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Confronting Cultural Extinction

Indigenous Cultures
Continue to Vanish from the Americas

Linking Indian Peoples of the Americas



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We welcome submissions of articles, letters, photographs and relevant information. Letters and articles may be edited for length. If you have access to a computer, please send your article on paper and on a Mac-compatible 3 1/2 inch disk. Send all correspondence to:

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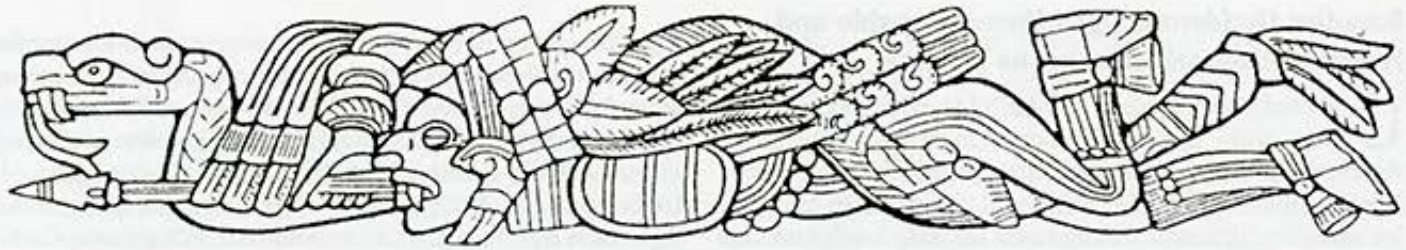
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*Abya Yala is the Kuna word for Continent of Life which includes all of the Americas.

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In this issue, we focus on the distressing concept of cultural extinction. Five hundred years after Columbus, entire Indigenous cultures are still slowly smoldering out, like neglected fires. The arrival of novel diseases, the usurpation of Indigenous territories, and the appropriation of Indigenous peoples' ancient artifacts are leading to the disappearance of distinct peoples, their languages, their unique ways of life. In an attempt to deal with the ongoing extinction of culture in the Americas, we approach the topic from three distinct angles: the physical, environmental, and spiritual. Our piece on the Urarina in Peru shows us how the biological contamination of the Americas is an ongoing process that continues to wipe out entire peoples to this day. We then feature an article on the Wichi people, whose large population belies the environmental crisis that threatens to wipe them out. Finally, we discuss the issue of the theft of a people's spiritual heritage as a means of "preserving" them forever behind a display case.

Along with our focus on extinction, more optimistic articles follow on the recent political and cultural accomplishments of Indigenous peoples in Latin America. In a conversation with Mayan novelist Gaspar Pedro Gonzáles, we discover how a Mayan artist persevered through Guatemala's years of violence to publish his works, and inspire others to do the same. We also discuss ex-CONAIE president Luis Macas' recent election to the National Congress in Ecuador, and the implications not only for the future of this nation-state but for the Indigenous movement. We show how Indigenous peoples are actively participating in nation-state politics, whereas until 1992, with few exceptions, we remained expectant of public life, essentially without a voice. Today the focus has shifted instead to the need to *redefine the nature of the nation-state* as Indigenous peoples participate in it. Indigenous peoples have become actors in the construction of new democracies, and the re-writing of outdated constitutions.

As forceful as Indigenous peoples' struggle is, undemocratic practices persist. As a follow-up to the situation in Brazil, we feature an article on the fallout from the passage of Decree 1775, as well as a piece on the Yanomami showing how they have yet to free themselves of the death and violence of colonization. We move on to Colombia, where an intensifying conflict fueled by the greed of narco-traffickers and the corruption of government officials has placed Indigenous peoples in an impossible squeeze, with tragic consequences as indicated by the recent rash of murders of Indigenous leaders.

On the positive side again, SAIIC and several Indigenous confederations of Latin America have gained world recognition as our voices are invited to places where decisions that affect Indigenous peoples are made. Facing economic globalization and the increasingly aggressive extraction of Indigenous peoples' resources, Indigenous nations are coming together and working to secure their rights in numerous occasions. For example, SAIIC, together with other entities, is involved in organizing the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biodiversity in Buenos Aires in November 1996. In this way, we have encountered an international audience of concerned citizens that, affected similarly by globalization and neoliberalism, consciously continue to follow the issues and to participate with us.

Ultimately, this issue and every issue of Abya Yala News seeks to foster a world community that is better educated and that continues to listen to and respect the Indigenous voice. In this regard, we take the opportunity, in the section usually kept for SAIIC News, to acknowledge those who have supported our endeavours in outstanding ways in the past and present.

SAIIC Board of Directors

Ecuador: Occidental Signs Unconscionable and Fraudulent Agreements in the Amazon

US-based transnational OCCIDENTAL is currently negotiating with Indigenous communities in Ecuadorian Amazonia, offering little more than twentieth century trinkets—chainsaws, medicine chests, and rain-coats—in exchange for undefined access to Indigenous territory for “petroleum activities.” OCCIDENTAL is one of the world’s largest oil companies, currently operating in over eleven different countries outside the US, and extracting over 200,000 barrels of crude per day. Indigenous communities have been pressured to sign completely inadequate agreements, in the presence of the military—agreements which oblige the communities to allow the companies to carry out undefined petroleum exploration and extraction activities for undefined periods of time.

Occidental has used various forms of coercion to secure agreements with the leaders of the Indigenous communities. Leaders of the Secoya report that prior to negotiations, the legal representative of Occidental threatened to bring the military to the community. Occidental’s legal representative also told Secoya community leaders that “they did not want to see anyone else at the discussions.” Such statements amount to coercion and directly violate the Secoya people’s right to independent consultation.

In one instance, Occidental brought a draft agreement to the negotiations and was very reluctant to include any of the proposals made by the community. In the end, only a vague reference to the possibility of temporary employment was included. In previous discussions, Occidental had told the community that the company only wanted permission to do seismic testing. However, the agreement signed permits Occidental to carry out any form of “petroleum activity.” A Secoya leader later realized that the granting of permission for “petroleum activities” was a mistake, and asked Occidental to change the agreement.

Occidental also reportedly told Secoya leaders that the company could not pay in advance because they didn’t have the money. To explain this situation, the company used the analogy that “a farmer cannot pay the rent for the land until he’s harvested all the corn.” The company also told the Secoya leaders that if they did not grant permission, the Ecuadorian government could expropriate the land and the community could lose its territory.

Occidental operates in an area of over 200,000 hectares called Block 15. This block includes a part of the Limoncocha Biological Reserve, a protected area, and part of the Secoya, Siona, and Quichua Indigenous territory. Occidental signed an agreement with the Ecuadorian government that grants the company extraction rights for 20 years. Using Occidental’s own estimates of the existing reserves, the entire production of Block 15 will supply the equivalent of US oil consumption for just 12.7 days.

Information from: Carlos Sergio Figueiredo Tautz

Write letters to the directors of occidental corporation denouncing the immoral and illegal way in which they are carrying out negotiations, demand that they suspend negotiations and conduct all future negotiations ethically and legally: Ray R. Irani, President and Chief Executive Officer, Occidental Petroleum, 10889 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90024-4201; Mastonn Cunningham, Occidental Exploration and Production Co., Av. Amazonas 3837 y Corea, Casilla 17-15-0095-C, Quito, Ecuador

Chile: South and North American Indigenous Peoples to Protest Chilean Dam Project

An historic meeting of Indigenous peoples from North and South America has been scheduled to coincide with the annual meeting of the world’s largest association of dam construction and hydroelectric technology companies. At issue is the planned construction by ENDESA, Chile’s largest private company, of Ralco Dam, the second in a series of six dams planned for the Biobío River, ancestral Andean homeland of the Pehuenche Indians.

The Indigenous delegation will begin its activities in Chile on October 9 in Santiago, culminating in a demonstration at the annual meeting of the International Consortium on Large Dams (ICOLD) in Santiago on October 16.

Despite the fact that 100 Pehuenche Indian families, Chile’s most traditional Indigenous group would have their villages flooded by the project, no relocation plan was included in ENDESA’s environmental impact statement, which was submitted in April to Chilean environmental authorities. The Pehuenche say they are determined to exercise their rights guaranteed under Chilean law to remain on their ancestral lands, and have called for support from North American Indigenous people, many of whom have personally experienced the impacts of large dams.

Nine native peoples from the North will be making the trip to meet the Pehuenche, and to participate in political discussions, spiritual ceremonies, and public demonstrations. The delegation includes prominent leaders from diverse Indigenous communities and nationally-based Native American organizations.

Ralco would be a 155 meter-high dam with a 3,400 hectare reservoir. The dam would generate 570 Megawatts of electricity at a cost of \$500 million. The dam would also flood over 70 km of the river valley, inundating the richly diverse forest and its wildlife, and leaving downstream portions of the river dry for months at a time, devastating fish stocks. The first dam on the Biobío, called Pangue, was constructed after the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank assured investors that it would be the only dam built on the river. In response to a complaint by the Pehuenche and Chilean environmentalists, the World Bank has now initiated a formal inquiry into irregularities in the Pangue loan.

Environmental groups and Chilean Energy Commission officials have questioned the need for construction of Ralco,

citing plans for construction of two trans-Andean gas pipelines importing natural gas from Argentina, and the planned construction of new gas-fired powerplants. The US-based Natural Resources Defense Council recently concluded a study demonstrating that improvement of energy delivery systems in Chile would make Ralco unnecessary.

The International Commission on Large Dams is an organization of engineers from 79 countries which promotes construction of dams throughout the world. Founded in 1928, it is headquartered in Paris, France.

Information from: International Rivers Network (IRN), 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94703 USA; Tel: (+510) 848-1155; Fax: (+510) 848-1008; email: irn@igc.apc.org; Lummi Indian Nation, 2616 Kwina Road, Bellingham, Washington 98226, USA; Tel: (+360) 384-2288; Fax: (+360) 738-8863

El Salvador: Deputies Threaten Indigenous Organization, Target Community

The deputies Renato Pérez, Adolfo Varela, and activist in the rightist ARENA political party Jorge Ruiz are presently attempting to evict the Indigenous residents of the Las Hojas county of the San Antonio del Monte Sonsonate jurisdiction. Pérez, Varela, and Ruiz accuse the leaders of the National Salvadoran Indigenous Organization (ANIS) of being land thieves and murderers.

Through the Ministry of Agriculture and Ranching, the plaintiffs presented their accusations against the members of ANIS before the tribunals of Sonsonate. They are accused of violating the agricultural norms of the country. At this point 10 members of ANIS were summoned to appear before the Sonsonate courts to present their testimony regarding this situation, according to the president of ANIS, Fermin Garcia Guardado.

Several Indigenous nations inhabit Las Hojas county, including Nahuats, Lenkas, and Mayas. This region was acquired by ANIS in 1978 as a safe region in which to work with the communities. They organized cooperatives and are working communally. In this same spot, 74 Indigenous people were massacred in 1983 by the Salvadoran army. It remains today a sacred place for them and they ask that it be respected.

Since January a number of violent actions have been directed at the Indigenous people of the region, such as on January 27 when unknown masked individuals entered the community at midnight and fired bullets on the house of the spiritual leader and Indigenous leaders connected to ANIS. At the same time they threatened to repeat the bloodshed of 1983. At that time Amnesty International had led a campaign of informing human rights organizations to pressure the Salvadoran state to enforce justice.

On the 12 of March, the national police ransacked the office of ANIS and detained Rafael Arturo Pérez and

Armando Antonio Pérez, two members of ANIS. The Pérez brothers appealed to the Supreme Court of Justice, but to no avail; the court ruled to have them expelled from the community.

Presently, a warrant is out for the arrest of Don Adrian Esquino, president ANIS, on the grounds that he has stolen land and murdered. On May 3, an explosion tore through the house of the Esquino family, but caused only structural damage. Faced with this situation, Esquino is urging human rights organizations to pressure the Salvadoran state to protect the rights of Indigenous communities under fire.

Colombia: Another Zenu Leader Killed

Before the very eyes of Indigenous and national authorities, one by one the members of the San Andrés de Sotavento Resguardo (Indian reserve), are being killed.

At 1:30 pm on Sunday, August 18, in the site known as La Arena (Córdoba state), two armed men on a black motorbike assassinated the Indigenous leader of the town council and mayoral ex-candidate of the town of San Andrés, Alberto Cheito Malo Alean.

The Zenu leader was 38 years old, married, and had two children. By profession, he was a civil engineer. He was the brother of Héctor Malo Vergara, Cacique (chief) of the San Andrés de Sotavento Resguardo, who was assassinated on March 26, 1994, along with three other Indigenous persons. This year 12 Zenu leaders have been killed.

The Zenu of the San Andrés de Sotavento protested the lack of any meeting with representatives of the state in search of solutions to this crisis of civil order. Their attempts have so far yielded nothing.

The Cacique Rosenberg Clemente confirmed that the Indigenous people are scared because they don't know who will be next or when.

He added that the massacres have continued unabated, aided by the indifference of the authorities. This comes after those same authorities had promised in a recent meeting in Martillo to establish a vigilante system and to assure peace and autonomy in the Resguardo.

The International Brotherhood of Human Rights has proposed the creation of a human rights commission in the area. The Church in turn has suggested that a Reconciliation Commission be set up in conjunction with international observers. Nothing has come of any of this, however.

The Cacique requested that impunity be stopped and that the results of the investigations of the murders under way be made public.

He also denounced the fact that there are heavily armed mercenaries in the majority of the ranches existing in the region of the San Andrés de Sotavento Resguardo in Córdoba and Sucre.

Information from El Tiempo, Bogotá



Photo: R. Witzig

New and Old Disease Threats in the Peruvian Amazon:

The Case of the Urarina

by Ritchie Witzig

An estimated 90% of Indigenous people in the Americas died after exposure to novel infectious diseases brought by Europeans—and over half the Indigenous groups once present in the Americas have become extinct. Biological extinction mandates cultural extinction, although in the modern era cultural loss may preclude physical extinction. Isolated Amazonian peoples that have managed to keep their culture and language intact remain at risk of biological and cultural extinction. The Urarina of the Peruvian Amazon are one group still struggling with increasing threats to their physical survival as a people.

The Urarina have lived in the Chambira and Urituyacu river basins for at least half a millennium. The word "Urarina" is thought to be derived from the Quechua root words of "people" and "below"—meaning the "people from below." They call themselves "Kachá," meaning "the people." The Urarina have remained relatively isolated due to the remoteness of their settlements and by choice. The blackwater river basins where they live are supplied by a giant

aguajal, or swamp, providing insulation from any incursions from the north, east, and west. The Urarina are ecologically flexible, able to live both on the low-nutritional blackwater rivers or in the rainforest. They have resisted missionary influence and cultural integration (from colonists). All these factors may be the reason the Urarina speak a unique language, and have survived as a distinct people. However, in the present their traditional territory has been invaded, and they have yet to affiliate with any Indigenous rights group. Not surprisingly, the Peruvian government has not officially registered their lands.

Incursions of "foreigners" (non-Urarinas) into Urarina traditional lands are currently from river

Ritchie Witzig is an infectious diseases physician currently directing medical projects in the Amazon and Andean regions of Peru.

traders, loggers, colonists, oil exploration teams, and recently, "drug-voyeur" tourists. All of these groups have brought significant disease pressure on the Urarina that threatens their way of life and survival.

River traders, loggers, and colonists coming from Iquitos to exploit the Urarina and their land for natural resources are known to have transported two measles epidemics in the late 1980s and 1991. They certainly brought the cholera epidemic of September 1991 and October 1993 upriver from Iquitos, as well as dengue fever and different strains of gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases to which the Urarina have had no previous immunological exposure. The traders and colonists also bring in poor nutritional quality foods such as rice and sugar that are altering the diet in some Urarina villages. The Urarina traditional diet is high in protein which prevents malnutrition, even under the stress of several infections. Once their diet includes more refined foods, malnutrition and consequently disease morbidity (the rate of incidence of a disease) and mortality will probably increase.

The oil exploration and drilling teams are from Petroperu facilities bordering Urarina territory, but their personnel are imported from various areas in Peru. An oil pipeline crosses under the Chambira river just before the confluence of the Tigrillo, on its way from Trompeteros on the Corrientes to Saramuro on the Marañon. The pipeline then courses across the Andes to the Pacific. The northern section of this pipeline crosses Urarina land just north of the *aguajal* (swamp) supplying the water for their rivers. Petroperu has planned a huge Chambira oil drilling project in the center of Urarina land as soon as they receive startup moneys. The cultural, biological, and ecological effects on the Urarina will likely be devastating. Oil drilling teams are renowned for transporting new strains of malaria and sexually transmitted diseases into territories they exploit. The Urarina do not marry outside their

group and sexually transmitted diseases are not yet a problem among them. New strains of malaria, however, are currently decimating the Urarina peoples.

In the past two years, two Americans have arranged "jungle ecology tours" that include a two week trip up the Amazon and Marañon rivers, and recently the lower Chambira river. During the river tour, a "shaman" from Iquitos manufactures the sacred hallucinogenic *ayahuasca* (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) for the tourists to drink and "experience the jungle like the natives." Finally, they arrive in Urarina villages to "look at the Indians" and take pictures. Right after a tour in the spring of 1995, most of the children in one village which had been visited came down with a respiratory ailment requiring antibiotics to recover. This infection was most likely supplied by these "drug-voyeur" tourists from overseas. The Urarina are alarmed at this invasion, especially as they know the tour operators are armed with weapons and take drugs, effectively mocking the Urarina religious ceremonies. The affected villages organized to write a complaint to the Peruvian Ministries of the Interior and Tourism in Iquitos, and the American Embassy in Lima, demanding that the individuals responsible be barred from their lands.

In August 1992, a medical survey was initially conducted in Urarina territory. As the Urarina had previously never seen a physician, it took eight days before a four-year-old girl was brought forward in critical condition suffering from malaria, amoebic dysentery, and three types of worm infections. After she recovered, community members were interested in complementing their own sophisticated ethnobotanical medicines to prevent morbidity and mortality from new diseases. These maladies included mostly recently introduced diseases, such as the deadly cholera and malaria. Urarina communities suffered gravely from the introduction of cholera into the Chambira river system in September 1991 (cholera was reintroduced into South America in January 1991). Some communities



Petroperu operations on the Marañon.

...they arrive in Urarina villages to "look at the Indians" and take pictures. Right after a tour in the spring of 1995, most of the children in one village which had been visited came down with a respiratory ailment requiring antibiotics to recover.



"Delfin" boat with drug-voyeur tourists.



Children are especially at risk of dying from diseases like malaria.

reported population losses of up to 20%, an incredibly high population mortality rate even from this well-known disease that can kill in less than 12 hours. A second epidemic of cholera in the Chambira with significantly less mortality followed in October 1993 after village health workers had been trained to treat cholera.

Urarina communities also suffer from endemic vivax malaria, which still produces significant morbidity and contributes to mortality especially among children, pregnant women, and the elderly. Other important illnesses documented in Urarina communities in the initial 1992 survey were helminth infections, dysentery (amoebic and bacillary), and viral and bacterial respiratory infections.

After the initial medical survey was performed, the Urarina communities elected 3 village health workers (VHWs) who were then trained to diagnose and treat the most common medical illnesses. The VHW communities were provided medical supplies for their village as well as any surrounding Urarina community in need. VHWs and the Urarina people are encouraged to continue using and developing their own medical system for many ailments

which it can ameliorate. Further medical surveys from August to October 1993, February to April 1994, January to April 1995, and October to December 1995 revealed progressive disease threats, furthered training of the VHWs, and replenished medical supplies. When the second wave of cholera came up the Chambira, the VHWs were ready to give oral rehydration solutions and tetracycline to the sick. Only one fatal case was reported from the VHW villages after that outbreak.

The most recent disease threat to the Urarina has been the deadly *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria strain. Previously confined to small areas of Peru, in the last 5 years this strain has spread across most of northeastern Peru. It first appeared in the Urituyacu river system 2 years ago, and spread into the Chambira river from the Tigrillo river in 1995.

The Urarina region has been the most affected. The malaria research lab in Iquitos has identified a staggering 79% of all *P. falciparum* cases in July, August, and September 1995 to have originated from the main river systems in which the Urarina live (Chambira, Urituyacu, and Corrientes). However, these figures still underestimate the severity of the new malarial strain on the Urarina, since most of their cases are never reported. A further problem is that the new strain has grade II (two) drug resistance. While colonists on the lower Chambira and Tigrillo rivers are seeking the most effective drug treatment at medical posts on the Marañon and Amazon rivers, it is unavailable to the Urarina because of logistical and financial reasons. To illustrate the seriousness of the epidemic, the Urarina village of Tagual had 6 people (5 children and one pregnant woman) out of 80 die of the new strain the week before the last medical survey and supply trip arrived. All other Urarina communities experienced mortality from the new strain, although at a lower rate.

What is to become of the Urarina? The most negative spin on the future must be confronted as a potential reali-

ty. If the past is any measure regarding Indigenous peoples in Peru, the government will attempt to assimilate them into Peruvian society. Young Urarina men, for example, will be drafted to do their mandatory military service for "fatherland" Peru. Colonists will continue invading Urarina territory. Petroperu will drill in the Chambira oil field. Ecological destruction and introduced diseases will gradually decimate them.



Urarina man dying of cholera, treated for the disease just in time. Many people do not survive this treatable illness.

For the optimistic spin, the Urarina could remain where they are, in their own territory and self-sufficient. Since Peru is a signatory of the International Labor Organization Convention 169 which effectively advocates for the defense of Indigenous cultures, it could legally recognize their territory. This would lead to their self-determination, and the control of their own destiny.

Thankfully, a few optimistic signs have emerged for the Urarina. First, Peruvian anthropologists have succeeded in petitioning the Peruvian Department of Agriculture on their

behalf to conduct a population survey, the first step necessary for land titling. The survey is being conducted by the Peruvian NGO CEDIA (Centro Para el Desarrollo del Indígena Amazónico). The survey started in November 1995, with expected completion in late 1996 or early 1997. However, this is only a start. With the odds stacked against them, the Urarina will likely need political support from outside Peru or they will join the long line of extinct cultures and peoples left behind by the ongoing colonization of this continent.

Thanks to Rafael Meza, Lelis Rivera Chávez, José Morosco, Jorge Quintana Zurita, Luis Icomena, and Massiel Ascencios Linares for their contributions to Urarina self-determination and the Urarina medical project. To call attention to and protect the Urarina's territorial integrity:

Write the President of Peru, Alberto Fujimori, urging him to secure the Urarina and other Indigenous peoples' territorial rights and to stop destructive, invasive tourism into Indigenous peoples communities. Send your letters to Ministerio de la Presidencia, 4297 Paseo de la República, Lima 1, Peru.

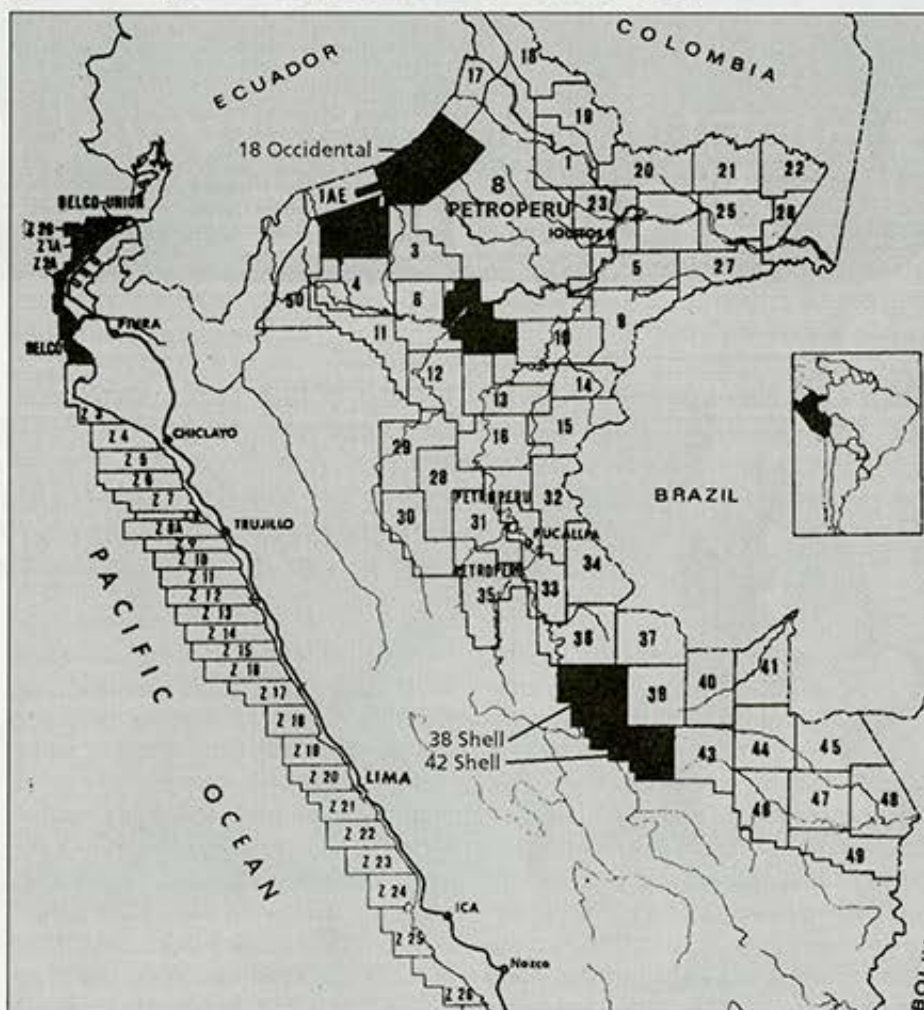
To protect Indigenous peoples from imported diseases:

If you are working with isolated Indigenous peoples (anthropologists, human rights workers, etc.), please confirm that both you and your local guides have all the necessary vaccinations and prophylactic medications. Any person participating in the project who is currently ill should either be left behind, or the project should be delayed until that person has recovered.

If you are engaging in ecotourism, please do not enroll in "exotic" tours promising to meet isolated peoples. There is no advantage for them to meet you. The tour operators are in business to make money. Tour operators have no incentive to prevent disease or improve health among these peoples. Please inform local Indigenous organizations or other adequate entities of tour operators operating under such conditions.



Map showing Urarina territory in the blackwater systems of the Chambira and Urituyacu. The rivers drain from a swamp to the north, helping to isolate the Urarina.



Selling off the rainforest, Petroperu displays its "Map of Areas for oil operation contracts and areas directly operated by Petroleos del Peru." Block 8 falls directly on top of the Urarina's territory.

Source: "Peruvian Petroleum: Present and Future," published by Petroperu

Wichí:

Fighting for Survival in Argentina

"We call the colonists ahatai which is like our words for 'spirit of the dead'(ahat) and for 'the devil'(Ahataj). When they first arrived (in 1902-3) their foods were unfamiliar to us. Our grandparents were afraid of the flour the ahatai gave them, thinking it might be poisonous. So they left it boiling on the fire, afraid that they would die if they ate it. Then one old woman said to her children, 'I am old and haven't long to live, so I'll try it. If I die from it, you'll know not to eat it.' And so we learnt to eat ahatai foods."

Standing waist-deep in the muddy water, holding nets strung between two poles, the Wichí fisherman detects the fish by noting movements in the river's surface. Plunging the net over the fish and swinging downward, the catch is enveloped in the trap. Swiftly and with minimal impact on the aquatic environment, a natural resource yields a nutritious meal. The fisherman's serenity, however, belies the deepening crisis faced by the Wichí people: For 90 years, they have endured the gradual

takeover of their land by outsiders. What was once a fertile grassland dotted with bushes and trees has become a dry, sandy desert, and with the shimmering chest-high grasses have gone many of the animals the Wichí used to hunt. Today, although numerically the Wichí are not in danger of disappearing, their traditional way of life is vanishing as the outside world slowly closes in. In response, the Wichí are organizing and trying desperately to secure their land.

The occupation of the Wichí peo-

ple's land attests to an Argentinian version of "Manifest Destiny," the guiding ideology behind the colonization of the North American West. Since the arrival of Europeans, but particularly since the turn of the century, the Wichí have suffered continuous harassment, interspersed with serious bouts of violence in which large numbers of Indigenous people were killed. Along with disease, the well-armed settlers introduced herds of cattle, which devastated the fragile arid landscape.

Today, the Wichí are still fairly

numerous. Estimates range from 20,000 to 50,000 Wichí living in south-eastern Bolivia and northern Argentina, in a semi-arid region known as the Chaco. Wichí villages have their own territory, but often six or seven villages will share the use of the overlapping areas. Each community usually consists of one or more clans. People belong to their mothers' clans; in matrilineal Wichí society, men move to their wife's village upon marrying.

The Wichí people live in an intimate relationship with their surroundings. Their small houses of mud, branches and leafy boughs are well adapted to the scorching temperatures that reach 50° C in the shade in summer. During the dry winter months they depend on fish from the Pilcomayo River. In the wet summers, they cultivate corn, watermelons, beans and pumpkins grown in their gardens, which they encircle with thorny branches to try to prevent the settlers' cattle from invading. They hunt deer, armadillo, peccary and iguana, and search for wild honey throughout the year. Members of some of the neighboring peoples—the Iyojwaja, Nivaklé, Qomlec and Tapy'y—often live amongst the Wichí, sometimes marrying into their society.

While the Wichí have always known periods of hunger, never has life been as hard as it is today, with most of the animals gone, and their environment drastically desertified—a sandy desert where a grassland ecosystem once thrived.

According to UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme), 'desertification' is not the spread of deserts but the creation of desert-like conditions in the dry lands, which make up 35 per cent of the Earth's land surface. It is a phenomenon which it estimates may threaten the livelihood of one billion people worldwide, including the Wichí. In November 1995, a coalition of donors, governments, NGOs and grassroots groups met in a two-day conference convened by the UN International

Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to single out efforts to combat desertification as a top priority.

For the Wichí, desertification translates into starvation; starvation because their traditional sources of food are disappearing. In the winter they depend on fish from the Pilcomayo river and in the summer on vegetables grown in their gardens on what little land they have left. All too often, the settlers' cattle trample the gardens, undaunted by the Wichí's fences of thorn bushes. The wild fruits and berries they used to gather and the animals they used to hunt are gone. Now, even the Pilcomayo river is threatened by the Hidrovía development project (see below).

Underlying all these problems is the state government of Salta province and its continuing refusal to grant the Wichí title to their territory. In the area under dispute, known as State Plots 55 and 14, which comprise about 138,000 and 186,000 acres, respectively, live about 5,000 Wichí, along with a few small communities of Chorote, Toba and Chulupí peoples.

In 1987, the provincial government passed a new law that recognized the settlers as having legal rights to the land, and proposed to give each settler, as well as each of the 30 Wichí communities in the area, title to a small parcel of land. By this time, the settlers had established themselves on the most fertile areas of land, and the Wichí knew that such an action would split up the region into hundreds of pieces, jeopardizing their access to much of the land. This would not only be intolerable but was also illegal under international and Argentinian law.

In 1991 the Indians, working with Survival International, an NGO based in England, prepared a land claim report that demonstrated that at least 162,000 acres spread over the two State Plots traditionally belonged to them. Later that year, the provincial Governor signed a decree (No. 2609/91) recognizing that the area was indeed Indigenous land, and pledging to recognize this in law. The succeeding Salta government failed to take any decisive action, and allowed the situation to deteriorate dramatically. Shortly before leaving office at the end of last year, the same government presented a draft



Wichí fisherman on the Pilcomayo river.



Wichi men enjoy roasted fish on a honey collecting trip.

land bill to the provincial parliament that is completely against the interests of the Indians and, if approved, would deprive them of huge tracts of their territory.

As a result of the general disintegration of the environment, the non-Indian criollos are also becoming poorer. But in a desperate attempt to salvage a living, they are increasingly preventing the Indians from using the few remaining fertile areas. Men are barred from hunting (sometimes at gunpoint), women gathering wild fruits are threatened, and in some cases the Indians have even been denied access to much-needed water holes. The criollos' cattle, no longer having grass to feed on, invade the Indians' vegetable gardens, often destroying a whole crop overnight.

"They threaten us saying, 'Indian, don't come around here. I own this land and I don't like Indians on it. If you want to hunt here, you must ask for my permission - or I'll kill you.' ...They don't own those resources. The things that we Wichi live on do not belong to anyone. They belong to God," a Wichi man was quoted saying in a 1994 report by Survival International.

Under pressure to integrate its economy into the emerging Mercosur

free-market system, the Argentinian government undertook a regional development plan linking Paraguay with northwestern Argentina and, ultimately, Chile with Brazil and the Pacific with the Atlantic. This 'development' process means that Indigenous peoples will be gradually pushed out, and that the conflicts over land will intensify.

Without the slightest consultation of the Wichi, a bridge is currently being built across the Pilcomayo River (which forms the border between Argentina and Paraguay) beside an Indian village called Nop'ok 'Wet (La Paz). The Wichi were told that their village is scheduled to be replaced by a frontier town. In addition, the government plans to construct a major highway that would cut through Wichi territory to link this town with Tartagal.

The massive Paraguay-Paraná Hidrovia industrial waterway project is also part of that plan. The project is headed by the five governments of the La Plata basin. It would require widening and deepening the channels of the Paraguay and Paraná rivers, South America's second largest water system, to allow ocean-going ships access to the port of Cáceres, Brazil, 2,100 miles upstream from the river's mouth. Under the plan being studied, the rivers would

be channeled, straightened, and dredged, with tributaries of the river blocked off and rock outcroppings in the channel detonated. The Pantanal, the world's largest wetland, figures among the 93 sites needing dredging.

For the Indigenous peoples dependent on the rivers targeted by Hidrovia, which includes the Wichi, the environmental impacts could be devastating, worsening their already precarious living conditions. (See article page 30)

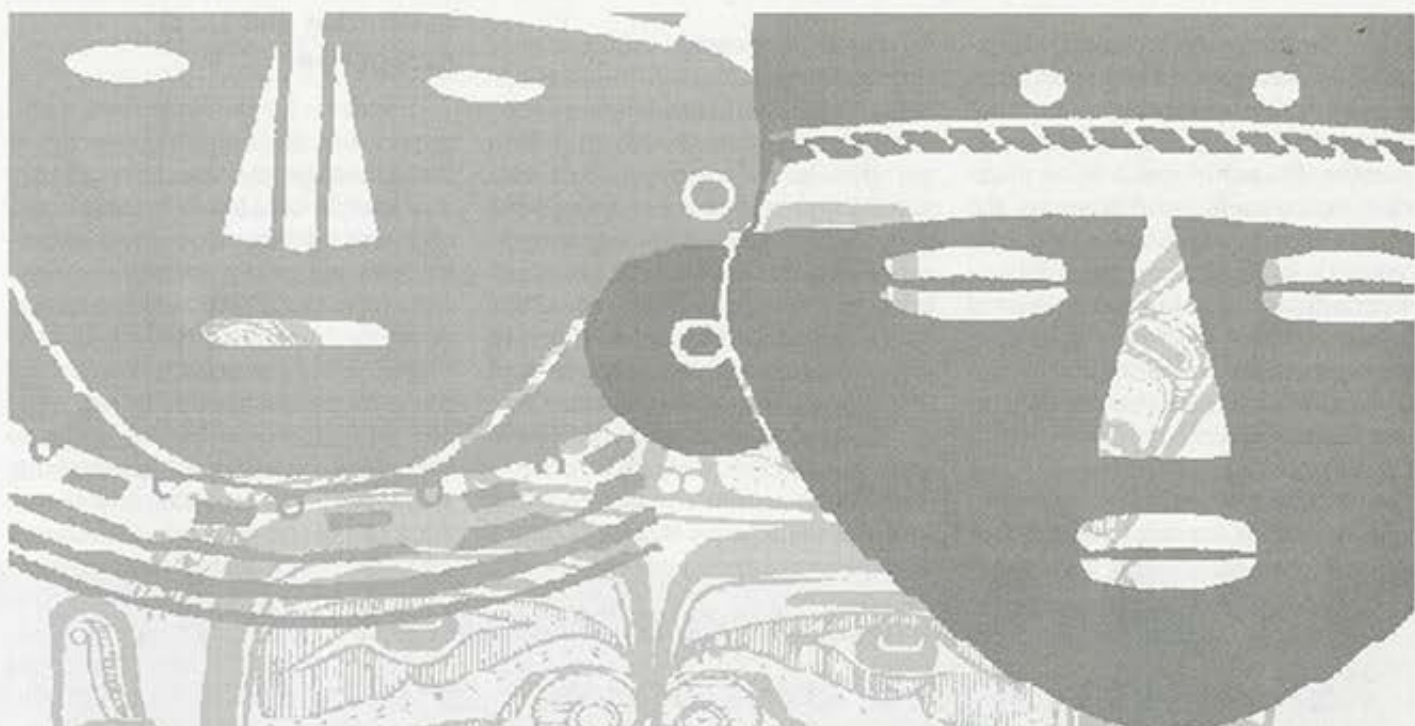
In 1990, the Wichi chose a course of action. They contacted Survival International, requesting the help of two anthropologists they trusted. They reasoned that the government might revoke the law if it could be shown that the whole area was Wichi land, and had been so for hundreds of years. They wanted the government to recognize their land rights and remove the settlers. They decided to carry out a census of all the Wichi in the region; to make a map of every village; to record an oral history of life on their lands before and after colonization; and most importantly, to compile one large map of the entire region, showing all the places used and named by the Wichi. This would provide irrefutable evidence of their intimate knowledge of the land.

On August 7, 1991, the report and map were formally presented to the provincial governor. Later that year, only hours before he left office, he signed a decree recognizing the Wichi's ownership of the land, and confirming that they should be awarded a single, communal title to the entire area.

As a result of the project the Wichi decided to form an organization through which they could be represented in meetings with government officials. They called it Thaka Honat (Our Land). Now, every village sends representatives to its meetings.

Despite the existence of the Decree, the Wichi have still not received title to their

Continued on page 31



Reversing the Flow of Traffic in the Market of Cultural Property

by Eric Bergman

Indigenous nations today are struggling to preserve their cultural identity, not by placing it behind the glass of a museum, but by the active renewal of their collective and individual cultural traditional practices. The unique religious and secular items each culture creates are fundamental to its continuity. For centuries the Indigenous people of the Americas have suffered the steady loss of their cultural property. The international community is finally beginning to recognize the obvious right a community has to its own creations. The new awareness of this important link between people and cultural artifacts is resulting in the successful restitution of previously lost or stolen items.

“Considering that cultural property constitutes one of the basic elements of civilization and national culture, and that its true value can be appreciated only in relation to the fullest possible information regarding its origin, history, and traditional setting.” So reads the preamble of the Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import,

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export, and transfer of ownership of cultural property, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its sixteenth session in Paris on November 14, 1970. This convention is the first major step taken by the international community to address the centuries of plunder of cultural property of Indigenous peoples. Vast quantities of artwork, religious artifacts, and even funerary remains have found their way into museums and private collections worldwide. This traffic, often in the form of outright

theft, continues today. Items are taken, whether for selfish purposes or out of ignorance, without consideration of the damage done to a living culture when it is stripped of the items of its heritage.

The Indigenous Perspectives

To many people who trace their roots to European cultures, the scientific study or museum preservation of cultural property is considered of great value. It is important, however, to recognize that these views are not neces-

sarily shared by Indigenous peoples. Items of cultural or religious value created by Indigenous peoples were not intended to be placed in museum collections. The removal of cultural materials to museum archives severs the living connection and contact a people has with its works and past. This is especially true of cultures with an oral rather than written tradition. Museums and cultural scientists must strive to maintain the vigor of the culture that created the objects they seek to study.

All too frequently archeologists and anthropologists consider the dead to

be objects of curiosity and study; "a storehouse of biological information" as anthropologist Johan Reinhard says, referring to the frozen body of an Inca girl that he exhumed in Peru (see accompanying story). For Indigenous peoples, however, the dead are not scientific objects, they are their ancestors, perhaps even their family. Ancestors were interred with careful attention to respect and ritual that will see them to their proper destiny after death. These efforts are disturbed by archeologists, grave robbers, scientists and other collectors who continue to violate burial sites and the remains therein.

Restitution and Legal Recognition

Standards for the protection of and respect for the cultural property of Indigenous peoples are greater today than ever before. Major museums and even some governments are cooperating with Indigenous nations to voluntarily repatriate objects to their cultures of origin. The United Nations and the United States are beginning to legally recognize the claims of Indigenous peoples to their cultural property. Unfortunately, individual governments and police forces are doing little if anything to cooperate with the United

Not Dead Yet: An Incan Mummy Find Rekindles the Fire Over Science and Ethics

Two men enter an Inca ceremonial burial site. They spot some feathers; the headdress of a small statue. The men scramble down a ledge. There they find a carefully prepared grave. Taking out their axes they begin hacking away. Soon they uncover the body of a young woman. A little more ax work and they completely exhumed the body. One man stuffs it in a sack and the other removes the remaining funerary artifacts. They depart into the darkening sky. Returning later with more accomplices, the two men scour the area for any remaining items, including two more corpses. Another sacred burial site has been picked clean and the bodies removed from their graves.

The two men, American archeologist Johan Reinhard and his Peruvian partner Miguel Zàrate, found the grave-site last September atop Nevado Ampato in the Andean Cordillera of modern-day Peru. The bodies were originally buried on top of the remote 20,700-foot mountain as part of a religious ceremony and remained there, frozen, for an estimated 500 years until Reinhard and Zàrate arrived. Since then, the body of the young Inca woman was brought to a laboratory at Catholic University in Arequipa, stuck into an ice box and stripped of her clothing including a beautiful wool Alpaca dress. Scientists then conducted a battery of tests, took body tissue and fluid for tests, and then shipped her off to Washington D.C. to be put on display as an item of curiosity at the offices of the National Geographic Society.

National Geographic's display of the Inca woman's body and the archeologists' treatment of the burial site in general has drawn international criticism. "The dis-

play of mummies or any human remains stands in contradiction to the ethics regarding the handling of the dead," said Dr. Konrad Spindler, a prehistory specialist at the University of Innsbruck and leader of the research team studying the 5300-year-old "Iceman" frozen corpse found in an Alpine glacier in Europe in 1991. Although Spindler was invited to join the research team studying the Incan woman, he eventually left the project because of his displeasure over the treatment of the corpse. Yachay Wasi, a non-profit organization dedicated to sharing and supporting indigenous culture of Peru, is sponsoring a petition in protest of National Geographic's handling of the situation. Indigenous people in the United States and Canada are joining Yachay Wasi in protest.

Although circumstances surrounding the decision to bring the Inca body to Washington remain unclear, National Geographic has made an admirable effort to consult the Indigenous people who are descendants of the Tawatinsuyu, or Incan empire. According to National Geographic spokeswoman Barbara Moffet, the second team of archeologists sent to excavate the Ampato burial site first paid a visit to the nearby village of Cabanaconde. No formal agreement was obtained by National Geographic, but Moffet claims that the villagers, who are believed to be the most closely related descendants of the Inca, were not only consulted, but eight villagers also volunteered to take part in the expedition. National Geographic has also made small a donation of photos and money to the village for the establishment of a museum in Cabanaconde. When the body of the Inca woman was brought to the National

Nations. In addition, the US legislation is not applicable nor respected outside US borders.

Should an Indigenous nation wish to repatriate items removed from their community, they face a difficult but increasingly possible task. First the seriousness and costs of the effort must be considered. Any individual or institution that has gone through great expense and effort to acquire and maintain valuable cultural items will not be eager to give them up. Securing the goodwill and cooperation of the party currently in possession of the items in question is crucial to any repatriation

effort and can eliminate the need for legal battles. The legitimacy and coordination of the repatriation effort are also influential. Any documentation or testimony that can assist in proving the claimant's position will be very helpful. Also the party making a claim for any items should consider what measures will be taken to insure the protection of the items once regained; no one is likely to part with rare artifacts if they suspect that they will be sold, stolen, or mishandled in any way.

Many resources exist to aid Indigenous peoples' repatriation campaigns. Non-governmental organiza-

tions, charitable groups, and other Indigenous entities may be sympathetic to repatriation efforts. These groups may provide contacts, publicity, council, or other forms of assistance. Some communities have been successfully pursuing repatriation for many years and have developed mechanisms within their political system to respond to concerns involving culturally sensitive materials. Journalists may be able to provide publicity and help bring public opinion behind the repatriation efforts. Some governments (most notably the United States) and the United Nations may also be of assistance.

Geographic headquarters for display, former residents of Cabanaconde now living in Washington D.C. were in attendance. There was no charge to see the Inca exhibit.

Despite National Geographic's overtures to the living descendants in Cabanaconde, this case has raised criticism of the ethics of archeology. Does the curiosity of scientists justify the disturbance of graves? On what authority do universities or other institutions take possession of the human remains of another society? Among many national societies, such as the United States and Peru, and especially among academics, such as Reinhard, there is a double standard for the treatment of the dead. The legal and moral codes normally relating to the handling of human remains and graves are ignored for Indigenous people. Although we are aware of no formal protests raised by Indigenous peoples in Peru, many Native Americans feel the dead should not be disturbed, studied or displayed at all. Native American groups in North America have been fighting for protection of their ancestral burial sites and reburial of remains held by archeologists. Walter Echo-Hawk, who was a lawyer for the Native American Rights Fund when Congress was considering NAGPRA, says "If you desecrate a white grave, you wind up sitting in prison, but desecrate an Indian grave and you get a Ph.D.," and a fat check from National Geographic it seems. The Washington D.C. based non-profit organization supplied a grant of \$100,000, mainly to fund the second expedition.

Had Reinhard and Zarate done what they did in the United States they would likely have been indicted for grave-robbing under the provisions of The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Public Law 101-601 (see section 104 STAT.3051 C). Fortunately for the anthropologist NAGPRA only applies within U.S. borders. Nevertheless,

the National Geographic Society is aware of NAGPRA and the spirit in which it was drafted and chose to ignore it by not only funding the second expedition, but also bringing the frozen body to Washington D.C. to be put on public display.

The display of the Inca woman also violated the spirit of the United Nations. The U.N. Commission on Human Rights drafted a resolution entitled The Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous People which states that "Under no circumstances should objects or any other elements of an indigenous peoples' heritage be publicly displayed, except in a manner deemed appropriate by the peoples concerned" (Article 23), "Human remains and associated funeral objects must be returned to their descendants and territories in a culturally appropriate manner, as determined by the indigenous peoples concerned" (Article 21), and "Researchers and scholarly institutions should ...obtain formal agreements with the traditional owners for the shared custody, use and interpretation of their heritage" (Article 33).

The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, pending approval by the U.N. General Assembly, also specifies the protection of burial sites. (Articles 12 and 13, see attached article) It should not require a United Nations declaration to instill basic consideration for the spirituality of a people, whether they be the ancient Inca or living descendants. "With this discovery, the spirit of Mount Ampato is challenging scientists" says Eliane Lacroix-Hopson of Yachay Wasi; that despite legal limitations, "all involved should know they are morally responsible in front of the Creator, Indigenous Peoples and their friends."

Hopefully during all the testing, prodding, studying and analysis the scientists may actually learn something from the Incas; that they show respect for the dead.

The United Nations

The United Nations is taking an increased interest in cultural heritage and in the protection of Indigenous rights. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has taken up the issue of the protection and restitution of cultural property. For this purpose UNESCO established the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation (henceforth, just the Committee) which currently numbers twenty-two member states of UNESCO. It will hold its ninth session in Paris from September 16-19. The eighth session was attended by sixty-nine nations, international customs and legal bodies, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the International Council of Museums. Several important ideas were laid down including the rights of a people to expect legal protection of cultural property and secure aid in its return. The International Council of Museums has voluntarily agreed not to admit items into museum collections that are not proven to be legitimately acquired and to inform authorities if approached with illicit material. So far the Committee has not discussed any cases concerning Indigenous peoples.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council's Commission on Human Rights adopted a declaration at its eleventh session providing for the protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples including, "the right to the restitution of cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs." (Article 12). More recently, in June of 1995 the Economic and Social Council drafted the report entitled Protection of the heritage of Indigenous people. Although the report lacks any real legal power, it helps to lend legitimacy to individual claims.

NAGPRA: US Takes Legislative Action for Repatriation

In November 1990 the US Congress enacted Public Law 101-601, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, also known as NAGPRA. This law provides a legal infrastructure to aid in the protection and restitution of funerary remains, and associated items of cultural patrimony. NAGPRA outlaws the traffic in such items, mandating a maximum of five years in prison and/or a fine for "Whoever knowingly sells, purchases, uses for profit, or transports for sale or profit, the human remains of a Native American" or "Native American cultural items" [1170 (a)(b)]. NAGPRA also requires museums and other institutions receiving federal funding to supply inventories of their items and return the items upon the request of a tribal authority. Thirty-four states have passed additional laws to fill gaps in the NAGPRA legislation.

Although NAGPRA only applies to federally funded institutions within the United States, it has set a precedent with many museum authorities on an international level. Museum institutions in the US have also repatriated items to Indigenous communities in South America outside NAGPRA's jurisdiction. One notable case was the return of several *Tzantzas* (head trophies) from the Smithsonian Institute to the Shuar peoples in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Austrian president, Thoma Klestil, returned the mantle of Montezuma to Mexico. The beautiful mantle of feathers and gold had been out of Mexico for over 400 years.

The Return of the *Ahayu:da*

An early and important repatriation effort in North America was the struggle of the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico to return the sacred *Ahayu:da* figures to their traditional resting places in tribal shrines. Figures representing the twin war gods, *Uyuyemi* and *Maia'sewi* are placed in shrines to harness their potentially destructive powers. The

Zuni believe that when Spanish and US agents stole the communally owned figures from their designated resting places, it caused the spiritual imbalance that the world is suffering in this century. The return of the figures to their shrines is necessary to restore harmony and protect the Zuni community.

Anthropologist T.J. Ferguson, a member of the *Ahayu:da* repatriation effort, warns, "It is extremely important that both tribes and museums recognize that the amount of time and money required to assemble information and reach an agreement can be substantial." This was the case for the Zuni people, for whom the saga of the *Ahayu:da* lasted nearly a century. The first objects were removed to the Smithsonian in 1897. In April of 1978, Zuni leaders began repatriation efforts by meeting for the first time with repre-

The return of the figures to their shrines is necessary to restore harmony and protect the Zuni community.

sentatives from the Denver Art Museum. By 1992 the Zuni secured the return of 69 *Ahayu:da* from 37 different sources, representing all known US copies.

Most of the efforts of the Zuni to repatriate the *Ahayu:da* were accomplished without any legal backing from NAGPRA, which was not passed until November of 1990. The struggle of the Zuni to mount their repatriation campaign was intense, but in the end they prevailed. Their success is due mainly to dedication and cooperation. The museums were not, at that time, required by law to cooperate with the Zuni requests, nor did the Zuni representatives seek a legal confrontation. Instead, the Zuni approached the matter by presenting a solid case to museum officials and embarking on a series of friendly negotiations. Cooperation and respect kept the negotiations from becoming adversarial. Although the museums stood to

lose valuable portions of their collections, they respected the sincerity and legitimacy of the Zuni appeals.

One of the concerns the Smithsonian raised before agreeing to return cultural artifacts was the security of the figures. The Zuni developed elaborate measures, including surveillance of the shrines, to protect the *Ahayu:da* from repeated theft. "Indian tribes requesting repatriation of human remains and artifacts should be ready, as the Zunis were, to address questions from museums about the security of artifacts after repatriation," says Ferguson.

Repatriation appeals can even begin a friendly cooperation between museums and Indigenous peoples. The Zuni provided valuable information to the museums regarding the nature and significance of items in the museum collection and the museum provided a secure record of cultural artifacts and history that they shared with the Zuni Pueblo. Zuni artists and ceramics students benefited from studying pottery in the Smithsonian collection. Zuni religious leaders also guided the museums' curators in appropriate handling procedures for those sacred objects that remain in museum collections.

"The power and continuity of Zuni culture and religion have been reinforced by the return of the *Ahayu:da* to their shrine on the Zuni Indian Reservation, and that is good," says curator of ethnology and Zuni anthropologist, Edmund Ladd.

The Sacred Weavings of Coroma

For the Aymara people of Coroma in the southern Altiplano of Bolivia, the sacred garments of Coroma are communal artifacts that illustrate genealogies and are believed to embody the souls of their ancestors. Some garments are 400 to 500 years old.

In early 1988, Professor John Murra, a well-known ethnohistorian from Cornell University, received a postcard announcing an ethnic art exhibition in San Francisco that featured the sacred weavings of Coroma.

He recognized the weavings as those that had been stolen or bought illegally from the Aymara community in the late 1970s and 80s. He contacted the Bolivian embassy and social scientist Cristina Bubba Zamora who was inventorying the Coroma weavings at the time through HISBOL (a Bolivian grassroots development organization).

Concerned community elders emphasized the importance of the weavings and considered the discovery of the art dealer's collection as a sign of their ancestor's spirits wishing to return home. "When a sacred garment is taken from the community, a Coromeño believes that the spirits of the ancestors have been kidnapped," explains Susan Lobo, one of the advocates of the Coroma repatriation efforts.

The Bolivian embassy and two representatives from Coroma contacted United States authorities and in February of 1988 US Customs officials confiscated about 1000 objects (mostly weavings) from the dealer. Delegates from Coroma then went to California to identify the collection confiscated by US Customs. "Our ancestors must be so sad and lonely," commented one of the delegates viewing the weavings.

Native Americans in the US and academics joined Cristina Bubba Zamora in rallying support for the people of Coroma. A San Francisco law firm also aided the coalition. With the backing of the UNESCO convention, signed by both the US and Bolivia, the return of forty-nine of the weavings was secured. In September 1992, Bolivian President Zamora received the weavings from the US government on behalf of the people of Coroma.

The extreme difficulty and expense in tracing, identifying and proving that the weavings were purchased illegally was a major obstacle in this case. Many items could not be determined to be illicitly obtained and had to be returned to the dealer. The return of the weavings attracted renewed interest and respect for the ancestral religion among many younger Coromeños who had previously shown less interest in traditional culture.

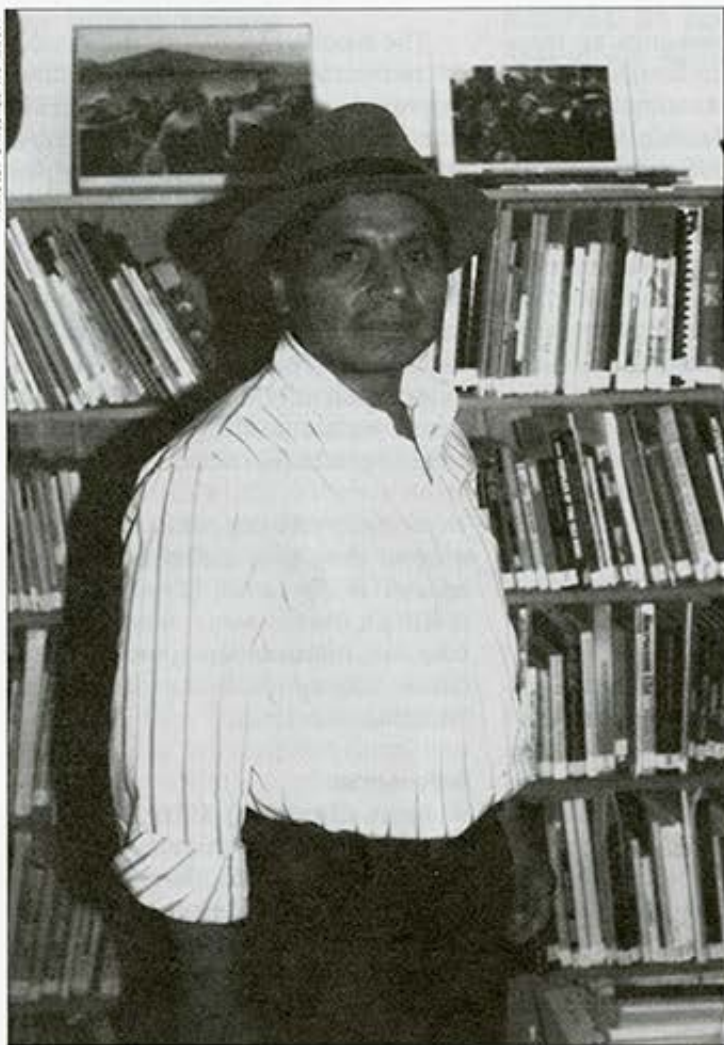
The success of the Zuni and Aymara in recovering sacred artifacts from museums and unscrupulous collectors is an important step in the prevention of the extinction of Indigenous peoples' living culture. Currently, the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is slowly taking shape. Now is the time for Indigenous peoples' to participate in this document and work on the issue of repatriation rights. Perhaps most importantly, everyone can help by being vigilant for the appearance of sacred items in the ethnic art market.

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Photo: Gilles Combrisson



Luis Macas during a recent visit to SAILC.

Pachakutik-Nuevo País:

Breaking New Ground in Ecuadorean Politics

In an historic moment, Luis Macas, former president of CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) ran as a candidate to the National Congress in Ecuador's last presidential elections and won a seat as National Deputy on the Pachakutik-Nuevo País (New Country) ticket. This was the first time in recent Ecuadorian history that an Indigenous leader sought election to a national office. In this interview, we talk with Luis Macas about CONAIE and the future of the Indigenous movement in Ecuador.

Interview with **Luís Macas**

In general, could you evaluate the election process from the point of view of the Indigenous winners—not just the significance of the number of votes, but also of this election and of the participation of Indigenous candidates?

For the Indigenous movement it is an extremely valuable experience. We have experienced triumph and gains in many forms. First, the increased coverage of the Indigenous movement's struggle, the extension of the Indigenous movement's political realm to other social sectors, and the formation of the Movimiento Unidad-Plurinacional Pachakutic-Nuevo País.

For us, this is a move forward. Now, Indigenous peoples are not alone, but united with workers, Afro-Ecuadorians, women, youth, professionals, teachers, human rights workers, and the grassroots Christian community. That is to say, all the inhabitants of our country who anxiously want change, transformation, and better days for our nation and people.

The fact we will forge this great movement, achieving the unity of Ecuadorian peoples, is really a triumph. For us, it means an historic step. It signifies having initiated a different process in the country, and one that is unique in Latin America. I would say this time we believe we have gained a lot.

Our fundamental objective was to consolidate a social base in our country. We wanted to consolidate a strategic base of Ecuadorian peoples for the near and long range future. You have to remember we had an absolute disadvantage facing political parties of the right, parties that have invested millions of dollars in their campaigns: the Social Christian Party, the Roldosista Ecuadorian Party, the Popular Democracy party, the Conservative Party, and the party led by Mr. Noboa. All have invested money, and what they want is to get back, with interest, their investments in the political campaigns. However, they are not the only ones who personally make investments but also other businessmen. I would say

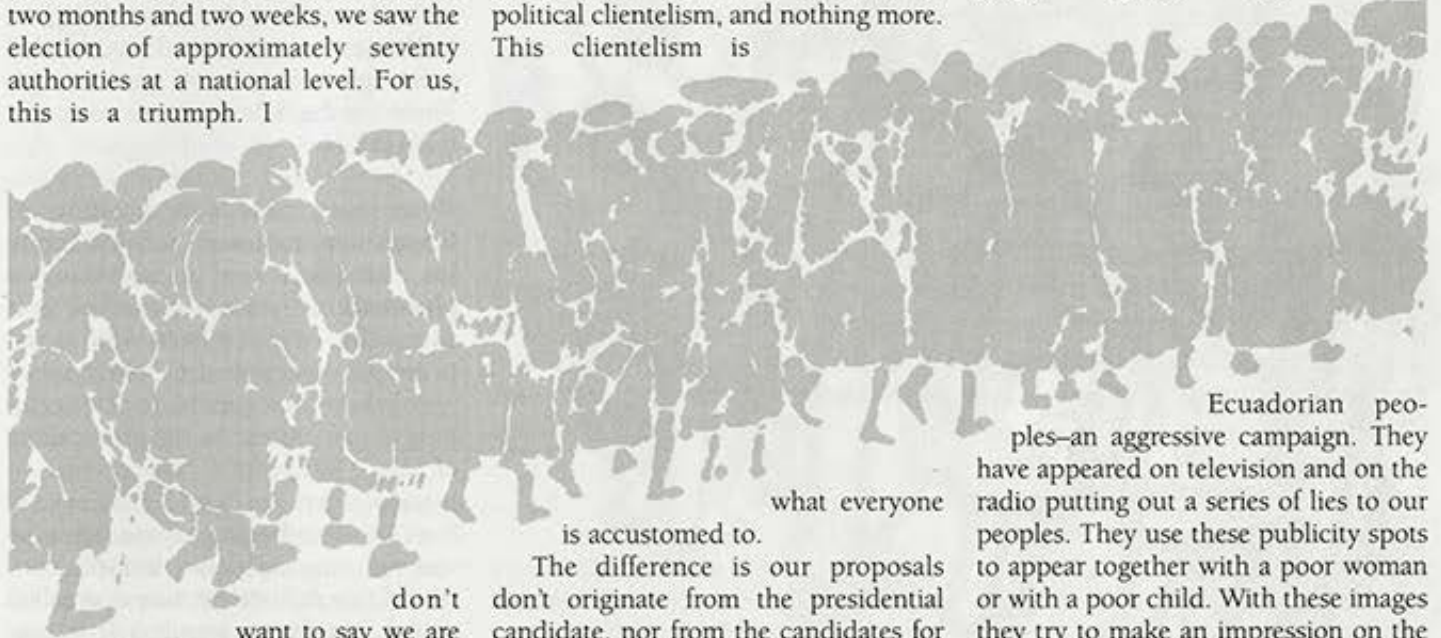
this is how corruption in electoral campaigns begins. Once they are in power, the debts accumulated by the electoral machine have to be paid to the businessmen. In this last election, it was an incredible machine, as never before in the history of Ecuador.

We were also at a disadvantage concerning time, but the Indigenous candidates quickly achieved a national presence with people in positions at a local, provincial, and national level. In two months and two weeks, we saw the election of approximately seventy authorities at a national level. For us, this is a triumph. I

mean between a traditional campaign and the traditional form in which the political parties have driven their electoral campaigns. First, we focused on content. It was obvious to rely on the candidates at a local, provincial and national level. We favored a government program. We didn't want to imitate the traditional political ways: the cheap offers to the Ecuadorian people in an attempt to convince them and attract their votes, the discourse of political clientelism, and nothing more. This clientelism is

Ecuadorian people a government program. Everyone has to submit to what they think. There is no consultation about the needs of the people, the community. So that's another difference. There is an individual effort, the work of an aristocracy that scorns the people.

Another difference is in electoral spending. They have spent millions of dollars in this electoral process. In my opinion they raised an offensive campaign against the



don't want to say we are in second or third place. We believe we are the first political force at a national level. Ours is a political force that isn't necessarily sponsored by any political party. Civil society expressed its political will with decision. I would say that in this game the Indigenous movement has played an important role. Before the convoking of the Indigenous movement, all the social forces, all the popular forces of our country decided to organize a national minga (communal work) to build something different, something that hasn't been seen in the history of our patria.

What were some of the differences between the campaigning style of the Pachakutik movement and that of the traditional political parties? How did you implement the campaign?

There is a radical difference in

what everyone is accustomed to.

The difference is our proposals don't originate from the presidential candidate, nor from the candidates for deputies. Our proposals come from the people. We have been working on them for years. They are a collective effort, a collective force. They are the

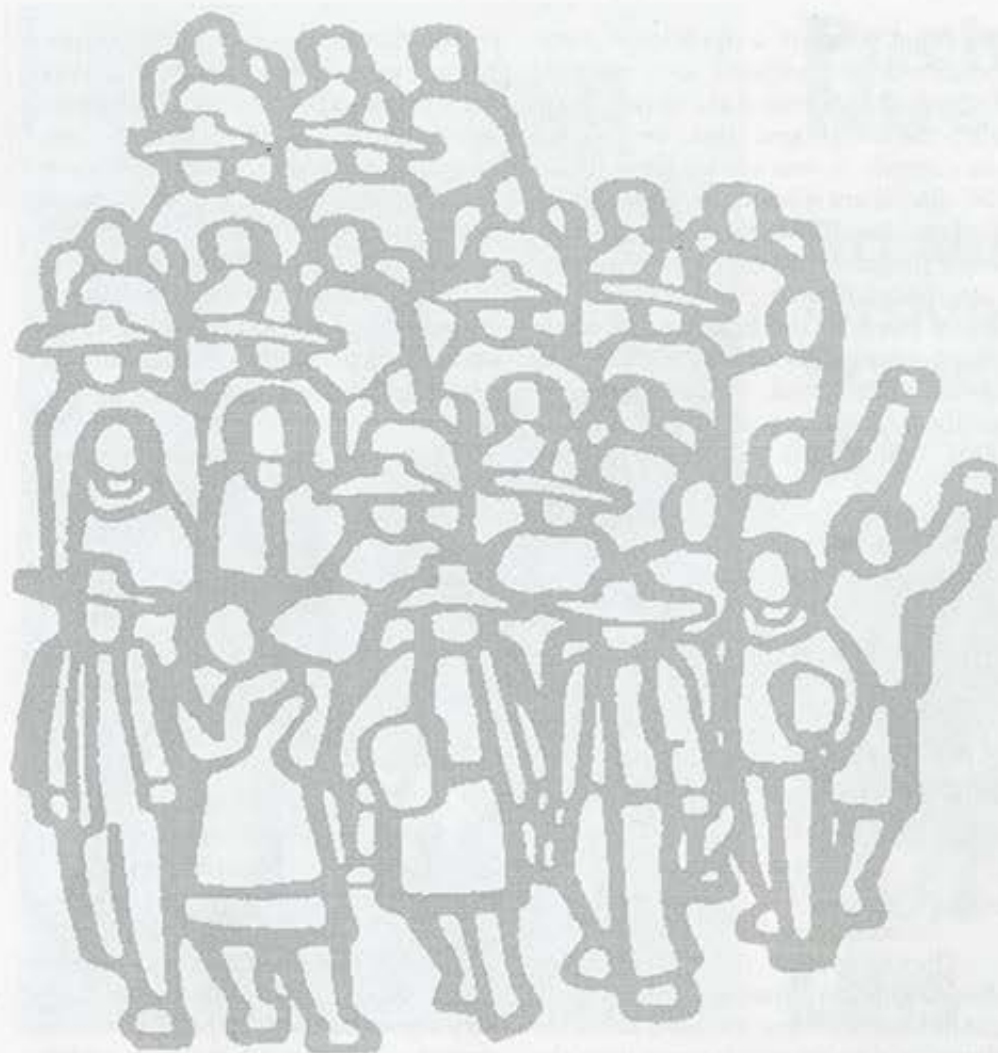
Ecuadorian peoples—an aggressive campaign. They have appeared on television and on the radio putting out a series of lies to our peoples. They use these publicity spots to appear together with a poor woman or with a poor child. With these images they try to make an impression on the people. Also, the other urban sectors that see them are definitely affected. It may not reach the majority of the people, but it reaches a wide social sector

"We didn't want to imitate the traditional political ways: the cheap offers to the Ecuadorian people in an attempt to convince them and attract their votes, the discourse of political clientelism, and nothing more."

result of uprisings, struggles, and the marches of our peoples. This then transforms itself into a political proposal, into a government program. This isn't how Mr. Nebot proceeded, who only presented his political proposal, or Mr. Rodrigo Paz. What they do is sit down at a desk with their two specialists, write whatever, and show the

of the country. If we had to describe our country right now, we would say that there it is absolutely covered in paint. The walls, trees, rocks, and paths are covered with posters. Everything is covered.

We can observe the differences in the campaign proceedings. There are posters everywhere. Where did this



money come from, we ask ourselves? These expenses? There, I would say, is where the corruption of the politics of our country is initiated. The aristocrats of national politics have an understanding of political work. What, for me, personally is a sacred act, for them it is a civic act, transformed into one of buying and selling, of business. Because, neither at a provincial nor at a national level can you explain the political staying power of these men. I would be ashamed. For example, Nebot is a candidate for the second time. This is his second electoral campaign. For Abdala Bucaram, this is his third time. Even though the Ecuadorian people don't want them, nevertheless, these men keep appearing in our politics.

There we established another differ-

ence. A very wealthy campaign facing a campaign of programs that visits the communities. How have we instituted our candidacy? We have gone to the communities. We have gone to the neighborhoods. We have gone to the families. We have gone to the cooperatives. That is, we have gone to the people. We have gone to our peoples, to the Indigenous communities. We have gone with a message, with a proposal. Our campaign has been absolutely different. With this government program, what we have done is hold workshops, seminars, assemblies. Thankfully, the Indigenous movement has a national structure, as do the workers and some campesino organizations that are part of the Movimiento Unidad-Plurinacional-Pachakutik. These structures have helped us to bring the cam-

paign to every last corner of our country—from the last community in the Amazon region, to the last plateau in the sierra region, to the last beaches in the coastal region. This has been our way of running a campaign. We have had to walk. We have been accompanied by these people. We attended meetings in plazas, many of which were designed by the people. Because they asked, we had to walk to such places. We had to attend seminars in such places. Everything was done in a collective and coordinated way, in common agreement, in a great minga. These are the differences we were able to establish.

What does your new position in Ecuadorian national politics imply for the project of establishing a pluri-national state in Ecuador? Is it compatible? Or, if it isn't, what is the principle objective of CONAIE now?

I believe that parallel to the beginning of this process, to the great calling of the Indigenous movement in Ecuador, there has been a great answer from the Ecuadorian peoples. But what was the proposal? What was the content of this political process that called to the Ecuadorian peoples? It is precisely this proposal, one of the construction of a modern state and a state that responds to the needs of all Ecuadorians. We have said that in Ecuador the legislation provides for—in theory at least—individual rights, rights of the citizens, rights of the family, but it doesn't consider collective rights, the rights of Indigenous peoples. We are going to insist that it is time, in the stage our country is living through in Latin America, for a change, a qualitative transformation in the way we conceive the state and the nation, to put ourselves at the height of the advances humanity has achieved in these recent times.

The construction of a plurinational state responds to this—to raise, to dignify the rights of Indigenous peoples. However, we are not only talking about benefits for Indigenous peoples. We

want to start to revise the traditional, archaic legislation. We think ours is a Constitution that doesn't respond to this era, this information age. It absolutely does not respond. It benefits only a few groups in power in our country. In this, we have a great backing. It is because of this that we are now a great political force in our country.

Because there never was one before, all the Ecuadorian peoples have assimilated themselves to this proposal. Before, no political party was capable of doing it, nor did they ever intend to change our country. Therefore, things only changed little by little. We are going to continue fighting in the National Congress with or without support. Obviously, we are going to look for the necessary support in different sectors and progressive political movements. We will build a political force in the parliament so that the interests of the people, and those of the Indigenous peoples, can be defended.

What would you say to someone who ignores the potential benefits of the CONAIE proposals and the general project of the Pachakutik? How would you invite other sectors to unite with Pachakutik?

Our proposal is a national one, although it has not been finished and presented to the others. What we want is a national debate. Everyone should participate in this. First, in our country, we think the changes should be global and structural. The changes can't apply to only a minimal sector of society, one with economic or political power. We want all Ecuadorian people to assess actively participating in the neoliberal model. This policy is against the Ecuadorian people. What we want is to give dignity to politics in our country. We think the structure and traditional ways of doing politics in our country should be changed. This representative democracy has to transform itself into a participatory democracy. Could there possibly be equality without participation in Congress? No. Haven't

Indigenous peoples historically been isolated from Congress?

I definitely believe that if we don't begin to understand ourselves, in the framework of mutual respect, if we don't begin to be conscious of each sector and its particularities, our country is finished. We believe it is necessary and important that everyone have the opportunity to participate in the benefits the state can give them. Here, we are obviously speaking not only of bettering the lives in the Indios and the campesinos, but also of all Ecuador's citizens.

On the other hand, we are called to

political institutions of the state: deputies, advisers, mayors, etc. How do you think this will change the future of the Indigenous movement?

I think this question is very important. The Indigenous movement is going through a crucial stage, precisely because of our great achievements.

First, I would say there are people we have struggled with: regional organizations, grassroots organizations, provincial organizations, communities. And, at least for me, this makes me think the Indigenous movement in Ecuador in general and CONAIE will undergo a great development.

"I will continue working on the proposals that come from organizations and not just those from myself and from the National Congress. Proposals from underneath, from the communities, will be delivered to the National Congress. Only like this can we speak from a parliamentary level, instead of an individual one."

a great chore. We have to search for an ideological focus point. I believe the fundamental issue all Ecuadorians have spoken to us about is identity. This is another of the crises we live with. Although in recent years we have seen an appropriate response to this problem, there still isn't the recognition of human values in ourselves. We are not going to be able to change politically and economically because we are living in a global crisis. This crisis is the absence of self-recognition, the absence of the recognition of the human values in one's self, as well as the values of the collective group. Therefore, we are also moving towards this idea. What the Indigenous movement proposed years ago isn't an empty discourse. We believe the resources for the development of our people are in ourselves.

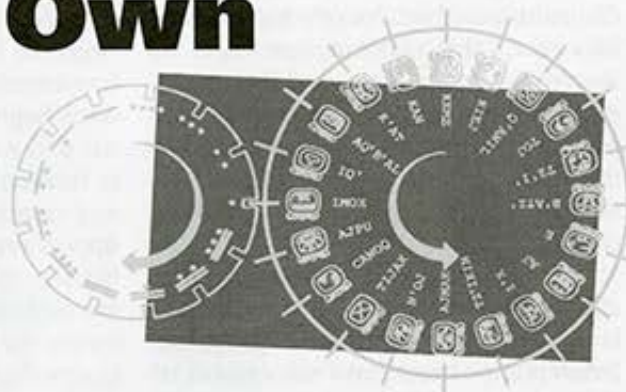
There are various elected Indigenous people who will occupy places in the

Second, our fundamental objective wasn't only to win positions in these last elections at a local, provincial, and national level. Our fundamental objective was searching for a way to consolidate our organizations. Here I believe we have taken an important step. This will serve to strengthen the organizations in their respective levels.

We think that if there is a collective decision our peoples will respond to the correct needs. At least, I personally think I shouldn't settle down and I won't. For example, I will continue working on the proposals that come from organizations and not just those from myself and from the National Congress. Proposals from underneath, from the communities, will be delivered to the National Congress. Only like this can we speak from a parliamentary level, instead of an individual one. This is what we propose. Because of this, I think it is a difficult challenge, but we have to take it on. 🐾



In Our Own Words



A Conversation with Gaspar Pedro González

Gaspar Pedro González is the author of A Mayan Life (La otra cara), first published in 1992. It is considered the first novel by a Mayan author. A Mayan Life traces the rich life of Lwin, a Q'anjob'al Maya, whose eyes reveal to the reader the bitter realities of Mayan existence in contemporary Guatemala. Gaspar Pedro González was born in 1945 in San Pedro Soloma, and attended the University of Mariano Gálvez, majoring in Educational Planning. He is a member of the Academy of Mayan Languages of Guatemala. He has written on Mayan languages, Mayan literature, and educational policy in Guatemala. In continuation, we present excerpts from two separate interviews. The majority of the material comes from an interview conducted on May 5, 1995, by Bob Sitler, from the Department of Foreign Languages at Stetson University, Florida. The other was conducted by SALLC on July 5, 1996.

“Many people, when they read my novel, take it to be autobiographical. In some ways, there are indeed parts of my own life that relate closely to this work. For example, the initial setting, that initial education that I absorbed in the heart of the home.

I was born in 1945 in San Pedro Soloma, in the department of Huehuetenango. I was born on a very special day when the Mayan people hold a ritual celebrating the first ripening fruits of the Earth. That day is called Ox Tz'ikin in the Mayan calendar, and signifies “Three Birds.” The expert priests who study this say that this “tz'ikin” is in other contexts the spirit, creativity, initiative, all that is intangi-

ble, that is immaterial. They also say that all those who are born on this day hold these qualities. This is like the horoscopes of Western culture, you see.

I lived a good portion of my infant life in the community. So most of what I write is real, not imaginary. I lived it.

I had the novel sort of simmering in my head for several years. I was always aching to write. I would jot down notes, and then I came up against a period of stagnation, in which I wasn't moving forward because, first, I had no idea how to go about publishing my work. Second, there was a stage in the political life of Guatemala at which no writer, let alone a Mayan, had the certainty of living freely and safely.

Yes. It was 1978 when there was an attempt to publish it. But someone told me, ‘Why don't we wait a little.’ The

national political conflicts had begun. When the tide of violence hit in the 1980s, anyone with paper or pen in his house was risking his life. So I took the drafts and stuffed them into a cardboard box, and saved them from the 80s, for the 90s.

The 90s brought the movement of cultural revival and the fast-approaching commemoration of the 500 years of Columbus. It then seemed to me to be an opportune time to publish this thing.

In the end I reached my goal. It was a struggle for someone with few resources, with little influence in society, to achieve publishing. I think it was a key experience that strengthened my spirit of resistance in the sense that I never threw in the towel. This is so important. I reach out to my fellow

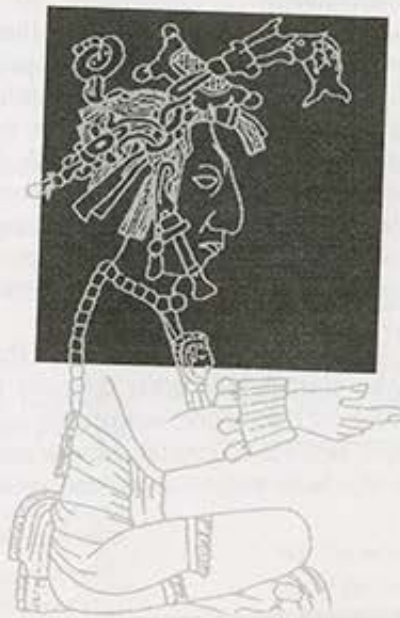
Mayan friends and I tell you that you have to persevere. If you accept defeat, you'll never reach your objective.



"I thought the novel in Maya, and when the time came to bridge everything, I had to work it out theoretically and avoid being too materialistic in Spanish. For example, concepts as love, God, and metaphysical manifestations are difficult to write with Mayan words. In our culture these experiences are felt. In the Mayan languages, these things are refereed to through material experience. 'Love,' for example, has no translation in Q'anjob'al. It's not that these experiences don't exist. They are lived. They are not for analyzing or conceptualizing critically. No, they are lived situations.

When I wrote the part of the novel where Lwin and Malin fall in love, I realized what love signified for a more complex, perhaps more sophisticated society. But for Mayas it's feeling, experimenting, and living. Words are not spoken. One lives, dances, is lured to a spiritual realm internally to the sounds of the marimbas. That night when they dance for the first time, they don't say a word. There are no discourses, no sweet words.

When I had to turn all this into Spanish, I took refuge in poetry, and lyrical and rhetorical speech in Castilian. For that reason, as I was writing the novel, sometimes I would get a little ahead of myself in Spanish so as not to lose emergent ideas. There are nevertheless ways to say these things through the Mayan parallelism that exists in our oral literature. There are literary resources in Maya such as repetition. There are literary figures that I had to study to adapt these ideas to Maya. It's a bit ironic because poetic speeches are uncommon in Q'anjob'al. The culture offers us another type of rhetoric, known by the elders, who in turn use it for ceremonies and special occasions.



"Writings abound on Mayans by non-Mayans. But a novel of this nature, written in the Mayan language, is, to the extent of my knowledge, the first. There is a novel, for example, *Juan Pérez Jolote*, that presumably deals with the Tzotzil Maya, written by Ricardo Pozas, a Ladino author. There's *El destino del Indio*, by Oliver La Farge, a novel on the Maya in Chiapas and Guatemala.

Miguel Angel Asturias obtained the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1967 precisely due to his writings on the Maya.

He is respected as one of the foremost Latin American authors. But our worlds are so completely different. The day more Mayan authors emerge, we will expand our different interpretations of Asturias.

He is a man of the literary medium whose raw material is the Maya, much like contemporary painters, sculptors, and other Ladino artists. Though, his identification with the Mayan people is a whole different story. Asturias' thesis is a scientific endeavor where Asturias the artist and Asturias the impassioned novelist are not present. If you get a chance to read this thesis, you won't see his later opinions on the Maya. In this work, he comes off as full of stereotypes and prejudices, as when he says that Mayas are indolent, filthy... He sees the plight of the "Indian" as the perfect opportunity to better himself, but in no way does he value that human being. When Miguel Angel Asturias travels to Europe, especially France, he begins to mature and learns to appreciate the Mayan civilization when faced with his hosts. His vision of the Maya is that of a Ladino.

There is a certain tendency to engage in 'positivism,' to portray the Maya as stoic, battle-hardened. This in turn serves to construct a nationalist identity based on certain values. You have, for example, the case of Tecum Umán [the leader of a Mayan rebellion]. The military adopts this Mayan symbol, shrouds it in myth, and shines it back on the Maya to entice them into the military. He becomes a warrior that defends the nation. But, whose nation is it? It is a nation of the few, of Ladinos and for their benefit, not of the Mayan people.

More concretely, I think that in Asturias' *Men of Corn* (*Hombres de Matz*), this phenomenon occurs. He seeks to depict our society abroad, a society he recreates based on personal criteria, and he puts on display for the world after applying some literary cosmetics. But the Maya fail to appreciate it because it is like a bad portrait. In *A Mayan Life*, I try to distort these stereotypes, and present the Maya with their values, their anguish, their view of the world, and of mankind in that part of the world.



“A part from the necessity for artistic and esthetic expression, [A *Mayan Life*] is in a certain sense a staunch critique of the social conditions and, particularly, an attempt to make the Q'anjob'al culture known. A *Mayan Life* falls into the genre of testimonial novel because it is a testimony to the exploitation and marginalization that is rampant across Mayan society.

I think that thanks to a Mayan presence in different circles, in different stages of national life, it is becoming accepted that the Mayan people speak, that they express their thoughts, and that the laws be more closely heeded. In *A Mayan Life*, there is no invention, nor is anything that we describe surreal. We are simply transferring a sort of radiography of a society that is living, that is dynamic, that is aware of a book published by a Mayan. Many non-Mayan friends have congratulated me for the work. It has been an international success. I think that it is beginning to be seen as a key part of the culture of this diverse society.

Of course there are sectors of the population that still spurn this voice. There are sectors that oppose the strengthening of the Mayan languages, or that Mayan identity be reinforced. They want to standardize the country, or “ladinize” it, much as in past periods.

Mayan society today is being bom-

barded in a series of cultural invasions. Progressively, people are less and less responsive to manifestations of spirituality. The media is a key factor in these invasions. The majority of Mayan houses have a radio. That radio says nothing about the Maya. It plays no Mayan music, nor do we hear Mayan languages.

On the same side of the coin, the present religions, the religious sects, have divided the Mayan people. One village is fractured into 4 or 5 churches. Social cohesion is wanting. Society is disjoined. Each faction tries to pull the other to its side. We are becoming complacent because our collective identity has dwindled.

Nevertheless, I perceive that there exists a favorable environment to publish, for example, the results of scientific investigations in Guatemala, or the works of people who write novels or poetry. You can't conceal the truth indefinitely. Eventually these things must be told, and the political atmosphere must give in, and begin to develop a conscience of these things.

Still, it remains the reality that Mayan authors have great difficulty in publishing their work, because the economic factor is so crucial. I know people who have written documents or lit-



erature, and there they are locked up in a box because they don't have the resources to publish it.

“The reality is that education policies, or simply, education, is constructed on philosophical bases. If in a national education plan, the policies are not well defined, or even the philosophies, it is hard to imagine what the goals of an education system are.

This is the topic of another work of mine. In *Mayan Languages and Education* (*Los idiomas mayas y la educación escolar*), I try to present some ideas as an educational planner, to suggest mechanisms, policies, and educational philosophies for this country with multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic characteristics. I also proposed to write what turned out to be my other book. Because, the first step in the construction of nationality is precisely that of education. But if we fail to construct our education from and within a culture, we are probably distorting, or we're destroying the identity of an entire portion of the population which in this case is primarily Indigenous and—in this country—above all Maya.

Various institutes in the interior of the country are using *A Mayan Life* in courses like literature or anthropology.

On the same token we are striving to coordinate with education authorities, to present to them these suggestions to implicate them in curricula—because we have known first hand the effects of an education based on destruction.

Chi waltoq skawilal he k'ul ayex he masanil yul hin q'anej, yin masan k'ulal jetoq ko masanil. (“From here I greet you all in my language, may peace reign in the hearts of all.”) ☘

To obtain a copy of *A Mayan Life*, write to: Yax Te' Press, 3520 Coolheights Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-6231; Tel/Fax: (310) 377-8763

Gold Miners Invade Yanomami Area, Again

Since the government suspended its surveillance operation of the Yanomami area on March, 1996, thousands of gold prospectors have re-invaded the Yanomami area in Northern Brazil. Since then there has been no attempt by FUNAI (National Indian Foundation), the police, or the armed forces to stop the gold miners from invading the demarcated Yanomami area.

Davi Kopenawa Yanomami, the Yanomami representative leader, writes:

Demini 05 de Junho de 1996.
Caros amigos,
escrevo esta carta para dizer

que nós Yanomami mandamos a nossa mensagem para vocês. nós Yanomami estamos muito preocupado porque a nossa área Yanomami está sendo invadida de novo pelos Garimpeiros. É por isso que nós Yanomami estamos informando que os Garimpeiros estão no meio do rio Catrimani e no alto Catrimani. Eles estão também ao redor de Xiteia, Homoxi, Papiú e Parafur no momento há 35 pistas de pouso ilegais em área Yanomami e o número de Garimpeiros chegou a 3.000 no Brasil e 4.000 na Venezuela. nós Yanomami queremos a ajuda de vocês para divulgar estas notícias sobre a invasão dos Garimpeiros. Pedimos que esta denúncia seja transmitida para vários países da Europa e nos Estados Unidos para que eles tomem conhecimento do que está ocorrendo de novo área Yanomami. Pedimos que as organizações destes países, que apoiam a questão indígena enviem cartas ao Presidente do Brasil pedindo que ele libere verbas para a operação de retirada dos Garimpeiros para que acabe

Letter sent by David Kopenawa in the hopes of stopping the latest invasion of Yanomami lands.

"We Yanomami send a message to you. We are very worried that our Yanomami area is being again invaded by gold miners. This is why we Yanomami are informing that the gold miners are in the river Catrimani and the high Catrimani. They are also around Xiteia, Homoxi, Papiú, and for the moment there are 35 illegal runways in the Yanomami area. The number of gold miners has arrived at 3000 in Brazil and 4000 in Venezuela.

The invasion of the gold miners has set off a dramatic rise in malaria cases, and resulted in the deaths of at least three Indians, shot with guns supplied by gold miners.

"We Yanomami want help from you to publicize the invasion of gold miners. We ask that this denouncement arrive to the various countries of Europe and the United States so that they know what is happening in the Yanomami area. We ask that the organizations of those countries support us and send letters to the President of Brazil asking that he free the funds for the operation of removing the gold miners so this situation ends."

The invasion of the gold miners has set off a dramatic rise in malaria cases, and resulted in the deaths of at least three Indians, shot with guns supplied by gold miners. In April alone 12 Yanomami died from malaria and pneumonia. Tuberculosis and venereal diseases are also increasing throughout the Yanomami area. The gold miners are also supplying guns and ammunition to the Yanomami in exchange for food or sexual relations with Yanomami women. The presence of guns has heightened the level of

violence among the Yanomami, leading to numerous deaths and injuries. One Yanomami leader lost the use of an arm after being shot. In early May three Yanomami were shot dead during tribal conflicts. There are reports that gold miners are encouraging tribal conflicts.

FUNAI officials fear that at any moment Venezuela will also expel several thousand more Brazilian gold miners who crossed the border as the result of earlier evictions from the Yanomami area. FUNAI also said that planes have been seen flying over the Parima, Catrimani, Parafuri, Paapi, Xidea, and other rivers in the area. The miners and

their machinery have been seen working in the Catrimani Paapiu Aracaca, Curimata, and Mapula rivers.

The Yanomami reserve was officially demarcated by the Brazilian government in 1992 after international protests over the mass invasion of up to 40,000 gold miners at the end of the 1980's. Fifteen percent of the Yanomami population died as a result.

Besides the terrible effect on the Yanomami people, the presence of the gold prospectors also causes huge environmental damage, contaminating rivers and destroying riverbanks and forest.

The good results obtained by the Comissão Pró-Yanomami's (CCPY) health programme, will be completely undermined if the invasion is allowed to continue.

For the Yanomami it is a matter of life and death. For the Brazilian government it would be a matter of honoring their word. During his recent visit to Europe Justice Minister Nelson Jobim promised that the federal police and the armed forces would be used to expel the gold prospectors. 🗑

Information from CCPY (Comissão Pró-Yanomami) See below.

We urge you to appeal to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso to free the funds needed (approximately US \$6 million) to restart the miner removal operation.

Sample letter:

Presidente Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Palácio do Planalto, 70159-970, Brasília DF Brazil; Fax: 061-226-7566

Dear President Cardoso,

The survival of an ancient people, the Yanomami, is in your hands.

The Yanomami are known throughout the world as one of the last large groups of Indigenous peoples who have been recently contacted. Now they are threatened by a new illegal invasion of gold miners and your inexplicable delay in authorizing the funds needed for their expulsion, an operation already jointly planned by different departments of your government in cooperation with the government of Venezuela.

We would like to remind you that on 29/3/96 in London, Justice Minister Nelson Jobim promised the international press and non-governmental organizations that this operation was imminent. Three months have passed and nothing has been done to stop the entry of new gold miners or remove those who are illegally inside the demarcated Yanomami area.

We know from reports from the area itself that the consequences for the Yanomami are disastrous: there has been an increase of malaria and venereal diseases and cases of injuries and even deaths caused by firearms supplied to the Indians by gold miners. Many rivers are being polluted and contaminated.

A visit by members of the Human Rights Commission of the OAS to the Yanomami area in December, 1995, found that a binational operation to put an end to the chronic problem of invasions on both sides of the frontier by mostly Brazilian gold miners was needed.

The international community expects that you, Mr. President, will fulfill your commitments and protect a people who are vulnerable, but have the same right to life as anyone else.

Therefore we appeal to you to free the necessary funds for the operation to remove the gold miners who have illegally entered into the Yanomami reserve in Brazil immediately and introduce a system of permanent vigilance to prevent them returning.

Yours sincerely,

For more information contact:

Claudia Andujar, Comissão Pro-Yanomami, Yanomami Campaign Coordinator, Rua Manoel Nobrega 111-cj.32, 04001-900 São Paulo SP Brazil; phone (011) 5511-289-1200; fax(011) 5511-284-6997; email: apc-cpybr@ax.ibase.org.br

Indigenous Peoples and Peasants of Bolivia Press Government for Solutions

As the month of September brings the spirit of spring to the Andes, Indigenous organizations have again challenged the neoliberal government of President Sánchez de Lozada and Aymara vice-president Cárdenas. The call to march to La Paz by Indigenous peoples follows governmental failure to implement previously signed decrees in favor of Indigenous peoples—a state version of the ancient dictum, “I obey but I do not comply.” The government has obstructed the application of laws and delayed measures aimed at solving the problems over Indigenous territories. The main demand of the march is to enact at least nine Decrees signed by the Government after the massive Indigenous peoples’ march of close to 1 million to La Paz in 1990, and to have rural laborers integrated into the General Labor Law.

Indigenous leader Marcial Fabricano, representative of CIDOB (Confederation of Indigenous peoples of Bolivia) called for the march. He also organized the 1991 “March for Territory and Dignity.” Joining Mr. Fabricano in the organizing process are Román Loayza, representative of the CSUTCB, the national peasant confederation and Modesto Condori, representing CSCB, an organization of landless peasants also known as “colonizers.” It is the first time, Indigenous peoples, peasants, and landless rural workers have come together in a strong coalition. Urban workers, who have fared poorly because of neoliberal policies brought by governing parties MNR (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement) and MRTK (Revolutionary Movement Tupaq Katari), have lent their active solidarity.

The Decrees in question, which agreed to grant rights over land, should

have created Indigenous territories for the Siriono Indigenous peoples of the Isiboro National Park, Secure, Pillon, Chiman, Tim, Araona, Moseten, Chiman, Yuqi, Chiquitano, and Weenhayek (Mataco), all located in the eastern Amazon region. Their non-enforcement prompted the march, as well as more ongoing problems no different from similar areas other nation-states share in the Amazon basin. Ranchers, lumber companies, miners, and landless peasants consider the Amazon “an empty area,” lawless, and ideal for “colonizing.” Indigenous peoples have worked to defend their rights coordinating themselves nationally and forging international alliances to denounce this situation. Ranchers and landowners in the area continue to benefit from the conditions of lawlessness, and are actively pressuring the government to declare these lands (and territories) “negotiable” at market prices.

The march constitutes a strong indictment against President Sánchez de Lozada’s administration regarding the environment, biodiversity, and land and territorial management. Recent statistics published in Bolivia by LIDEMA (Environmental Defense League), demonstrate that the rate of deforestation has increased to unprecedented levels, as well as the percentage of national territory adversely affected by soil erosion. President Sánchez de Lozada, whose administration is plagued by inefficiency, has answered by menacing the marchers to postpone a debate over a law drafted by the National Agrarian Reform Institute, INRA—likely due to strong pressures from ranchers and agroindustries whose interest he strongly supports.

Indigenous peoples conflicts in Bolivia have been widespread since the

election of President Sánchez de Lozada in July 1993. His administration has seen the return of old forms of rural labor enslavement and debt peonage in cattle ranches and other estates in the Departments of Chuquisaca, Beni, Santa Cruz, and Tarija (Chaco). There have been no significant actions taken by his administration to eliminate such illegal practices, although many Indigenous nations, such as the Guaraní, have publicly denounced it within the last four years. Practically all the well-known Indigenous peoples such as the Yuqi, Moseten, Chiquitano, Araona, Guaraní, Chiman, and Weenhayek, have persistently endured physical abuse, enslavement, forced prostitution, debt-peonage, and the theft of their wages and lands.

Long marches are a recent strategy by rural inhabitants to press for their human rights in Bolivia. This 1996 march differs from recent ones because, rather than simply complain, it explains Indigenous peoples’ overdue demands. The Bolivian case, amidst those of the other Amazonian countries, is another example where governmental measures could stop the environmental collapse this area is currently undergoing. Indigenous peoples in the area have a long-term commitment to restore this forest, but not when under heavy pressures from non-sustainable forms of land management. Obviously, land tenure laws cannot be implemented without the input of peasant and Indigenous peoples’ organizations. Although the Sánchez de Lozada administration ran and enacted a Popular Participation Law, little has advanced in terms of participation, and most decisions in fact continue to exclude Indigenous peoples’ large representative confederations. ▀

Decree 1775 Update: Jobim Calls for Revision of Demarcation of Eight Indigenous Territories

Of the 83 Indigenous territories contested as a result of the controversial Decree 1775, Brazil's Minister of Justice, Nelson Jobim has targeted 8 for alterations and possible reductions. The Indigenous areas slated for alteration are: Kampa do Rio Envira (Acre); Raposa/Serra do Sol, (Roraima); Sete Cerros, (Mato Grosso do Sul); Krikati (Maranhão); Maxakali (Minas Gerais); Tapeba (Ceara); Apyterewa, and Bau (Para). There are now 90 days for FUNAI (the National Foundation for Indian Affairs) to study each of these individual cases and hand its recommendations to Jobim who will make the final decision.

Decree 1775, written by Jobim, was signed into law by Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso on January 8, 1996. The Decree allows private interests and state and local governments to appeal the demarcation of those Indigenous reserves not already demarcated. By the end of the April 8 contestation deadline, FUNAI had received over 500 appeals targeting 83 different Indian areas from miners, loggers, ranchers, and government officials. Jobim will now have a chance to prove his good intentions when saying that Decree 1775 was necessary to move on with the demarcation process. All but 8 territories have officially gone through the contestation process and can continue with their demarcation. Indigenous peoples and their Brazilian and international allies want to see the immediate demarcation of all other Indigenous territories. The process is now constitutional and funds are being made available from the World Bank's Pilot Program for the Amazon.



The Mano dance of the Bororo, who inhabit the heavily colonized southern portion of the state of Mato Grosso.

In Brazil, there are about 150,000 Indigenous peoples forming 215 distinct nations and speaking about 170 languages. Most inhabit 526 Indigenous areas nationwide that comprise a total area of 190 million acres – an area twice the size of California. There is also evidence of 50 other Indigenous groups that are still uncontacted and living in the depths of the rainforest. Most of these Indigenous lands, about 188 million acres, are located in the Amazon region of Brazil in the states of Acre, Alnapá, Amazonas, Pará, Mato Grosso, Maranhão, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins. Considering that Brazil contains about 65% of the Amazon Basin and that 188 million acres of it belong to Indigenous peoples, the demarcation of Indigenous territories is not only imperative for securing Indigenous rights, but also a

very significant conservation strategy. However, 125 million acres of Indigenous lands still await final demarcation. 🐦

Please write to Minister of Justice asking him to honor Article 231 of the Brazilian Constitution by ordering the immediate demarcation of all Indigenous territories and to guarantee that the rights of Brazilian Indigenous peoples are respected.

Dr. Nelson Jobim, Ministro da Justiça, Esplanado dos Ministérios, Bl. T, Brasília, DF - CEP: 70.064-900, Fax: (0115561) 224-2448; email: njobim@ax.apc.org

Adapted from a text of Beto Borges of the Rainforest Action Network. For more information contact RAN, 450 Sansome St., Suite 710, San Francisco, CA 94111; Tel (415)398-4404; Fax: (415)398-2732.

Venezuela:

Amazonian Indians Request Support

Venezuela has passed legislation that threatens to undermine Indigenous peoples' control of their lands and destinies by dividing the state of Amazonas into electoral municipalities. Indigenous peoples claim this law is unconstitutional and are challenging it in the courts. However, while the courts have delayed hearing the case, the local government has gone ahead with the dismemberment of the area. The Indigenous peoples are calling for international support to urge the courts to consider the case.

The 19 Indigenous peoples of the Venezuelan Amazon are represented by ORPIA (Organización Regional de Pueblos Indígenas de Amazonas). They have received the support of the Human Rights Office of the Catholic Church in Puerto Ayacucho. They have been demanding since February 1995 that the law creating the political divisions of the Amazon State in Venezuela be declared invalid by the Supreme Court.

For eight months the Supreme Court of Justice took no action over the case. It was only after concerted pressure from the Indians that the court finally declared in November 1995 that the case required an urgent hearing. Despite the initial sense of urgency, the court still has not declared its judgment.

Until recently the Venezuelan Amazon was administered as a Federal Territory and run by Governors appointed from Caracas. More recently, as part of a nation-wide program of decentralization, the Territory has been declared a State and opened to local electoral politics. As a part of this process, steps have been undertaken to divide the State up into new administrative units.

However, the local Government

pushed through the 'Ley de División Politico-Territorial del Estado Amazonas' without consulting with the Indigenous peoples. Under the law, the new State of Amazonas has been divided into 'municipios,' each with elected 'alcaldes' (mayors), and each in turn divided into a number of 'paroquias' with their respective elected heads. These areas and institutions do not correspond with traditional Indigenous political systems. Moreover, they overlap with Indigenous territories for which titles have yet to be gained according to Venezuelan law.

Despite Indigenous objections and the filing of a case contesting the legality of the law, the local government has gone ahead with applying the new structure and forced through elections. Already the imposed system is causing problems. New internal divisions have been created because the boundaries of the new 'municipios' and 'paroquias' do not conform to Indigenous ethnic boundaries. Party politics has been introduced into the communities. New clientelistic relations have been established throughout the territory. Dominant communities and ethnic groups have strengthened their authority over smaller and politically marginal ones. Most serious, the new 'municipios' have begun a process of expropriating untitled Indigenous lands for municipal use.

Indigenous peoples have argued that the law dividing the State is unconstitutional, pointing out that Article 77 of the constitution allows for exceptional administrative regimes in Indigenous areas to accommodate their cultural differences. They also note that the law is contrary to established procedures, as the towns about which the new 'municipios' are being created are far too small to qualify.

The Indians demand that instead their land rights be properly recognized and that subsequently consultations take place to devise an administrative regime that suits their cultures and coincides with their customary systems of decision-making.

The challenge to the 'Ley de División Política...' is the second court case that ORPIA has filed contesting Government initiatives in the State of Amazonas. Earlier this year, ORPIA successfully challenged the local Government's attempts to build a road from the State capital Puerto Ayacucho south to San Fernando de Atabapo.

Adapted from a report by the World Rainforest Movement.

Please send faxes or letters:

- Expressing concern for the situation in the Venezuelan State of Amazonas as a result of the imposed territorial division

- Asking the Supreme Court of Justice to declare null and void the Ley de División Politico Territorial del Estado Amazonas as requested by the Indigenous peoples on 2 February 1995.

Dra. Cecilia Sosa, Presidenta de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, Av. Baralt, San Jose de Avila, Caracas, Venezuela

Dr. Alfredo Ducharme, Magistrado Ponente, Corte Suprema de Justicia, Caracas, Venezuela

Fax number for both: 00 58 2 563 8113

For further information: Forest Peoples Programme, 8 Chapel Row, Chadlington, OX7 3NA, England; Tel: 00 44 1608 676691; Fax: 0044 1608 676743; Email: wrm@gn.apc.org

Hidrovia:**Declaration of the Río Paraguay**

The following declaration states the conclusions of participants in the Floating Seminar of the Paraguay River, organized by Sobrevivencia - Friends of the Earth Paraguay and the Coalition Rios Vivos Paraguay-Paraná-Plata, who in three boats descended the Paraguay River between 17-27 July, 1996 as part of a permanent dialogue with the populations of the La Plata Basin. Along the way, they travelled through sections of the river programmed for large-scale engineering works as part of the Paraguay-Paraná Hidrovia industrial waterway, currently being planned by the governments of the region. Participants included citizens of the countries of the La Plata Basin, North America, and Europe.

We, Indigenous peoples of the Paraguay basin, traditional communities, scientists, environmental experts, and ecologists from various countries, concerned with the future of our rivers, have taken part in the Floating Seminar on the Paraguay River, and united in our message, propose strategies for the construction of sustainable societies in the region.

We are the Earth, the peoples, the plants, the animals, the waters, the sun's rays, the breath of the winds. We want to honor the Earth as the place of all living beings.

We have come to testify to the depredation we have witnessed along our entire descent of the Paraguay River, from Corumbá to Asunción. The model of occupation established in our region bears no relation to the needs of the peoples who live along the river bank, nor with the potential of its ecosystems. Indigenous peoples have been expelled from their territories and deprived of their sustainable means of wisdom, of happiness, and of life. Huge barge convoys have replaced the ancestral means of transport and navigation adapted to the natural conditions of the river; mining and mineral loading docks contaminate their surroundings; logs pile up in the lumber mills which consume the final remains of the lush ancient forests; enormous columns of

smoke and ashes darken the sky in midday announcing the imminent end of prosperity on the earth and the eclipse of its original cultures. Signs of the inevitable collapse of this heart of America in whose rhythm pulses and breathes the security of life in the La Plata Basin.

Facing this situation, and because we still have time, we want to propose paths which serve to improve the condition of life in the basin: paths which do not destroy, but which restore the balance today threatened.

The salvation of the planet and its peoples, present and future, demands the creation of a new civilization based on an ethic which respects its limits, diversity, solidarity, equality, justice, and liberty.

We are all a unit in our diversity. We assume the shared responsibility to protect and to restore the Earth so that its natural resources may be used wisely, preserving ecological balance and the social, economic, and spiritual values which assure sustainability.

The existing patterns of consumption, of production and distribution of resources, currently oriented toward extraction, concentration, and expropriation, bring human societies and the ecosystems which sustain them to an inevitable disaster. All initiatives must therefore be urgently directed to meet the needs of local and traditional popu-

lations, especially Indigenous peoples, assuring the sustainability, the equality, and the respect for diversity in our societies.

Sustainable societies are based on the self-determination of local communities and original peoples in full exercise of their right to decide on the management and administration of the ecosystems which they are part of.

Administration of resources should be directed and controlled by local communities throughout the process, based upon criteria of sustainability, defined by studies which determine their carrying capacity, and the forms of processing and commercialization, having as their basis self-sufficiency and inter-dependence.

The diversity of habitats and cultures who live in them determine different uses which in turn make interchange possible, and establish factors of inter-dependence which must be respected and made compatible.

We consider that our region must be thought of as an integrated whole for the design of policies for management and territorial use.

The La Plata Basin in its entirety must be the unit for all plans, projects, or activities.

The restoration of ecosystems which have been damaged by the current predatory development, is a need which can not be delayed. The balance

and integrity of ecosystems must be recuperated, especially in degraded areas of critical importance for the structural restoration of hydrological systems. Proposed actions such as permanent dredging and the construction of dams for water regulation or for sediment retention do not constitute solutions, but rather threats. They do not look at the true causes of problems of sedimentation of river beds and deterioration of hydrological systems, but rather the maintenance of the predatory system which only seeks economic benefits for large corporations, while financial and environmental costs are paid by populations and by nature.

The infrastructure to be implanted in the region must be in function of the

needs of local populations and not external interests. Respecting this criteria, all initiative must have as its origin and finality the needs and interests of local communities. Even so, its implementation must adapt itself to natural conditions, avoiding negative social and environmental impacts. The governmental project for the Paraguay-Paraná industrial waterway does not respond to either of these criteria. This project, designed behind the back of populations of the region, will not bring any benefits nor solutions for the needs of the peoples of the Basin, but rather will increase even more their problems, generating greater impacts and increasing social and environmental costs, many of them irreversible.

The existing resources destined for mega-projects promoted by international financial institutions and entities of cooperation must be re-directed toward the true needs of local populations, moving away from their current orientation to promote unsustainable projects which only benefit those small groups in whose hands power and resources are concentrated.

From the curves of the Paraguay River, July 27, 1996

For more information: Glenn Switkes, Director of the Latin America Program at the International Rivers Network, 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA, 94703; Tel: 510/848-1155; Fax: 510/848-1008



Continued from page 12

land. In 1994, they made their first trip outside their land to speak at the United Nations about their plight. In continuation, we reproduce the latest attempt by the Wichí to secure their territory.

For the Titling of Our Land: Takeover of the International Bridge Over the Pilcomayo River (La Paz)

Many years have passed since we requested the government of Salta province, Argentina, to officially grant us title to the land that we have always inhabited. We have sent letters. Meetings take place, new laws and decrees are passed, and yet more topographic studies... We are now in the fourth administration. Yet they have not responded to our demands. Years pass and our lands become impoverished, because the people who have come from the outside to occupy them know not how to manage them. Years pass and we become poorer.

Even though we have official papers making

us Argentineans, they don't respect us. They don't recognize this land as ours. They play around, saying "Wait just a little bit more." But while we wait, they move ahead with their projects: They settle our land, lay down their roads, their barb-wire fences, and their towns. And now they are building a bridge in La Paz and they that we have to pack up and give them space.

We are not animals running loose. We are not dogs to be driven away at the whims of their owner. We are the flowers of the Earth, planted by God Himself to live and thrive in these lands.

We have asked the authorities to secure the titles to these lands before undertaking these large projects in the places where we live. These are fiscal lands and the laws therefore recognize our right of ownership. Amidst all this talk of Mercosur, we see a more secure future simply in the ownership of our land.

Faced with no response and the upcoming inauguration of the bridge, the 35 communities belonging to our association have decid-

ed to peacefully takeover the lands around the bridge on the 25 of August. We will occupy the land until the government of Salta gives a concrete response in regards to our requests. This is an act of hope.

We ask that you collaborate, by sending people who believe in our cause to accompany us and assure that there be no acts of violence against our families.

Even after the takeover, you can support our cause by sending letters to:

Sr. Gobernador de la Provincia de Salta, Dr. Juan Carlos Pomero, Casa de Gobierno, Gran urg 4400, Salta, Argentina

Sr. Presidente de la República Argentina, Dr. Carlos S. Menem, Casa Rosada, Capital Federal, Argentina; Fax: 54 1 343 2249 or 54 1331 7976

Asociación de Comunidades Aborígenes Lakha Honhat, San Luis, Sta. Victoria Este, Rivadavia B. Norte, CP 4581, Pcia. Salta, Argentina



Colombia: Indigenous Peoples Mobilize to End Violence, Land Invasions

A resonating protest by Indigenous peoples in Colombia lasting thirty seven days ended last August 5, 1996 after negotiations with the government yielded official promises for human rights and greater control over their own territories. Indigenous peoples and their leaders from over 60 different Indigenous nations agreed to leave the main branch of the Colombian Episcopal Conference in Bogotá which they had been occupying since July 5, 1996. Another group of Wayúu Indians had taken over the Office of Indigenous Affairs of the Interior Ministry on June 24, 1996.

This latest round of nation-wide Indigenous mobilization in Colombia was to protest government inaction and indifference to the wave of killings of Indigenous peoples on the part of drug-sponsored paramilitary mafias. They also took over various government

offices and demanded action in the face of peasant invasions of their land and the virtual cessation of land reform laws initiated in 1991.

Since April of this year, 10 Indigenous leaders from various Indian nations have been assassinated, bringing the total to 200 since 1990. "Across the regions of Córdoba, Antioquia, Chocó, they are killing Indigenous people, for political, or even territorial reasons," affirms Abadio Green, Kuna Indian and president of ONIC (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia) in an interview with SAIIC. "Indigenous peoples are not willing to let go of their land, so they fight and that's why they are killed."

During 37 days of demands and extensive negotiations, the government of President Ernesto Samper agreed to the establishment of a special human rights commission, and, two weeks later, to the formation of a permanent

"mesa de concertación," or a permanent council of major Indigenous representatives and members of the national government that could stop harmful development projects on Indigenous lands. "No works, investments, environmental license, or development project can be executed within Indigenous territories without the consent of Indigenous peoples," says Green, who actively negotiated the agreement. If this measure is implemented, it will effectively curtail the careless destruction of Indigenous territories in Colombia.

Since the beginning of Colombia's coca-growing and coca paste industry in the 1970s, wealthy druglords have come to comprise a new land-owning elite, with 42% of the best land in their hands. Resisting this trend are the peasant organizations and guerrilla groups, in place since the 1950s. To get rid of what it considers "communists," the

military has sided with the narco landowners and trained joint paramilitary units. These have not only attacked guerrilla forces, but civilian organizations and leaders as well, many of them Indigenous. The result has been a bloody struggle in the countryside that has displaced campesinos and Indigenous people—perhaps as many as 800,000—and killed thousands. Many campesinos have invaded long-since established Indigenous territories, known as *resguardos*, in search of land. Many others have simply swelled the slums surrounding Bogotá and other major cities.

There is another aspect to the violence against Indigenous leaders, however. Since 1991, when a new constitution gave the roughly 750,000 Indigenous peoples in Colombia broad political, judicial, and financial powers to control their territories (*resguardos*), many Indians have been elected to political posts at various levels, and this has not gone over well with the traditional power structure. "Throughout Colombia," says Green, "we have achieved, politically speaking, a certain equality—we can be mayors, deputies, councilmen. In many parts the Indians have had an important political impact. The big politicians that have always controlled everything have identified this as a threat. For this, too, they are killing Indigenous people."

With their wealth, the narco-sponsored paramilitary groups have amassed an impressive arsenal, against which there is no protection for Indigenous leaders who have received death threats. "You fight under these circumstances and when it becomes obvious that you're in danger, about all you can do is leave the region and go somewhere else," explains Green. ONIC was the target of paramilitary violence in 1994 when gunmen killed four Zenu leaders, among them Porfirio Ayala, assistant secretary general of ONIC. The others were Hector Malo, who was running for the senate; Luis Arturo Lucas, a former ONIC representative; and Cesar Meza.

As part of the demands in this latest round of protests, the special Human Rights Commission would be composed of the minister of the interior, of defense and justice, the presidential council for human rights, Indigenous senators, and would be monitored by international institutes including the ILO.

The question of land, still the most poignant aspect of the Indigenous struggle, took the front stage during the protests. Aside from the permanent council to regulate land concessions affecting Indigenous areas, Indigenous peoples sought to reactivate the provisions of the 1991 constitution, which declared Colombia a multi-ethnic nation and granted them two seats in Congress. Legislation soon followed that gave them unprecedented judicial, political, and financial control over the *resguardos*, which are lands under old Spanish colonial titles now officially recognized by the state as Indigenous territories. Since then, however, the *resguardos* have retained their old dimensions while their Indigenous population has increased. Few additional Indigenous territories have been officially titled. In addition, the process of *saneamiento*, or the purchase of land by the state from small landholders located within Indigenous territories in order to remove them, has not been adequately carried out.

To remedy this situation, one of the decrees signed by President Samper



calls for the creation of a National Commission of Territories, which would be responsible for researching Indigenous land tenure necessities and determining and administering the required funds. It will be composed of various ministers and the Colombian land reform institute, INCORA.

The Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca (CRIC), one of the oldest Indigenous organizations in Colombia as well as Latin America, will be sending several Indigenous representatives to Europe and the US to mobilize the international community and expose the plight of Indigenous peoples in Colombia. They plan to participate in the National Conference of the Colombian Human Rights Network in New York city from October 25-27.

For more information, contact the Columbia Multimedia Project, P.O. Box 1091 GPO, New York, New York 10116-109; Phone: (718) 369-4182; email: mmcompa@gc.apc.org



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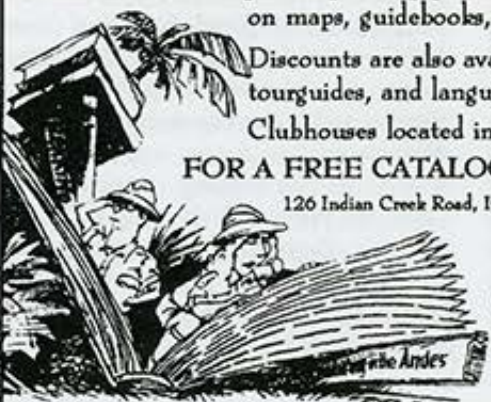
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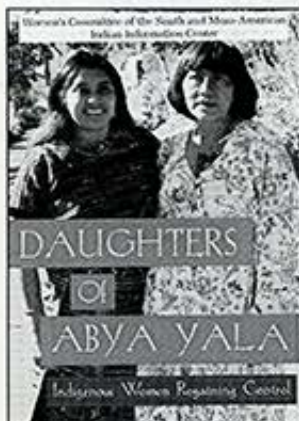
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SAIIC's latest educational handbook takes on the Indigenous perspective and zeros in on biodiversity, bioprospecting, intellectual property rights, the Human Genome Diversity Project, related international agreements, and Indigenous biodiversity management alternatives and what they mean for Indigenous peoples of Mexico, Central, and South America. Written by David Rothschild with interviews and contributions by Leonardo Viteri of the Instituto Amazanga, Eugenio Castillo of Pemasky, and Alejandro Argumedo of the Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Network. Made possible by the Foundation for Deep Ecology. Contact SAIIC for distribution information and copies. \$8.00 + \$3.00 shipping.



Daughters of Abya Yala

Testimonies of Indian women organizing throughout the Continent. Statements from grassroots Indian women leaders from South and Meso America. Includes resolutions from Indigenous women's meetings, a directory of Indian women's organizations and key contacts, information on Indian

women's projects, and poems by Indian women. Contains 128 pages with beautiful black and white photographs. Printed on recycled paper. \$8 + \$3.00 shipping.

"Indigenous Voices" Radio Program

SAIIC's latest taped radio program is now available. Focusing on topics related to biodiversity and Indigenous peoples, it serves as an informative base with which Indigenous peoples can protect themselves against unwelcome bioprospecting and biopiracy. 1 hour. Narrated by members of SAIIC's Board of Directors. (Available in Spanish only) \$8.00 + \$3.00 shipping.

Amazonia: Voices of the Rainforest

A resource and action guide with a comprehensive listing of international rainforest and Amazonian Indian organizations sponsored by SAIIC and the International Rivers Network, and published by Rainforest Action Network and Amazonia Film Project, 1990. Available in Spanish or English for \$4.50 + \$3.00 shipping.

Video: Columbus Didn't Discover Us

Native people's perspectives on the Columbus Quincentennial based on the footage of the 1990 Quito Conference. 24 minutes. A co-production of SAIIC, CONAIE, ONIC and Turning Tide Productions. Available in Spanish or English. \$19.95 + \$3.00 shipping.

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