatives, farmer organizations, Indians, and other. We are convinced that the only way to face this situation is to unite. UNTS is the strongest organization in the nation.

*SAIIC:* You talked earlier about your land claims. Do you function as cooperatives?

*Adrian:* We have about 28 or 29 cooperatives throughout the country. Some of our cooperatives already have their own land. In other cases we have negotiated with individuals who have gradually given us some land. But we are not benefiting from the famous agrarian reform, since in our country it is an arbitrary one, and eventually the land will be returned to the large landowners.

*SAIIC:* What crops do you grow?

*Adrian:* We grow rice, beans, maize, choca, camote, and Jicama. We also make crafts. We make clothes, hats, baskets, and other things. As you know, we Indians can live anywhere on earth. If we do not do one thing, we do another.

*SAIIC:* Are you in contact with other Indian organizations internationally?

*Adrian:* Yes, we are in touch with non-governmental organizations in Canada, the United States, and with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Here I have had meetings with Indian organizations, Apache and others, and yesterday they sent telegrams to the Duarte government and to the armed forces.

*SAIIC:* Do you have contacts with Indian people in Mexico, Guatemala, or Nicaragua?

*Adrian:* Yes. Today, especially, we know that international Indian solidarity will help us find a way out, and to get recognition of the rights of Indian people.

*SAIIC:* What can we do here to help Indian people in El Salvador?

*Adrian:* Indians and non-Indians are sending telegrams and letters in response to our appeal, asking that respect be given to the Indian people, and also that Gonzalez Araujo be prosecuted. After the massacre we insisted that he should be brought to trial. Because of our demands, we have been robbed of our land, and even of our offices, so we have come to Washington to be heard.

*SAIIC:* Would you like to send a message to Indian people in the United States?

*Adrian:* I urge you to unite in solidarity with the Nahuat, Lenca, and Maya people of El Salvador during this war situation. We believe that your support, moral or financial, will help us solve our problems and ultimately achieve peace.

I would like to invite all brothers and sisters to visit us in Sonsonate on December 21 and 22, when we have our traditional celebration. We Indians need to be strongly united and to help each other. We especially need your support with the difficult situation in El Salvador.



## MEXICO

# Zapotec Community Builds New Water Pipeline

*In the Sierra Juarez of Oaxaca, over seven hours by bus into the mountains north of the city of Oaxaca, there are many Zapotec Indian communities. There, in April, Solomon Lopez, director of the municipal council of San Miguel Cajonos, spoke with SAIIC about community work.*

We have started a project to get good drinking water. We've had piped water, but because of the drought it arrives irregularly at the village. For example, there was no water in the morning today, but in the afternoon it returned.

This month the entire town is working, even the women and the old people. We are united together, the entire community. The only way we will get it done is to do it ourselves. We bought the pipe, which costs about 2 million pesos, practically without any help from the government, which doesn't provide much of this kind of service. It's the people of the community who have had to deal with all the details, including the labor. We know we need water, so we're doing what we have to do to get it.

The water that we're bringing to the community comes from five kilometers away. So far we've completed two kilometers of the project, which leaves three to go. This is our largest community project, and it means we'll have more water in the future.

Everyone has to work two days a week, except the old people and the women, who work one day a week. Some of the old people find a relative to do their day, and some do it themselves. There are about 70 people active in the project, not including the elders, who are about 30 more. Plus there are some other people who live elsewhere who help sometimes.

Now we are digging the trenches, and then we put in the plastic pipe and cover the trenches

back up. We asked for technical advice from the government, and some engineers came to plot the route, but they didn't follow through, so we went to another office to find some other people to help. Now they come for two or three days every couple of weeks to advise us about how we should dig the trenches.

We started the job on February 16. In May the rains will come and we won't be able to work for a while. But we'll start again as soon as we can so that we'll have water as soon as possible. If we don't get it finished now, we'll work in stages, working every dry season. We really want to get the project finished.

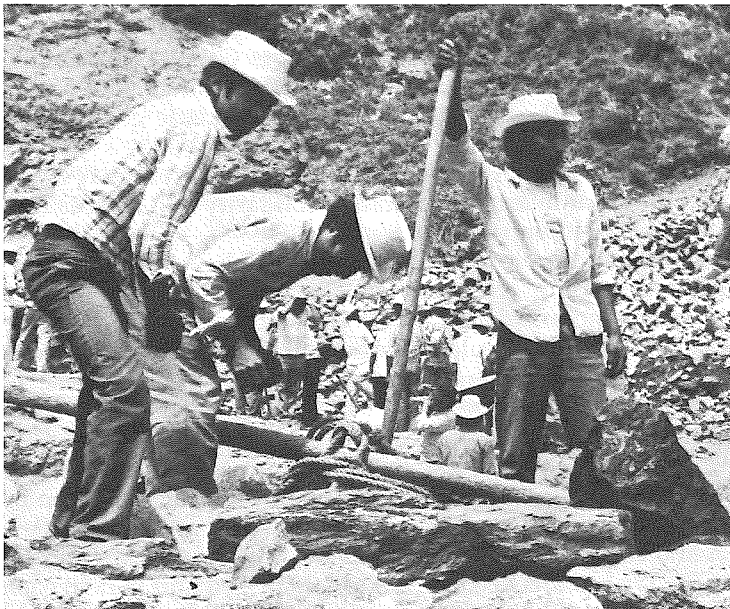


Photo: Assembly of Zapotec and Chinantec Peoples of the Oaxaca Sierra

## Pacific Islanders Defend Nuclear-Free Constitution

Can the people of Balau (also known as Palau) continue to withstand efforts by the United States to impose nuclear-equipped military bases in their islands?

The Balau Islands, the most western cluster of the Caroline Group, are located 500 miles east of the Philippines. In 1979, 92 per cent of the voters in Balau approved history's first nuclear-free constitution. Since then the United States has used its United Nations Trusteeship powers over Balau to force seven more elections on the nuclear-free issue. In the most recent vote, held at the end of June, the people of Balau again rejected changes in their nuclear-free constitution.

The United States government opposes the anti-nuclear provision because it stands in the way of the development on U.S. military bases in the islands. The United States has promoted a Compact of Free Association between itself and Balau which would provide millions of dollars of economic aid in exchange for the right to develop a naval base, store conventional and nuclear weapons, create a jungle warfare training reserve, and use the islands' airstrips. In May, Ivedual Yutaka Gibbons, the traditional High Chief of Balau, came to the United States to testify before the United Nations Trusteeship Council and to request assistance to uphold his country's constitution and resist military development. He told SAIIC:

"How many times must we say no? I am speaking on behalf of the traditional chiefs of Balau. We prefer to live in peace. During World War II, which was between two other nations, we were the victims. We can't forget that terrible war between the world powers.

"Today we are under a great deal of pressure to push for this plebiscite. The government has cut off all basic needs of the people of Balau. Our water and electricity have been cut

off. Our only radio station, which is owned by the government, has been shut down. There is a lot of threatening going on in Balau now pressing to approve this Compact.

"We are very concerned because the military will have the power to take land. In the Compact, the government would only have to give 60 days notice to take land.

"All these years we have been in a trust relationship with the United States. During this time, we have looked forward to the United States assisting us in developing our economy. But today, the only economy we have is based on government jobs. We have been learning about democracy and in addition we have our own system of traditional government. We thought that blending the two together we would be able to develop our economy, but we realize today that the United States is more interested in what it gets in its own self-interest.

"It is our request that the United States carry out its responsibility under the trusteeship agreement to make Balau economically, politically, and socially strong. The United States must also respect our constitution and our traditions. We want the entire world to know we are supporting world peace, and we are demonstrating it by maintaining the nuclear-free provision in our constitution."

Accompanying Chief Gibbons was Tosiwo Nakamura, the author of the nuclear-free clause in Balau's constitution. He said, "Being one of the smallest nations on earth, the people of Balau would like to start a movement and a legacy of peace in the Pacific region."

"We would like to send a message of solidarity to your people and ask your help to spread word of our struggle throughout your continent. We are a very small nation, and we don't want to be forced into something we don't want to be part of," another speaker from Balau said.

# Announcements

The Fifth General Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples was held July 11-17 in Lima, Peru. Prior to the General Assembly, the WCIP sponsored a series of workshops in Cuzco, Peru, from July 4-10. Workshop topics included political economy and self-determination, development projects, analysis and prognosis, organization and management for development, and Indian policy on development. For further information contact the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, 555 King Edward Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada. Telephone (613) 230-9030.

August 3-7, 1987, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, **Working Group on Indigenous Populations** will meet in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Museum of the American Indian seeks submissions for the Fifth Native American Film Festival to be held December 11-13, 1987. Animated, narrative, and experimental works on all topics concerned with Indians of North, Central, and South America will be considered for this non-competitive festival. Formats include 16mm, three-quarter inch video, and one-half inch VHS. Deadline for submitting entries is August 14. Contact the Museum at Broadway and 155th St., New York, NY 10032 for more information.

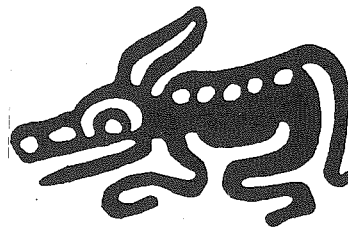
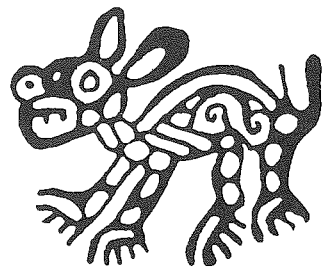
The First Meeting of Caribbean Indians will be held in the Dominican Republic in August, 1988, rather than 1987, as stated in a previous issue of the *SAIIC Newsletter*.

## Did You Miss Your Spring Issue?

An abundance of springtime activities prevented SAIIC from publishing the Spring issue of the *Newsletter*. We hope you missed us. Paid subscriptions will be extended an issue to compensate.

SAIIC promotes exchange and unity among all Indians of the Americas by making information available and by making increased direct communication possible. SAIIC also makes South and Central American Indian issues and culture known to the general English-speaking public. The *Newsletter*, one of SAIIC's projects, reflects indigenous perspectives of the Americas.

*Nilo Cayuqueo, SAIIC Coordinator, and Susan Lobo, Publications Editor*



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### NEWSLETTER

To receive the SAIIC Newsletter for one year (four issues), please send a donation of \$8 for addresses in the United States, Mexico, and Canada or \$10 for addresses elsewhere.

### PUBLICATIONS

*Working Commission Reports: Second Conference of Indian Nations and Organizations of South America. Tiwanaku, Bolivia*, published by SAIIC, 1984, \$3.

*Journey to the South*, K'uu yaa Tsa-wa, published by SAIIC, 1986, \$1.

### RADIO SHOW

One-hour tapes of SAIIC radio programs can be purchased for \$8 each. Titles include: (1) Evaristo Nugkuag, Coordinating Committee of Indian People of the Amazon Basin/Indigenous People and the World Bank; (2) Nilo Cayuqueo (Mapuche, Argentina)/Sofia Painequeo (Mapuche, Chile); (3) Francisco Mamani (Aymara, Bolivia)/Nilda Alvarez (Quechua, Peru).

### DONATIONS

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Photo: © 1987 S. Lobo

*Loyan Red Hawk and Morning Star Gali testing the mics before the SAIIC radio program "South and Central American Indian Update," which is heard the third and fourth Fridays of each month at 8:00 p.m. on KPFA-FM, 94.1 in northern California.*

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