

trialized, non-Indian societies which surround them. But they provide a means of self-determination by which Indian communities can reach accommodations with the outside world on Indian terms. In the case of the Kuna, community autonomy also provides a model of participatory democracy which non-Indian communities would do well to heed.

--Pete Hammer

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## MEXICO

Alvaro Vasquez, representative of the Assembly of Zapotec and Chinantec Peoples of the Oaxaca Sierra (Asamblea del Pueblo Zapoteca y Chinanteca de las Sierras de Oaxaca), was in the San Francisco Bay Area to organize an exposition of Zapotec-Chinantec lithographs and to show videos about his people. For information regarding the Zapotec-Chinantec newspaper write: Iopil, c/o Miguel Cabrera, 351-1 C.P., Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico.

## COLOMBIA

On June 29th the Colombian army bombed the municipality of Caldono, destroying 16 houses and many crops. In other land-based operations the army searched homes, stealing cattle, chickens and household items. Similar violations took place in the Indian community of Pueblo Nuevo on July 1. Prior to that, the village of Tacueyo had been bombarded twice, and the villages of Corinto and Jambalo once each.

The army changed its tactics against alleged rural guerrilla forces from bombarding the mountains to directly bombarding the areas occupied by Indian villages, which have suffered constant hostilities due to the militarization of the Cauca region. The worsening situation of Indian communities is also demonstrated by the death of Maximiliano Quiguanas, the president of a local cooperative, who was killed while working.

(From Unidad Indigena, Colombia)

## ECUADOR

Ecuador, along with Bolivia and Peru, is one of the countries in South America with the highest Indian population. It is estimated that 50% of Ecuador's 7 million inhabitants are Indian. The thirteen Indian nations in Ecuador are in three distinct regions: the Andean region (Quichua), the Pacific coast region, and the Amazon jungle region. The

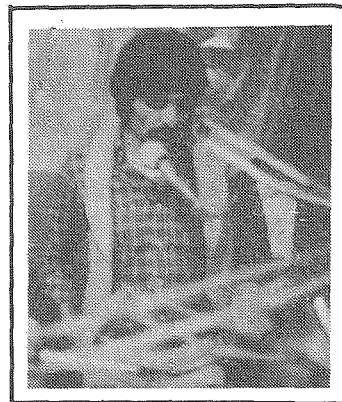


Photo: S. Lobo

Alvaro Vasquez speaking on SAIIC's radio show.

Federation of Shuar Centers (Federacion de Centros Shuar, Apartado 4122, Quito, Ecuador) in the jungle area bordering on Peru, was founded in the early 1960's and is the oldest Indian organization of this type in South America.



One of the most severe problems for Indian people in Ecuador during the last decade has been the invasion of their land by large multinational corporations such as Ecuamina, Shell and Texaco, that are seeking to exploit natural resources. For example, on the Pacific coast, large lumber companies continue indiscriminant logging operations. On the eastern side of the Andes, drilling for petroleum and the discarding of waste chemicals and other materials in the rivers has caused extensive contamination of the rivers and soil. Many Indian communities are affected by these practices as their water becomes unpotable and fish, a major food supply, are killed. Also new illnesses have been on the rise. For example, between the coastal and mountain region where the Chachi Indians live, mosquitos now carry an illness that causes blindness.

Often these mining, petroleum, and logging companies are backed by the Ecuadorean government with complicity of other organizations such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The SIL was officially banned from Ecuador in 1982 through a decree written by the late president Jaime Roldos. Roldos died in an airplane explosion which some believe was planned by the CIA due to his anti-imperialist politics. Following his death, Roldos' successor did not implement the SIL decree, stating that there was still a contract between SIL and the Ecuadorean government.

Last February, the conservative Leon Febres Cordero won the presidential election. Although the majority in Congress opposes the government's plans, they continue to back the transnationals and the SIL in Ecuador.

Shortly after the new president was sworn in, he established the National Office of Indigenous Peoples (Direccion Nacional de Poblaciones Indigenas, DNPI) with the stated goals of "defending Indian people, creating appropriate legislation, and initiating programs and projects for Indian organization and development."

In response, the Indian people, through organizations such as CONACNIE (Consejo Nacional de Coordinacion de las Nacionalidades Indigenas de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana), wrote a document on June 5, 1985 rejecting the creation of DNPI as an organization with the implicit intent of manipulating Indian people. They also accuse the government of pretending to create organizations parallel to the existing Indian organizations by appointing "Indian puppets," and of failing to effectively deal with any of the problems thus far brought before the agency by Indian organizations. The document continues that while the government makes false promises to Indians, it also "gives foreign interests our natural resources including lumber, minerals, agroindustry, and petroleum." The document was signed by Manual Imbaquingo (CONACNIE), Bolivar Tapuy (CONFENIAE), and Ampam Karakras (Shuar Federation).