

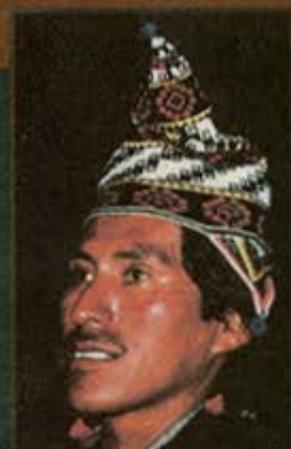
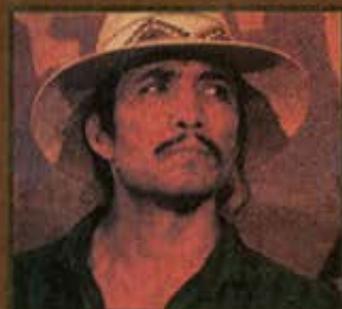
# ABYA YALA NEWS



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## II Continental Encounter of Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and Organizations

Human Genome Diversity Project:  
Indigenous Genes for Sale

Interview with Mauricia Castro, President of FETRIXI





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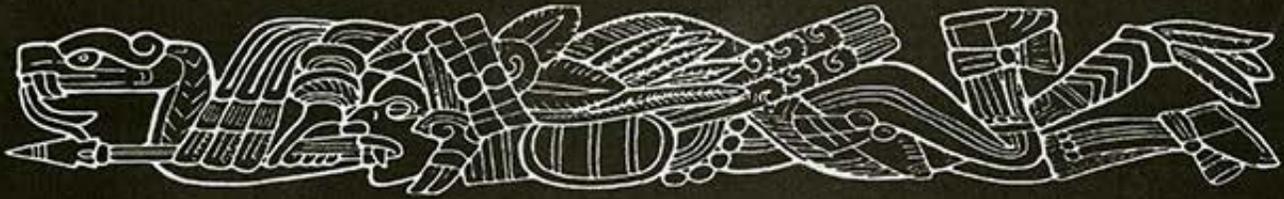
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The year 1993 (Gregorian year) is behind us. In different ways and for different reasons, great expectations were created because it was said that this year would be beneficial for Indigenous people.

In the first place, the United Nations declared 1993 the "Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples". The year was conceived to provide a platform so that consciousness, sensibility, and human rights to favor Indigenous Peoples would be created throughout the world.

Nation-states reacted positively to this call, but concrete repairs to oppression and discrimination have seldom benefited our peoples. In truth, we can affirm that no significant fact of historic reparation is concrete. If this would be true, there would have been some advances in Indigenous legislation, commitments to establish dialogues, and further respect for ecological conservation and economic implementation on Indigenous Territories.

The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, after sponsoring decades of environmental destruction, accompanied by genocide and ethnocide, have only recently decided to invite Indigenous representatives in recent dialogues. These banks have offered some economic support and technical assistance but there is no guarantee that they will stop funding destructive projects on Indian areas. The United Nations Development Program promised to support projects and defend our notion of biodiversity and intellectual rights of Indigenous peoples' knowledge.

Indeed, all of these can be considered positive. However, there is no guarantee that these agreements, proposals, and projects will be implemented under conditions of equality and mutual respect, i.e. with the full participation of Indigenous peoples in the decision making or implementation process. There is also no guarantee that Indigenous Territories and natural resources within those territories will be respected.

The Indigenous Fund, created by the governments of Bolivia and Mexico has only been ratified by five or six governments even though it has been widely publicized. What is even worse, is the lack of full participation by autonomous organizations in the decision-making process and not one Indigenous women's organization has been invited even though there are many.

Recently, the United Nations has declared the Decade of Indigenous Peoples, from 1994-2004 to help, among other things, to disseminate information (education) regarding Indigenous Peoples. This resolution, however, does not reflect the full participation of the Indigenous Peoples in the activities of the Decade. It seems that, the so-called "New Partnership" that had theoretically begun in 1992 has already ended, for it has not been mentioned anywhere.

Despite current processes of democratization in Latin America, massacres, repression, assassinations of Indigenous representatives, and endless waiting for territorial demarcation bylaws, continued to the end of the Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. We must print for the record, the massacre of the Yanomami in Brazil, the Ashaninka massacre in the Peruvian Amazon, the assassination of a Macuxi leader in Brazil and several Indigenous peoples of the 22 cultures found in Guatemala. Assassinations have also taken place in Colombia and repression in Ecuador and Panama does not escape our concern. In Chile, 144 Mapuche people were imprisoned and continue to be prosecuted. Similarly, when it comes to Territorial Demarcation, we must point out the Macuxi (Brazil) of the Area Raposa-Serra do Sol and the military strategies used to intimidate them, as well as, the recent mobilization of 125 Mocovi Indigenous communities against the "Law of Indigenous Communities" approved by the governor of Santa Fe, Argentina. The list of countries that have violated, intimidated and refuted the rights of Indigenous peoples continues to grow. All this demonstrates that, in practice, there continues to be violations and denial of ancestral Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The publicized World Conference on Human Rights of the United Nations in Vienna (1993), had no significant attainments.

It is important to emphasize, as a positive outcome of this continuous continental and world struggle of Indigenous Peoples, that we have advanced nationally, regionally, continentally, and globally. The Second Continental Encounter of Indigenous Peoples organized by CONIC, the "Coordinadora de Naciones, Pueblos y Organizaciones Indigenas del Continente", last October, marked a historical milestone in the consolidation of continental unity, organization, self-criticism, and a propositional political position.

The hopes and yearning for a true year of justice, peace, and harmony for our people is the wish of the entire Continental Indigenous Community. With these goals in mind, we are building community, looking to the future, and taking firm steps to voice our continental demands.

Peace, Justice, and Harmony with Mother Earth  
SAIIC Board of Directors



# II CONTINENTAL ENCOUNTER OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, NATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

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## CONIC

**W**ith the participation of more than 300 Indigenous delegates, supporters, and observers, the II Continental Encounter of Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and Organizations took place at the Otomí Ceremonial Center of the Ñathó Ñahñu people, in Temoaya, Mexico, from the 8th through the 13th of October. The Encounter was organized by the Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Nations and Organizations of the Continent (CONIC). This Encounter was a follow up to the First Continental Encounter of Indigenous Peoples, which took place in Quito, Ecuador in July of 1990. Its goal was to consolidate an autonomous and unified Indigenous movement throughout the Abya Yala continent.

A Provisional Council, responsible for putting together the Third Encounter that will take place in Guatemala between the months of September and November of 1994, was formed. During the Third Continental Encounter, CONIC will be formally constituted and regional workshops will be organized around the various issues that Indigenous Peoples are faced with. The first meeting of the Provisional Council will take place in Bolivia in February 1994, organized by the Coordinadora de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia.

The following are members of the Provisional Council: Consejo de Todas las Tierras (Mapuche, Chile); Coordinadora de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia; Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador-

CONAIE; Consejo de Organizaciones Mayas de Guatemala; Kunas Unidos por Napguana Panama); Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios, Mexico and Consejo Indígena de Guerrero, Mexico, TONATIERRA and SAIIC of USA.

### CONIC Declaration of Temoaya, 1993

501 years after the European invasion, the Peoples and Original Nations of Abya Yala gather together. Their song has caused the heart of the Earth to vibrate, given strength to our voices and illuminated our thoughts, strengthening the warmth of the sacred fire.



Thus, every morning, we greeted our Father Sun and welcomed the new day. His energy has united us and given us strength to progress in our work. We conclude five days of work towards agreements and consensus of dialogues and debate. With pain and with hope, with joy and with anger, we have reached the following agreements and conclusions for the future:

### I. Spirituality and Tradition

The spirituality of our cultures and the many traditional forms in which that spirituality is expressed, are the deep essence of our identity. The Great Spirit that shelters all of Abya Yala unites us, protects us, and offers us the means to bridge our differences with mutual respect. We conclude that a basic condition for maintaining the spirituality and traditions of our Peoples is the recovery of our territories and the healing and renewal of our Sacred Mother Earth, returning her green cover and nourishing her with organic life rather than with the chemicals that poison and profane her.

We agree that it is vital to foster, develop, and strengthen the roots of our identity; therefore it is of fundamental importance to work for the recovery of our own forms of living with and relating to our Father Sun, our Mother Earth, our Grandfather Fire, and our Grandmother Moon

We demand of the Nation-States the recognition of our religious practices and our use of traditional and ceremonial medicines, as well as the decriminalization of

coca, peyote, mushrooms and other plants of sacred and healing value...

### II. Mother Earth, Territory, and Harmonious Development

One of the principle agreements reached at the Earth Summit that took place in Brazil in 1992, was the warning call that united all of

the countries and social sectors of the world in face of the great dangers that confront our Planet. In addition, full recognition was given to the sustainable and sustaining technologies that have been practiced by the Original Nations for thousands of years. For our Peoples, ecology is not a fashion statement nor a recent development. This is the way our elders taught us:

"If you are going to cut down some trees in order to plant the seeds of your nourishment, you need to ask permission of the spirits of the forest and study the cycles of renewal in order to help regenerate what you have altered. You must ask permission and give offerings to the Earth Mother before opening any wounds in her body with the sharpened steel of your tools. You must study the agricultural calendar for the well-being of the other living beings who accompany you in this life.

In order to eliminate the root of the plunder and genocide suffered by our Peoples, it is necessary to undertake a profound territorial reorganization at a continental level that has as its objective the redefinition and the recognition of autonomous territories.

As Original Peoples, we denounce the neoliberal economic model which continues to generate more poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation. We are convinced of the need to establish alliances with the different sectors of society in order to join our efforts and work together towards the creation of alternative economic models which will not be based upon consumption and continuing ecological degradation.

### Resolutions

A) With the purpose of promoting a harmonious, sustainable, and community-based development, we strongly denounce and oppose GATT and NAFTA for the following reasons:

- 1) Their adverse impact on Nature.
- 2) Their exploitation of the Indigenous work force.
- 3) Their violation of Indigenous intellectual property rights with respect to Indigenous flora and fauna.



*Dagoberto Rojas, representative of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras addressing the plenary*

photo by SAIC

- 4) Their adverse impact on Self-Determination and Indigenous rights.
- 5) Their elimination of small-scale agriculture in favor of multi-national agribusiness.
- 6) Their potential for allowing the exploitation of child labor.
- 7) The lack of access our children have to the basic education that would allow them to compete internationally.

We protest and express our consternation and dismay at the proposal to collect human genes on the part of Project Human Genome Diversity Project. (see article, page 12) We demand that the HGD Project cease and desist in its attempt to collect human genes from Indigenous peoples, and that the United States government withdraw its application to patent the genes of a Guaymi woman, and any other similar applications. We also demand that GATT not approve any Agreement about the Patenting of Human Genes or other forms of life.

### III. Self-Determination, Legislation, and Indigenous Rights

The First Continental Encounter in Quito in 1990 constitutes a significant reference point in the actual struggles waged by the Original Peoples of Abya Yala. In that occasion, we produced the Quito Declaration which in 1993 is still very relevant. We said: "We are now fully aware that our definitive liberation CAN ONLY BE EXPRESSED BY MEANS OF

THE FULL EXERCISE OF OUR SELF-DETERMINATION." This self-determination must "...be expressed as full recognition. TO OUR OWN INDIGENOUS SELF-GOVERNMENT AND CONTROL OF OUR OWN TERRITORIES." In order to make real this objective, we maintained: "IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE A COMPLETE AND THOROUGH TRANSFORMATION OF THE STATE AND NATIONAL SOCIETY.

We ratify the understanding of ourselves as Peoples, as the Original Peoples and First Inhabitants of this continent. We re vindicate our right to be recognized as such by the international community, and the United Nations.

The opposition of the national States to the acknowledgment of our rights has its principal origin in the very configuration of the Nation-States, which by their very nature exclude our Peoples. It is not enough for them to declare themselves "multi-cultural" or "multi-ethnic", as these declarations do not modify them in the least. It is necessary to BUILD MULTINATIONAL STATES that will recognize the coexistence of multiple Peoples within one State.

CONIC needs to work towards guaranteeing the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the different meetings that the UN carries out in regard to our rights and request that it consider a proposal to re-structure itself in order to include Indigenous Nations as full members.



#### IV. Women, Family and Community

From remote times, our Peoples established the family as the basic unit of social organization. The roles of men and women, of youth and elders, were different in their functions, but equal in their importance. The historic situation of our peoples has laid a great burden of responsibilities on women, but thanks to our strength and conviction much of our traditions and customs were kept alive. Women play an important role as a principle leaders and counselors with spirituality being the source of our strength. The world view of Indigenous women is not one which divides and separates, but is instead a holistic one.

The importance of the role of women in the continuity of our culture was highlighted. The need to educate our children within the family, in our own culture and mother tongue was insisted upon. It is recommended that we build even closer relationships with our children, in order to transmit our spiritual strength to them and prevent alienation and distancing from their original cultures. To this end, it is considered important that in the forthcoming year of 1994, which has been declared by the United Nations as the "Year of the Family", funds be channeled specifically for the purpose of strengthening Indigenous families. We need to promote women's organizations in coordination with family and community.

#### V. Education, Culture and Youth

We consider it necessary to promote the establishment of an educational system in accordance with the philosophy and world view of our Peoples. The formation of one's iden-

determination. However, there have also been aggressions against our people as the voracious neoliberal appetite for our territories and resources continues.

We must make an effort to de-colonize ourselves, to recover our capacity to be indignant over any attack and any injustice com-

mitted against a fellow People. We need to establish more effective lines of communication between the continental Indigenous movement and the grassroots communities and organizations. We also need to be more effective in the handling of national and international laws.

Another of the advances which we have achieved in the last three years as CONIC is the relationship that has grown between the organizations of the North and the South of the continent. This brings us much joy because it also signifies the fulfillment of a prophecy of our ancestors, the re-encounter of the Eagle and the Condor. We are thus

creating the basis for a true continental Indigenous unity.

To this end, we must highlight that this II Encounter has had as a distinctive sign the permanent spiritual presence that accompanied us during all of the days of the Encounter. The presence of many grandparents, elders, and spiritual guides made it possible for us to have great energies to dedicate to our work, and contributed to the successful completion of our task...

A complete Report of the Second Encounter will be published in the next Couple months. If you wish to receive a copy of the Report you can write to SAIIC, also to : TONATIERRA. P O Box 24009. Phoenix, AZ 85074. USA.

#### Letter to the United Nations

To the UN Secretary General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali

We, the members of CONIC are writing to express the following:

At the opening ceremony of the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, at the UN in New York, CONIC made an effort to invite 23 Indigenous delegates from all over the world, in order to support the UN initiative in declaring 1993 the Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. During the inauguration, government representatives and UN officials expressed their desire for a new partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

Today, ten months later, this new relationship has not yet materialized, regarding participation and dialogue. For this reason, we are requesting to have a meeting between CONIC members and other Indigenous Peoples of the world with the UN...

Written at the Otomi Ceremonial Center, Temoaya, October 12 1993.

ity is a fundamental part of children's and young people's educational process. That identity begins at home, but it must be reinforced and strengthened at school.

#### VI. Organization — CONIC

One of the most important achievements of these three years that have transpired since the First Continental Encounter in Quito in 1990, is the consolidation of the Indigenous struggles in each of our countries.

Currently, the international community has begun to recognize the just nature of our claims, and we can affirm that we have gained important allies in support of our right to self-

## INDIGENOUS TRIUMPH IN BRAZILIAN COURTS

In a historic decision of the Brazilian Federal Court of Appeals, timber exploitation in the Indigenous areas of the Araweté, Apyterewa and Trincherá Bacaja, in the Southern part of the state of Pará, has been strictly prohibited.

The Court upheld the appeal made by the Indigenous Rights Core (NDI), a Brazilian NGO, against the timber companies Parachi, Maginco and Impar. These companies were illegally extracting mahogany from those regions.

The three indigenous areas are contiguous and are found in one of the richest areas in mahogany wood of the states of Pará and of Amazonas. 61% of the mahogany exported by Brazil comes from 80% of the Indigenous areas. Despite this, the Court has permitted Parachi to temporarily maintain a contingent of employees in a small part of the Apyterewa Reserve, where Parachi claims to have property titles.

The NDI is currently preparing for the next battle against the lumber companies in the Supreme Court of Brazil, which is likely to be less sensitive toward Indigenous and environmental topics.

In other news, an NDI lawsuit against a Mato Grosso logger recently came before the courts yielding positive results for the Hahaintesu peoples of Guapore Valley in the western part of the state. On September 6, 1993, Judge Maria Divina Vitoria found Anilton Antonio Pompermayer guilty of illegal extraction of mahogany in the Hahaintesu Reserve. The logger will pay over US\$ 200,000 for the extraction of 1,800 cubic meters of wood from the reserve. This is the second guilty verdict for illegal logging in the state of Mato Grosso.

International public opinion will play an important role in pressuring the Brazilian state to uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples and the environment. We urge you to send letters in recognition of these decisions to:

Exlma. Sra. Juíza Maria Divina Vitoria  
Digníssima Juíza Substituta da sexta  
Vara Federal no Distrito Federal  
Justica Federal de Primera Instancia  
Setor de Autarquias Sul.  
Quadra 4, Bloco D, Lote 7  
Brasilia D.F. 7007-000, Brasil  
Fax: (55) 61 225-7116

Exlma. Sra. Juíza Eliana Calmon  
Digníssima Presidente da Quarta Turma  
do Tribunal Regional Federal da 1ª Região  
585 Quadra 2, Edifício Aura 4º Andar  
Brasilia D.F. 70070-100, Brazil

## RADIOACTIVE WASTE BURIED IN BRAZILIAN AMAZON

According to reports from Movimento de Apoio à Resistência dos Waimiri/Atroari (MAREWA), the Paranapanema Mining Co. is responsible for the burial of five thousand tons of radioactive waste in the Pitinga River area of Amazonas, directly affecting the residents of Presidente Figueredo and the Waimiri Atroari Reserve. State and local authorities have taken no action on this matter and the local population has yet to be informed about the content and danger of the loads.

Since the mid-eighties, rumors about the presence of radioactive waste have circulated in Pitinga, recounting symptoms such as the loss of teeth, general weakness, unexplained respiratory diseases, loss of hair, and leukemia. Even though Taboca Mining Co., another firm working in the region, has verified the presence of radioactive materials since the early eighties, the company has always been

shielded by federal, state, and local governments.

The residents of Presidente Figueredo request international support in their demands that the Amazonas state government and FUNAI hold Paranapanema and the other mining companies in the region, accountable for seriously threatening the health of the people and the environment.

For more information, please contact:  
Movimiento de Apoio à Resistência  
dos Waimiri/Atroari (MAREWA)  
Presidente Figueredo, Brazil

Source: Cultural Survival, Summer 1993

## STRUGGLE IN ARGENTINA:

# WICHI HUNGER STRIKE FOR LAND RIGHTS

**O**n September 16, 1993 a delegation headed by Octorina Zamora, president of the Wichi Ka Puce Hi Cooperative launched a week long hunger strike to protest their lack of participation in a government Land Commission relegated to partition lands in Argentina. This is the second hunger strike initiated by the Wichi community of lot 55 since last year. The territory in question spans 15,000 hectares and is located within the vast terrain of the San Martin de Tabacal sugar plantation.

After a week of protests, President Carlos Menem stated he would meet with the Wichi representatives in one month. However, due to the public pressure that ensued, the President agreed to a sooner date. He also assured the protesters that he would speed up the legal process for the proposal of land adjudication which has been approved by Congress but has remained shelved for a year. The Wichi also requested that the Governor "mediate a dialogue between the criollos (non-Indigenous) and Indigenous communities so that the appropriation of land could be done without conflict."

The Wichi, Iyojwaja, Nivacle and Kom Lec Nations have been fighting for rightful ownership since 1946; the first year they came to the nation's Capital to reclaim land titles.

source: Agencia el Tribuno, Buenos Aires

## WAVE OF GUARANI SUICIDES CONTINUES

**A**ccording to the Indianist Missionary Council (CIMI), sixteen Guarani Indians have committed suicide this year, continuing the cycle of deaths in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, in the Center-West region of Brazil (22 suicides were reported in 1992 and 17 in 1991). Out of the 16, six were under twenty years of age.

Deprived of their land and unable to live according to their traditional culture, despair and alienation run rampant within the Guarani population. Many communities have been expelled from their territories leading to mass migrations and overpopulation. In the Dourados Indian Area, where most of the suicides have occurred, close to 9,000 people have been forced onto 3,530 hectares. Until land issues are resolved, the sense of helplessness that pervades throughout Indigenous communities will simply worsen.



illustration by Peter Gourfain

## CHILEAN GOVERNMENT OBSTRUCTS MAPUCHE PARTICIPATION IN DECEMBER ELECTIONS

**M**apuche leader Aucan Huilcaman's bid to run for Congress on behalf of Aukin Wallmapu Ngullam (All Lands Council), was denied by the Qualifying Electoral Tribunal. His alleged ineligibility is due to a pending case in which he is accused of unlawful association and "illegal" land take-over.

The case in question was initiated in 1991, after 144 Mapuches occupied lands that are currently claimed by private owners and the Chilean state. The group, under the auspices of Aukin Wallmapu Ngullam, had legal documents that proved their rights to the lands.

The Mapuches have initiated a strong movement throughout the country to protest the decision, which they consider a clear indication of the government's attempts to impede their participation in the next elections. "Because of the clearly



oppressive action taken by the Chilean government, 144 Mapuches find ourselves condemned for reclaiming our legal rights. This is one of many ways that the fundamental rights of the Mapuche are violated, especially where their participation in making decisions that concern the country's future is concerned," stated Huilcaman after learning of the Tribunal's nullification of his campaign.

If the Mapuches are found guilty, the defendants plan to appeal to the Supreme Court, the highest court in Chile's judicial system. If not acquitted, they will take the case to the Inter-American Justice Court in San Jose, Costa Rica.

It is vital that the case be resolved before the presidential elections in December because the new administration could prove to be even less favorable to the Mapuche's struggle.

## AYMARA ELECTED AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF BOLIVIA

**O**n June 7, 1993, Victor Hugo Cardenas, Aymara linguist of the Tupac Catari Revolutionary Movement, was elected to the vice-presidency of Bolivia. Hundreds of people from different Indigenous communities gathered in La Paz to support him on the day of his inauguration. Cardenas's speech, pronounced in Spanish, Aymara, Guarani, and Quechua asserted that the current government would be guided by the four fundamental principles of

the Original Andean peoples: "Ama sua, ama llulla, ama khella, and ama llunk'u" (do not steal, do not be lazy, do not lie, and do not give false praise).

His election has generated great expectations for Indigenous peoples of the Americas who hope Cardenas will further the cause of Bolivia's Indigenous population.

## VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT BLAMES TRANSNATIONALS OF YANOMAMI MASSACRE

**D**uring the last days of August, the massacre of 16 Yanomami at the hands of Brazilian miners, was confirmed to have taken place on Venezuelan territory. The international community accused the Venezuelan government of violating the Rio declaration under which policies of economic development must be sensible and respectful of the ecosystems and communities they affect. However, in recent years, violence against the environment and Indigenous peoples has intensified.

A month after the massacre, Fernando Ochoa Antich, Venezuela's Minister of Foreign Affairs, affirmed during a session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, that the protection of Indigenous peoples was out of the government's control. He went on to directly

accuse the gold and diamond multinational corporations that work in the area of promoting deforestation and the acts of violence against Indigenous communities. According to Ochoa Antich, these corporations build landing strips and supply the miners with machinery and weapons.

The Minister stated that only an open dialogue among the countries of the Amazon region can put an end to this critical situation. He appealed to the mining transnationals to understand that development did not mean destruction and pointed out that as long as poverty and ignorance persisted among large segments of the population in Latin America, violence and environmental destruction would continue.



# WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: FEW REAL ACTIONS TO REDRESS INJURIES

Even though Indigenous rights were a key topic on the agenda of the UN World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna this past June, the results were disappointing as the symbolic attention of the International Year of Indigenous Peoples failed to yield concrete actions.

Hundreds of Indigenous representatives came to the conference with their concerns and demands which they presented to the 179 government delegates and thousands of non-governmental observers.

Aucan Huilcaman, a Mapuche activist representing the Continental Commission of Indigenous Nations (CONIC) was chosen to address the World Conference. Topping the list of recommendations were demands for recognition of territorial rights and the right to self-determination. Huilcaman's speech emphasized Indigenous peoples' right to administer their legally recognized territory and to choose and implement a development policy according to their own cultural beliefs and values. In addition, the statement called for states to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Covenant 169.

Also called for by the Indigenous representatives was the recognition of Indigenous groups as distinct "peoples" rather than "people" who are considered minorities within a national population. The cultural continuity



photo SAIC

*Aucan Huilcaman addresses representatives and thousands of observers in Vienna*

and historic claim to the land distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other minorities. The addition of the "s" which aims to emphasize Indigenous collective rights proved to be a point of controversy at the conference as many member governments fear that Indigenous groups will interpret and use these rights to establish independent states.

Indigenous activists submitted a recommended text for the final declaration urging that "Indigenous peoples be recognized with inherent, distinctive, collective rights, including the right to self-determination, self government and autonomy." However, the Vienna Declaration on human rights contains only one half page devoted to "indigenous people" in which the issues mentioned above are not considered.

Among the few points made by the World Conference is the recommendation that "advisory services and technical assistance programs within the UN system respond positively to requests by states for assistance

which would be of direct benefit to indigenous people." The conference also "urges states to ensure the full participation of indigenous people in all aspects of society..." Another key recommendation calls for the establishment of an International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, to begin from January 1994, and the creation of a Voluntary Trust Fund for this purpose. Finally, the establishment of a permanent forum for Indigenous peoples at the UN is to be considered.

Although Indigenous issues have gained international prominence in the course of 1993, the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, there has been much frustration about the lack of real changes in the interactions between nation-states and Indigenous nations. The recommendations adopted in the Vienna Declaration represent, at best, a weak version of the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that does not address the fundamental rights to autonomy and self-determination.



photo: SAIC

*Hundreds of Indigenous people and supporters gather at the UN for the opening Year Indigenous Peoples, Dec. 1992*

## UNITED NATIONS DECLARES A DECADE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

**D**uring the United Nations World Conference of Human Rights that took place in Vienna last June, many Indigenous Organizations including CONIC, proposed to the Conference to declare a UN Decade of Indigenous Peoples. Nobel laureate, Rigoberta Menchu had also proposed the Decade in her speech.

The General Assembly of the United Nations on its forty eighth session approved the "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

The Decade was proposed by the Australian Government and seconded by the governments of Canada, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, El Salvador, Grenada, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Marshall Islands, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Peru, Dominican Republic, Surinam and Trinidad and Tobago.

Several Indigenous representatives lobbied the government delegates trying to get support for the Decade. Rigoberta Menchu addressed the General Assembly of the UN. Atencio Lopez of the United Kunas for Napguana was representing CONIC, also Alejandro Argumedo, Quechua from Peru and Board member of SAIC was present.

One of the Considerations of the Resolutions read: "Recalling its resolution proclaiming 1993 as the Year of the World's Indigenous People, with a view to strengthening international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by Indigenous People in the areas of, human rights, the environment, development, education and health..."

Proclaims: The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, starting on December 10 of 1994, and reserving the period between January 1st and December 9th for Planning the Decade..."

The United Nations also suggested that before and during the sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations that will take place in Geneva from July 25th to the 29th, 1994, Indigenous representatives would be consulted in order to plan the activities of the Decade.

The United Nations has established a Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations to provide financial assistance to representatives of Indigenous communities and organizations in order to enable them to participate in the meeting of the Working Group. In 1993 over 30 participants were supported by the Fund.

Further information and application forms can be obtained by writing to:

Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations  
United Nations, Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland

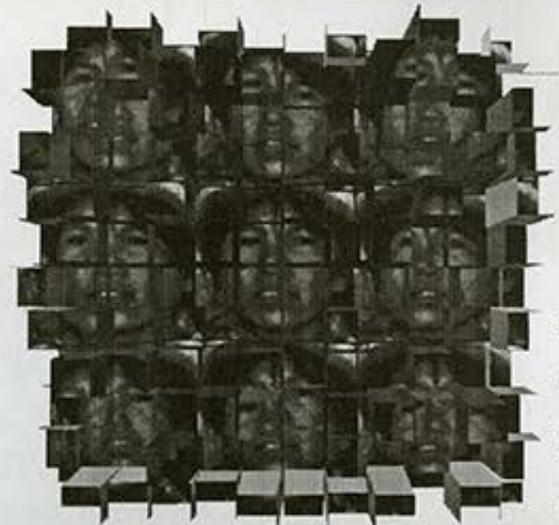


photo Alfonso Jaramillo

## GENE GENIE AND SCIENCE'S THIRST FOR INFORMATION WITH INDIGENOUS BLOOD

DANIELA SPIWAK

*"To take human DNA and patent its products, that violates the integrity of life itself, and our deepest sense of morality."  
Isidro Acosta, President of the Guaymi General Congress.*

*"When a foreign government comes into a country, takes blood without explaining the real implications to local peoples, and then tries to patent and profit from the cell line, that's wrong."*

*Pat Mooney, RAFI Executive Director.*

If you haven't heard about scientific endeavors relating to the Human Genome, you soon will. As we plunge deeper into the decade, the bedfellows, biotechnology and science, are having a direct impact upon Indigenous communities with overriding repercussions for humanity at large. In the previous *Abya Yala News* journal, we provided a sketch of the Human Genome Diversity Project. Since then, much more information has been made available and patents applications on Native peoples' cell lines have been revealed. The following article hopes to elucidate the various components and implications associated with the Human Genome Diversity Project, highlighting its impacts on Indigenous Peoples around the world and course of action taken thus far.

While the potential benefits should not be underestimated, all of the related issues, from

the method of execution to the exclusion of Native representatives in project discussions,

Human Genome = 100,000 genes, containing an individual's hereditary information, found in all the cells of a human being.

Human Genome Organization-HUGO (based in London) Financial arm of Genome research: Walter Börlmer, President Charles Cantor, VP

Human Genome Diversity Project (HGD Project) - Proposal to collect and study genetic structure of various ethnic groups. A loose international consortium of universities and scientists that aim to gather blood, hair and mouth samples of targeted populations considered to be on the "verge" of extinction. Indigenous groups referred to as "Isolates of Historic Interest." Primary Project Initiator: Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Professor Emeritus of Genetics at Stanford.

are being seriously questioned by Indigenous organizations and support groups internation-

ally. From financial compensation to the potential for biological warfare, it is essential that all foreseeable consequences and implications associated with the HGD Project be taken into account before further damage occurs.

### BACKGROUND

Guided by the premise that the genetic composition of different ethnic groups may vary slightly, the project organizers aspire to gain a better understanding of why diseases vary so much in their geographic distribution and from there, try to find out if such variation is caused by human adaptation to local environments or changes in genetic make-up (5). Through these findings, it is hoped that new methods of dealing with

fatal diseases, i.e. cancer, AIDS, etc. will be developed.

## METHOD

Through RAFI's research, it is known that 722 groups have been targeted for sample collection. The following outline provides a brief overview of the sampling and lab research process:

1. Collect blood, hair and mouth scrapings from selected population
2. Once gathered, samples rushed to lab (within 48 hours time) where white blood cells are to be "immortalized"
  - a) white blood cells are cultured in the lab then frozen in liquid nitrogen. Each cell contains a complete set of genetic DNA. This process allows the information in the genes to be preserved indefinitely for future study.
3. Once in this form, cells are turned into cell lines (continuously dividing cells that can provide a theoretically infinite supply of genetic material).
4. DNA to be deposited and stored in several "banks" around the world. The deposited material will be available for further research. Results from research can then be patented.

## CAUSE FOR CONCERN

The fact that Indigenous representatives and organizations have not been consulted or included in the planning process thus far, illustrates the paternalistic way in which the project is being conducted. Issues relating to patents, diversion of funds, access to gathered information and the potential threat of biological warfare have yet to be addressed satisfactorily by project organizers.

### I. OWNERSHIP AND PATENTS

It is a fact that some products and processes related to extracted material will have substantial commercial value. Once a patent on material extracted from a human

cell line has been approved how will compensation be determined? What systems are in place for assuring that Indigenous peoples will be appropriately compensated on all commercial gains? To date, these questions have not been answered.

Human Genome Project-U.S. (There is also Medical Research Council (MRC), Human Genome Mapping Project in London) A \$3 billion effort which began in 1988 with the goal of mapping each of the 100,000 genes found within chromosomes and sequencing the entire stretch of human DNA by the year 2005. Funded by the U.S. National Institute of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

#### Players:

1. American Type Culture Collection, Rockville MD. Holding point for all types of collection; 60,000 rare materials from yeast to human cells and plant viruses (3). Legal deposit for living material by U.S. Patent and Trademarks office.
2. Private biotechnology companies
3. Various universities including: UCLA, UC Berkeley, Stanford, Yale

In terms of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the United States is doing everything it can to make patenting of all forms of life a legal part of the trade agreement. If passed as an international mandate, how will Indigenous people be able to hold governments, institutions, corporations accountable when such accountability will be regarded as a "barrier to free trade?"

### II. STORAGE FACILITIES A WORLD BANK OF 'DNA'

The idea is to create various "world banks" of DNA around the globe that would include both regional and national storage facilities and be accessible to government agencies, corporations, foundations, and interested researchers. In other words, the information will be made available to anyone who shows interest, includ-

ing the institutions that have waged an unbridled war of oppression and genocide against Native peoples for the past 500 years.

### III. BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

In the context of genocide, marginalization, denial of traditional culture practices, who is to say a government, with a history of aggression toward Native populations and, in most of the cases, responsible for their physical demise, will not take the readily accessible information and use it to eradicate an "intransigent" group of people? There are sympathetic geneticists who feel that the feasibility of producing targeted ethnic biological warfare makes the possibility a long shot, but not out of the question. Where are the controls?

### IV. DIVERSION OF FUNDS

The exorbitant amount of money necessary to implement the project could be used to improve the present squalor that many of the targeted groups live in. In other words, the money could be spent on helping the groups that are facing "extinction" to overcome the various forces that have placed them in this critical predicament so that they can lead healthy, productive and self-directed lives now, rather than being recreated and "immortalized" in laboratories for future science projects.

### THE GUAYMI PATENT, A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE GONE AWRY WORST FEARS COME TRUE

Despite the efforts of HGD Project organizers to make it appear benign, equitable and absolutely necessary, the recent patent claim application on the cell line of a 26 year old Guayami woman from Panama, by U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Ron



Brown, illustrates the underlying dangers and potential for the project to get out of control. Collected under dubious circumstances, the woman's cell line is being stored at the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC). Inquiries made by Isidro Acosta, President of the Guayami General Congress, and Pat Mooney, Executive Director of RAFI, about the cell line being repatriated to the Guayami people, have been met with ambiguous responses and little action. Thus, the cell line remains in the hands of the United States government and the ATCC against the wishes of the original "owner."

On a broader level, if the U.S. government manages to make the patenting of human material legal under GATT, disputing a patent claim and repatriation would become that much more difficult. To make matters worse, there are reports of other possible patent claims on Navajo cell lines as well as prodigious cell line collection going on in Colombia. (6)

Along with the Guayami community, Indigenous peoples and organizations as well as a growing number of concerned scientists are verbalizing their outrage. There have been various resolutions denouncing the HGD Project by First Nations. The Mataatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples in June, 1993, stated the following:

Call for an immediate halt to the ongoing 'Human Genome Diversity Project' until its moral, ethical, socio-economic, physical and political implications have been thoroughly discussed, understood and approved by Indigenous peoples.

At the recent Second Continental Encounter of Indigenous Nations, Organizations and Peoples (CONIC), representing over 2,500 communities and organizations throughout the Abya Yala continent, issued a resolution denouncing genome research and the Guayami patent claim. As information about the project reaches Native communities, opposition until

fused and anonymous makes monitoring even more difficult. The challenge, then, is to make sure that research of this nature stays transparent and accountable.

However grave the situation may seem, positive and effective action can be taken by individuals. International pressure demanding that all types of related genetic research be conducted with clear, structured and direct involvement of Indigenous organizations so that they are an integral part of the decision-making process, is vital. As the possibility for "a small number of corporations, universities, and governments owning life's genetic code," (7) turns into reality, the time to mobilize is now!

**Cost and Funding:**  
 I. HGD Project: Initial five-year effort is expected to cost between \$23 and 35 million dollars. Expected to sample from 10,000 - 15,000 human specimens. Average total cost per sample ranges from \$500 to as high as \$2300. (4)  
 Currently seeking funding sources from government agencies and private foundations, funding will most likely come from the National Science Foundation. Hope is to obtain some of the money granted to the Human Genome Project.  
 II. Human Genome Project: Expected total cost \$3 billion. 10 times the grant money usually allotted for scientific research. Funding from the NIH and DOE.

Indigenous organizations are properly consulted, informed, and directly involved, has been the resounding response.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

Find out who is doing research in your area and how it is being monitored. Urge that Indigenous organizations be consulted, informed, and involved during every phase of the project. For more information contact Professor Henry Greely, Head of the North American Ethics Committee at the following address:

**CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION**

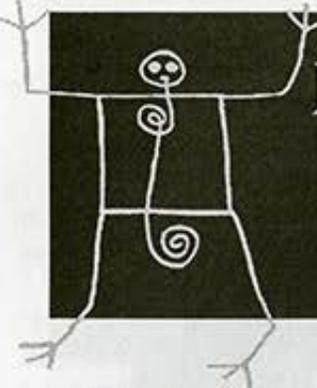
At this point, the HGD Project has not received the substantial funding it requires to be carried out and therefore has the potential of being stopped. However, before breathing easier, it is important to take a look beyond the immediate situation. If the HGD Project does not materialize in its grandiose form, the possibility of genome research becoming dif-

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# FREE TRADE'S ASSAULT ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

BY KRISTINA EGAN

*Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), "Indigenous people are displaced and become environmental and economic refugees in their own land."*

Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network

The specter of NAFTA no longer hovers over America, it has materialized. The high-flying rhetoric of the Clinton Administration will now translate into very real and frightening environmental destruction and labor injustice. Despite the attention these issues received in the polemical tumult NAFTA inspired, one important story went unreported in the mainstream media: NAFTA's ambush on Indigenous rights.

NAFTA's central premise that government regulations interfere with free trade allows democratically created laws to be considered trade barriers, and thus made inoperative. NAFTA sets up an independent tribunal closed to public participation. The tribunal decides if a native, state, or federal law offends free trade without any criteria for evaluating whether the trade would offend the public. Such unaccountability in a tribunal has broad implications for the Native Peoples of North and Meso America.

In the United States and Canada, Native Americans live on traditional lands endowed with forty percent of all known energy sources for each country, according to the Indian Treaty Rights Committee of Chicago. These traditional lands fall into two categories, reservation lands and private property. In both cases, government laws have served to somewhat protect Native American decisions regarding the use or sale of traditional lands. However, in Mexico, Indigenous peoples also living on economically valuable land enjoy significantly less legal protection. President Salinas recently abolished even the meager Mexican laws safeguarding ancient land rights.

The resource-rich Native homelands will be targeted by corporations as hot spots for development. Without doubt, all Mexican traditional lands will be up for grabs. Speculators in Chiapas already forced some Mayas off lands in anticipation of NAFTA's approval!

The future of Canadian and U.S. Indigenous groups is also uncertain. With NAFTA approved by Congress, laws that protect the rights of Native Americans to live on and utilize their lands may no longer protect anyone from corporate avidity. Companies will access the best lands, water sources, and natural resources. If the NAFTA tribunal deems a legal protection of ancient land rights a barrier to trade, the law may be struck down. Tribal governments may no longer be able to regulate the sale of lands and, as a result, privatization of land will likely proceed on a massive scale.

Privatization will hasten the conversion of commons into commodities. For example, water will be bought and sold, transferred and traded, without regard to Native claims to such an essential resource. NAFTA encourages projects similar to the James Bay Hydroelectric Project which will send Canadian waters down the Mississippi to consumers in the U.S. and Mexico. The dam has flooded the Cree nation's traditional hunting grounds, decimating caribou populations and forcing relocations and cultural upheaval.

NAFTA, crafted by Bush and 2000 of the largest American corporations, incorporated no Indigenous peoples in the drafting of the agreement. NAFTA includes no provision

for Indigenous lands in Mexico. Even the free-flow spirit of the trade agreement does not extend to communities split by national borders. The border communities of the Mohawk, Salish-Kootenai, Colville-Okanagan, Abenaki, Cocopa, Kamia, O'odham, and Kickapoo will not be reunited despite the massive melding of the three countries' economic agendas.

Various Indigenous organizations have denounced the trade agreement. The Continental Commission of Indigenous Nations, Organizations and Peoples (CONIC), representing 26 various organizations that represent over 2,500 communities, and The American Indian Movement, have both decried such an attack on Native land claims.

The ripples of NAFTA will extend far beyond North and Meso America. The treaty has established the largest free-trade zone in the world, setting an example which threatens to presage a global elimination of democratic laws that protect the land and its peoples. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the international trade decision making body, is scheduled to soon resume its eighth round of trade talks. Many of the issues on the table, like investment and service barriers and Intellectual Property Rights, were resolved under NAFTA. If NAFTA becomes GATT's model, we face a bleak profaning of the Earth's environmental and cultural treasures. Our aching and wearied land can not support such assaults on its Native American caretakers.

Sources: The Circle; Honors Digest



# INDIAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ARMSTRONG WIGGINS

*The author, a Miskito from the Northern Autonomous Region of Nicaragua, is the Coordinator of the Central and South America Project of the Indian Law Resource Center, Washington, D.C.; a non-profit, non-governmental organization that has consultative status with the U.N. Economic and Social Council. This article appears in its full length along with footnotes and annotated bibliography in the Yale Journal of International Law, Winter 1993, Volume 18, Number 1. Reprinted with permission.*



photo by Niels Ole Sørensen

**A**s millions of dollars poured into environmental organizations during the past decade, hundreds of activists headed for Central and South America to save threatened animals and to preserve the rain forests. Some activists arrived with naive and romantic notions about virgin forests. They had failed to accept the fact that the forests were already occupied, used, and "developed" by Indians. The environmentalists soon met and were sometimes confronted by Indian tribes and nations asserting their ownership of the same forests, lands, and resources that the environmentalists sought to protect.

Environmental protection plans drawn up in Washington or in Latin American capitals are greatly complicated by the questions and demands of Indian communities. What role should Indians play in decisions to establish a national park or protected area on lands traditionally Indian? Who owns and who is entitled to make decisions about the valuable land involved in proposed debt-for-nature swaps? How should environmentalists respond to Indian proposals for development initiatives or alternative conservation practices that conflict with their own proposals?

Responsible environmentalists must con-

stantly wrestle with these and related questions in their daily work. There is an urgent need for analysis and reform of the relationship between Indian rights and environmental protection. They have important roles to play in the development of principled laws and democratic policies that will both protect the fragile environment and guarantee the survival and development of Indian peoples in the 1990's and the twenty-first century..

## Rethinking an Old Myth About the Future of Indian Peoples

The first step toward reconciling environmental policies and Indian rights involves facing some long-standing myths about Indian peoples that have shaped current laws and policies. One such myth—sustained by non-Indians for 500 years—is that Indians are disappearing peoples. In an 1898 lecture delivered to law students in Washington, D.C., U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan said of Native Americans:

"(The Indian race) is disappearing and probably within the life time of some that are now hearing me there will be very few in this

country. In a hundred years, you will probably not find one anywhere... It is certain as fate that in the course of time, there will be nobody on this North American continent but Anglo-Saxons. All other races are steadily going to the wall. They are diminishing every year."

This myth has informed the two most infamous Supreme Court decisions in Indian law. One decision upheld the legal authority of Congress unilaterally to abrogate Indian treaties. The other decision declared the plenary power of Congress to impose its laws on Indian tribes and nations. Notwithstanding the sweeping changes that have taken place in civil rights and human rights law over the past decades, neither of these cases has been overruled.

Although not always stated so candidly, the myth that Indians are disappearing peoples underlies policies toward Indians everywhere in the Americas. For example, Mario Vargas Llosa, a prominent Latin American author and 1990 Peruvian presidential candidate articulated a modern viewpoint on the demise of Indians in a 1990 Harper's Magazine cover story. Vargas Llosa did not emphasize the physical disappearance of Indians, but rather

their inevitable assimilation into the dominant, non-Indian culture:

"Perhaps the ideal- that is, the preservation of the primitive culture of America- is a utopia incompatible with this other and more urgent goal- the establishment of societies in which social and economic inequalities among citizens be reduced to human... If forced to choose between the preservation of Indian cultures and their complete assimilation, with great sadness I would chose modernization of the Indian population, because there are priorities; and the first priority is, of course, to fight hunger and misery..."

Although policies toward Indians in the Americas rest at least in part on the view that Indians will die out or assimilate into a superior non-Indian world, the facts stand in stark contrast to the myth of the vanishing Indian. Today thirty million Indians live in the Americas, a number roughly equal to the combined populations of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. In Guatemala and Bolivia, Indians make up the clear majority of the population. Indians are a significant minority population in almost every country in the hemisphere, and in many countries they still maintain a large and resource-rich land base. Indian nations and tribes throughout the Americas are carrying on the historic struggle for their land, resources, self-government, and cultures.

### Indian Land, Indian Resources, and Indian Development

Indian leaders consistently cite Indian land rights as their most vital concern. Without their land base, Indians may be able to survive as individuals in the dominant economy and culture of their non-Indian neighbors, but they will not be able to survive and prosper as distinct peoples with distinct cultures and traditions. Indeed, governments throughout

the Americas, led by Europeans and their descendants, have sought to expropriate, allot, and control Indian land and resources as a means of assimilating Indians. policies such as these make beliefs about the disappearing Indian self-fulfilling prophecies.

New laws and policies must fully recognize how Indians view their land. Although there are differing views among Indian communities, common themes do exist. Indians generally feel a sense of permanence in their land that non-Indians do not share. Non-Indians tend to be very nomadic, to view land as a commodity to buy and sell, and to have ancestral roots on other continents. Generally, Indians hold their land in some form of communal ownership. The idea of private, individual land is historically unknown in Indian communities and is rare even today.

When Indians speak of rights to their territories, they are referring not only to the land, but also to flora, fauna, waters, and mineral resources. Indian cultures and religions celebrate the close interrelationships that people share with animals, plants, and natural resources. The idea of sustainable development is part of the cultural and religious heritage of most Indian peoples. This cultural and religious heritage is very much alive and well today. As recent studies show, the survival of Indian communities and cultures has contributed greatly to the survival of some of the world's most biologically rich environments.

It would be a mistake, however, to take too romantic a view. Indians, like all other humans, utilize and develop their territories: they plow, plant, harvest, and mine the earth and use its resources. Some observers argue that Indians with bulldozers and chainsaws will soon be as destructive to their home environments as non-Indians are to theirs. Some Indians have already permitted toxic waste dumping, storage of nuclear waste, and other environmentally dangerous practices on their lands, while others are hotly debating whether to do so.

Nevertheless, those Indians willing to sacrifice their homelands are the exception. Most Indian communities have maintained their cultures, homelands, and resources by resisting outside forces that have attempted for centuries to destroy or purchase them. The Indian regions on maps of Central America have remained green not because non-Indians left the Indians alone, but rather because Indians successfully fought to keep the regions green.

### Indians and Environmentalists

Most environmental organizations are based in North America and Europe. Those organizations that exist in Latin America are based in cities among Ladinos and are often funded by their North American and European counterparts. Indians are on the margins of the organized environmental movement. Although some environmental groups have established good working relations with Indian organizations, most relations between Indians and environmentalists are uncertain and strained. There is even potential for serious conflict.

Like human rights workers, academics, and other non-governmental activists, many environmentalists bring with them the baggage of their own cultures. They have been raised within the framework of laws and policies that have long oppressed Indians. Because the academic and legal communities have not yet given prominent attention to the issue of Indian rights, most environmentalists remain unfamiliar with the history of Indian land disputes. If leading human rights organizations write reports about Guatemala and Bolivia without even mentioning that the Indians of those countries are majority populations subjected to minority rule, it is not surprising that many environmentalists are not sensitive to Indian concerns. For instance, during a 1988 conference between environmentalists and representatives of COICA, the



Illustration by Oswaldo Guayasamin

Amazonian Indian coordinating group, an exchange occurred about debt-for-nature swaps. A COICA leader explained that the debt involved was not Indian debt, while the "nature" involved was Indian land that Indians had not agreed to trade for anything.

Another disturbing trend involves attempts by mineral development corporations, hazardous waste disposal companies, lumber companies, and others to pass out favors in Indian communities to buy support for their projects. Governments have long used this approach. More recently, environmental groups have sought support for their projects through similar steps. By gaining the backing of some members of an Indian community, outsiders can create the appearance that Indians were actually involved in the decision-making process and that the whole Indian community approves. There is danger that these divide-and-conquer tactics will seriously harm Indian communities, undermine legitimate Indian leadership, and generate a backlash against environmental projects that may be seen as manipulative or colonialist.

Nevertheless, some effective alliances have developed to promote both environmental protection and Indian rights. In Brazil, the Yanomami lost nearly one-fifth of their population when gold-miners invaded and poisoned their lands in the late 80's. In the late 1970's, the Indian Law Research Center filed a human rights complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights demanding legal demarcation of the Yanomami terri-

tory and expulsion of outsiders. Environmental and human rights groups joined with Indian groups to place effective and overwhelming pressure on Brazil's President to expel the miners and demarcate 22.5 million acres of ancestral Yanomami land in 1991. The demarcation process has now begun. A number of non governmental organizations have agreed to monitor implementation of Brazil's new Indian laws and policies. [Significant changes have taken place regarding this matter. See article pg. 23]

On Nicaragua's Miskito Coast, Miskito communities helped develop a government program to expel resource pirates from a marine and coastal environment rich in turtles, shrimp, lobster, and fish. The project trains Miskitos to manage and police the area themselves. It was initiated not in board rooms in Washington or in government offices in Managua, but in a series of meetings held in Miskito communities along the Coast. Environmental groups have actively and financially supported every phase of this pioneering bottom-up environmental protection project in a Central American Indian area.

### Developing a Sound Legal Framework for Indian Rights and the Environment

Environmentalists and Indians must not merely critique laws and policies to secure the health of Indian communities and their environments. The groups must develop a sound, international legal framework to replace myths and arbitrary government power. Fortunately, the effort to develop a sound international legal framework for Indian rights is well underway. For the past 15 years, Indians have worked within the human rights system of the U.N. to develop Indian rights protections. The U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations, has been meeting for ten years and will soon release the final draft of a proposed declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Within the U.N. human rights system, the issue of Indian rights has moved in one decade from the fringe to the mainstream. The annual Working Group

meetings are now among the most vital and well attended of all U.N. human rights activities. Human rights experts who previously focused exclusively on the rights of individuals now support protection of the group rights of Indian communities.

In 1989, the International Labour Organization (ILO) approved a new convention on the rights of Indigenous peoples requiring Indian participation in all matters concerning development of their land and resources. Also in 1989, the Organization of American States (OAS) began its own law reform to prepare a new judicial instrument to secure the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Indian rights advocates hope that better legal guarantees at the international level will prompt national governments to provide better legal protection for Indian rights. Indians throughout the Americas are fighting for their rights in national courts, national legislative bodies, and constitutional conventions resulting in rapid changes such as Brazil's new constitution which supports Indian rights and the demarcation of Yanomami land.

### Conclusion

The protection of human rights and the environment requires a truly international legal order based on democratic principles. Non-Indians must reject the myths and imperialism that have shaped laws and policies toward Indians in the Americas thus far. Governments must respect democratic decision making with Indian communities and must ensure that relations between Indians and their neighbors are based on agreement rather than on domination. Indians, not outsiders, will best govern Indian land and resources. Although Indian communities, like all others, have difficult decisions to make about their development, if Indians are permitted to chart their own future they will continue to serve not only themselves, but also the global environment. Working together as equals, Indian communities and the rest of the world can share important lessons about how best to provide for all future generations.

## OIL COMPANIES TAKE OVER THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON



photo by Niels Ole Sørensen

Decades of petroleum exploitation in the Ecuadorian Amazon have had a devastating impact on the region's environment and its inhabitants. Among the Indigenous communities directly affected, Quichua, Cofan, Siona, Secoya, Huaorani, and more recently, Shuar, Achuar and Shiviari, a growing movement to organize against the exploitation of oil conglomerates is steadily gaining momentum. Complex and volatile, the situation in the region is changing and growing more critical as the Ecuadorian government seeks to expand the concessions given to petro-chemical corporations and the privatization of Petroecuador through the reform of the hydrocarbons law. These policies will, on the one hand, lead to an increased role for private companies in the Ecuadorian Amazon while on the other, reduce the State's control over the exploitation of a delicate ecosystem.

### TEXACO

For twenty years, Texaco's operations have decimated one of the world's most biologically diverse regions, wreaking havoc on the environment and the 300,000 Indigenous

people that live there. In 1992, after extracting over one billion barrels of crude oil, Texaco fled the country leaving behind 2,500,000 acres of barren rainforests, abandoned toxic materials, 17 million gallons of spilled petroleum and 20 million gallons of toxic spillage in the Amazon's rivers.

The ecological damage has had a profound effect upon the Indigenous communities. Aside from the disruption of traditional lifestyles and massive displacement, it has caused severe health problems. According to different studies done by Acción Ecológica (Ecological Action), an Ecuadorian environmental organization, and The Institute for Economic and Social Rights (IESR), skin diseases, digestive and respiratory problems, malnutrition, chronic headaches and cancer run rampant throughout the communities. A separate study by the Canadian company HBT Agra, assessing the environmental impact of Texaco's activities is to be presented to both the Ecuadorian government and Texaco. The report will not be published, however, and both Indigenous and environmental groups are questioning its validity as it neglects to mention the indelible impact of Texaco's actions upon the region's inhabitants.

In response to the extensive damage Texaco has caused, a campaign to hold Texaco accountable has been launched on an international scale. Presently, there is a world-wide boycott of its products with campaigns taking place in Denmark, Holland, and England. In addition, two lawsuits in the United States have been filed and articles in The New York Times, Reuters News Agency, and New Yorker Magazine attest to the fact that this conflict has finally caught the eye of the international press.

### MAXUS

While the campaign against Texaco intensifies, the North American petro-chemical company, Maxus, continues to expand exploration of Block 16 which includes part of Yasuni National Park and Huaorani territories. Even before beginning extraction, Maxus had already caused a 900 barrel oil spill when a pipeline belonging to the Occidental Company was accidentally perforated by a Maxus work crew. Even though the spill was, for the most part, contained, oil did manage to reach the estuaries of the Napo River.

Moreover, the road that Maxus built to



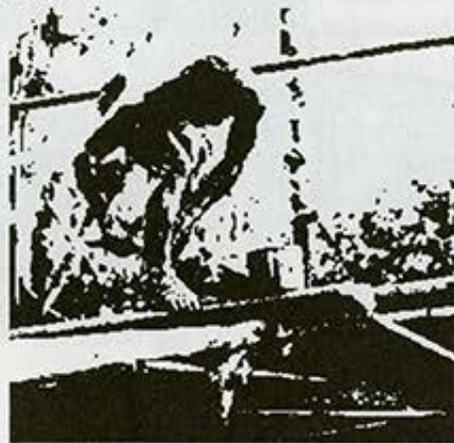
support its oil extraction in Block 16 has led to the colonization of the Tiputini River area. Through the purchase of wood for its encampments and extraction towers, it is promoting massive deforestation of the southern portion of the Cuyabeno Reserve which was recently declared one of most biologically diverse regions in the world. The company is also responsible for several chemical spills in this zone.

As unbelievable as it may seem in the face of its disruptive practices, Maxus is attempting to present itself as "protector" of the environment by promoting the establishment of an environmental investigation station and sponsoring an archeological project to "preserve the cultures that have been occupying the region for thousands of years."

### ARCO

Another petro-chemical corporation is ARCO, which has used divisive tactics among Indigenous communities in Block 10 of the Pastaza province. During a meeting with leaders of the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP), in Berkeley, California, during the month of October, 1992, ARCO agreed: 1) to respect the political and cultural integrity of Indigenous peoples in Pastaza 2) not enter into divisive negotiations through the buying off of local individuals; 3) to desist from creating tensions which may lead to the militarization of the region; 4) to keep all meeting attendees abreast of present and future exploratory activity. Nevertheless, ARCO has forgone this accord and launched a campaign to politically debilitate OPIP. Through manipulation and bribery, ARCO has created a parallel and independent organization, DICIP, and is unwilling to continue the dialogue unless DICIP participates equally. Needless to say, DICIP unconditionally supports ARCO's activities. In a recent letter to ARCO's CEO, John Middleton, Hector Villamil, president of OPIP states: "To date, ARCO has neglected to comply with (the above) guarantees and has actively pursued a strategy which systematically and insidiously undermines the political integrity of OPIP. During the past months, ARCO has reinstated an un-called for hostility toward the Indig-

enous peoples of Pastaza, created social instability, and divisively manipulated and corrupted local individuals. Need I affirm that we find this tactic unethical and reprehensible?"



### PETROECUADOR AND THE PENDING HYDROCARBONS LAW REFORM

The future privatization of Petroecuador has potentially devastating implications. If passed, the World Bank sponsored privatization and reform of the Ecuadorian hydrocarbons law will sever the state's ability to control and sanction oil corporations. The new law would open up the region to increased exploration and exploitation as well as grant new concessions to multinational corporations, accelerating the pace of destruction even more.

In response to the impending reforms, a campaign has been launched which seeks to minimize the impact on the region. The "Amazonia for Life" campaign is currently pressuring the World Bank to consider its loan to the Ecuadorian government as a "Type A" loan, calling for environmental and cultural impact reports prior to any further exploration in the region, as well as establishing a process of public participation that would include the affected Indigenous communities and representative organizations.

### COFANS CONFRONT PETROECUADOR

On October 28, 40 Cofans took over a Petroecuador oil well located inside the

Cuyabeno Reserve in Cofan territory, forcing the corporation to negotiate with the Cofan community. The Cofans demanded active participation in Petroecuador's activities on their territory and the financing of solar panels for their villages. A provisional accord was turned down by the corporate executives in Quito who only agreed to the purchase of the solar panels valued at \$10,000. The Cofans unanimously rejected the offer and stated that unless someone with sufficient authority agreed to their demands, they would be forced once again to shut down Petroecuador's exploration activities.

This conflict was temporarily resolved when Petroecuador announced that no oil had been found in Paujil. Nevertheless, there is evidence that suggests that Petroecuador plans to perforate a few miles outside the reserve.

### BLOCK 22 EXCLUDED FROM 1994 CONCESSIONS

In November, 1993, it was confirmed that Block 22, inside Yasuni National Park, would not be included in the concessions being offered for 1994. This is undoubtedly due, at least in part, to pressures from the international and Ecuadorian environmental communities. However, the right of Indigenous peoples to control oil development on their lands still needs to be addressed.



The prolonged petroleum extraction activities in the Ecuadorian Amazon has taken place without environmental or social impacts being taken into account. Important decisions have been made without consulting with the Indigenous communities who inevitably suffer the brunt of these deleterious activities. National parks, reserves and Indigenous territories which had supposedly been permanently designated as cultural and environmental reserves have not been spared. It is within this context, that the Public Enterprise Reform, ID #6ECUPA103 in Category A, calling for an all-inclusive study of social, environmental and cultural impacts of petroleum activities, is being advocated by various international and national Indigenous, environmental and social justice organizations.

Source: Rainforest Action Network

# ALLIANCES FORMED AGAINST COLOMBIA'S PLAN PACIFICO



Photo by Camilo Hernandez-Fundacion Natura

*Bulldozers clearing the forest for construction of the Pan-American Highway in Colombia*

During the last decade, the Colombian Pacific Coast has been ransacked by mining and timber companies as well as thousands of colonists. The situation has become critical as the neo-liberal policies of the 90's have been implemented. Within this context, the Pacific is not only a region of high rentability due to its abundant natural resources; it has also become a strategic point through which the Colombian State strives to consolidate its insertion into the international markets linked by the Pacific Rim through a development strategy known as "Plan de Apertura Hacia el Pacifico" (The Opening of the Pacific Coast).

The Chocó region of the Colombian Pacific Coast is one of the world's most biologically diverse ecosystems. It is covered by tropical rain forests, abundant in minerals and tropical woods. It has one of the highest concentrations of plant and animal species on

Earth and it is a potential source of hydroelectric energy and oil. In contrast to its richness in life forms and resources, the Chocó is inhabited by some 800,000 Afro-Colombians and 110,000 Indigenous peoples (predominantly Waunanas, Emberás, and Awas) living under conditions of extreme poverty.

Plan Pacífico seeks the investment of transnational capital for infrastructure development to include a vast network of roads, ports, and industrial centers in the Chocó, the Pan-American highway through the rain forest between Panama and Colombia, and the Bahía Málaga naval base which has effectively militarized the area. In addition, the construction of an inter-oceanic land bridge connecting the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, is planned for the near future.

For these reasons, the Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities of the Chocó have joined forces to defend their lands from impending devastation. For years, the Regional Indigenous Organization Emberá Waunana (OREWA), has struggled to obtain collective property rights over the 61 reserves that make up 16% of the Pacific Coast. Indigenous peoples are currently waiting for the "ley de Ordenamiento Territorial", a constitutional law which will define Indigenous territories throughout the country to be approved by Congress. The new constitution represents a significant step forward for Indigenous property rights as it aims to grant Indigenous territories the same degree of administrative autonomy enjoyed by Colombia's departments. However, under the new constitution, the law was supposed to have been drafted by the Colombian State and Indigenous organizations yet this has not been the case. The bill

has reached Congress twice without the inclusion of the document submitted by the Indigenous groups.

The Afro-Colombian communities of the Pacific Coast face a similar situation. The special commission designated by the government to work on the bill was made up, for the most part, by members of the government. The resulting law (Ley 70) awards uncultivated lands near the rivers of the region, not the urban areas and farms they occupy, and contains clauses allowing for the construction of a network of roads within the allotted territories. This law ignores the legitimate and legal land rights of the peoples of the Pacific over the areas they have traditionally occupied and where they have constructed the Afro-Colombian society and culture.

Continuing a long-standing struggle, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian organizations came together at the end of July in Quibdó, capital of the Chocó, to jointly look for solutions to a common problem. Members of the Afro-Colombian Organization of Popular Neighborhoods of Quibdó (OBAPO), and the Integral Campesino Association of Atrato (ACLA), petitioned the government for the legal ownership of their communal land holdings and the management of their natural resources. According to these organizations, the government's recognition of their property rights and their direct participation in the policies and development projects that affect them, is the only way to put an end to the environmental and social devastation brought about by the Plan Pacífico.

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# LOGGING THREATENS FIRST NATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by Susan O'Donell

International attention has focused on Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia, where the battle over clear-cut logging of an old-growth rain forest has resulted in hundreds of arrests in Canada and protests at Canadian embassies around the world.

Indigenous peoples make up about half the population in the Clayoquot Sound area. The First Nations oppose the Canadian government's decision to clear-cut the forest and want a solution that both preserves their natural environment and creates jobs for their people.

A November 1993 court decision stated that the government of British Columbia must consider Indigenous land rights when awarding logging contracts. A spokesperson for the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council said he hoped his people would now be given a share of the logging profits and a guaranteed percentage of the forestry jobs. About 70% of the Indigenous people in the area are unemployed.

Canada's new prime minister has said he would be willing to declare the Clayoquot Sound area a national park if the province and the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations agree. However, many Indigenous people in the area have reasons to be suspicious of his offer.

A similar fight over logging of traditional Haida land in the nearby Queen Charlotte Islands ended about six years ago when the federal government created a new national park on Haida territory. The government promised that tourism generated by the park



*Giant redwoods such as this one on Meares Island are threatened by clear-cut logging*

would create jobs for Indigenous peoples in the area but, six years later, the only new jobs have been given to white bureaucrats and the tourists have not appeared. Instead, an army of government bureaucrats arrived to tell the Haida how to care for forests they had been looking after for time immemorial. "It's like a new set of missionaries have been steaming in here to save us," a Haida woman told a reporter. "But we're not being converted. We know how to take care of our land."

Many other First Nations across Canada

are fighting the destruction wrought by logging companies on their traditional lands. In most cases, the First Nations are not seeking an end to logging but want sustainable logging practices and a share of the jobs created. First Nations have already won many court battles but still the logging continues.

Canada has been called the "Brazil of the North" because of its destructive forestry policies and a comparison between the two countries reveals many similarities. For example, trees cover about 40% of both. Nearly 100,000 Indigenous people live in Canada's temperate and boreal forest, and about 170,000 Indigenous people live in the Amazonian rain forest. In Canada, an acre of forest is clear-cut every 12 seconds while in Brazil, an acre is cut or burned every nine seconds. While the scale of devastation in both countries is similar, an important difference exists in the human motivation behind the destruction. In Brazil, a driving force for rainiest destruction is the poverty of the loggers, while in Canada, the driving force is the greed of multinational corporations.

photo by Cultural Survival-Canada

For more information contact the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, which represents the 14 First Nations in the region:

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## CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION IN BRAZIL: A THREAT TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

BY SELENE JARAMILLO

The battle for the rights of the over two hundred Indigenous groups in Brazil seemed to have claimed a victory at the end of 1988. Brazil's new constitution was drafted and approved that year, recognizing the rights of Indigenous peoples, including the right to their lands. A five year deadline for the demarcation of these lands was established. After obtaining Indigenous territory status they would be protected by the government against invasions. Only the Indigenous peoples would be able to determine the use for their lands, including, if they so wished, mining and forestry. This deadline expired on October 5, 1993, and only 266 of the 532 territories officially recognized had been demarcated.

The 1988 constitution also included a clause for its revision at the end of five years. This period also expired in October. If this revision takes place, the rights granted could be revoked. The validity of the demarcation of Indigenous territories and the current restrictions on the use of these lands are highly questioned by many groups that support the constitutional revision. Invariably, these groups are part of the elites that have lost advantages and privileges. The three chapters central to the debate are those concerning agrarian reform, the environment, and the rights of Indigenous peoples. It is feared that, if carried through, the revision could lead to changes toward the Neo-liberal policies supported by the majority of the Brazilian congress. Special interest groups lobbying in the Congress will have great influence over the results of the revision. The political climate in the congress is actually dominated by these diverse though generally conservative groups. The lack of complementary judicial tools that are also adequate and agile, added to the inoperative power of the executive are also seriously threatening the conquests made for indigenous rights.

One of the most significant conquests was that over the Yanomami territory in May, 1992. The granting of 9.6 million hectares demarcated as Yanomami territory is now in danger of revision. Although the official recognition has not kept gold prospectors away, some groups contend that this area is exceedingly large for the Yanomami.

Another argument is that demarcation in border areas threatens national sovereignty



by creating practically independent states. This argument does not take into account the fact that Indigenous territories have existed in border areas for years. Indigenous groups like the Kayapo and the Guarani are involved in legal battles to prove their rights to establishing territories that cover areas in different countries.

Though it is true that the constitutional revision would not alter the present situation it can risk the loss of the judicial principle that philosophically supports the rights of indigenous people. Thus, the Yanomami and the Kayapo could lose the legal basis to defend their autonomy and territories, as well as losing the power to resolve other issues still not legally defined, such as their rights over intellectual property and germ plasma. The appropriate compensatory mechanisms are yet to be established.

Recent events justify the urgency of the possibility of constitutional revision. The

Minister of Justice recently declared that the demarcation will only continue in areas where there are no conflicts, a requisite nearly impossible to fulfill, and that effectively halts the process of demarcation until the revision issue is resolved. This process could take months or even years. The Minister of Justice also had the power of prohibiting access to indigenous areas, but the Supreme Tribunal recently revoked this power. This will have serious consequences for groups that are still isolated. Their limited numbers are threatened by the illness and violence that nearly always follow contact with outsiders.

In the 500 years since the beginning of European invasions, the population of Indigenous peoples of Brazil has been reduced from over 5 million to less than 500,000. Their territories today are only 10% of their original size. The biggest obstacle to their survival is the attitude of Brazilian society. To the majority of the population, Indigenous rights and environmentalism are not social priorities. Hunger and poverty are ranked first. These economic pressures create great tension between the Indigenous peoples and the new colonists, poor migrants trying to establish farms in their territories. Indigenous people are thus the most widely discriminated group in Brazil, frequently viewed as sick, dirty, and carriers of the Cholera virus. The physical and cultural survival of Indigenous peoples is not considered their right, but rather an eccentricity of environmentalists. Many Brazilians are of the opinion that the resources of the tropical forests can and should be exploited for economic benefits alone. These benefits rarely reach those actually affected by poverty. This attitude needs to change if the rights established in 1988 are to be upheld and if the fight for indigenous rights is to be continued.

Sources: Porantim, Revisao Constitucional



# THE NEW PERUVIAN CONSTITUTION AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

## AIDSEP

**G**overnment policy under successive Peruvian administrations has consistently denied Indigenous communities the right to participate in the political processes governing their lives and their environment. In Peru, like its neighboring states, the Amazonas has perennially stood as the cushion for external problems and it, as well as the Indigenous peoples that inhabit the forest, have traditionally been subordinate to and utilized by outside interests. The politics of intervention practiced by previous administrations have been taken a step further by the Fujimori regime as reflected in his proposed Constitution for Peru.

While the declarations of ethnic pluralism and the recognition of the right to Indigenous identity in the draft version of the new Constitution superficially represent progressive changes, their character is for the most part symbolic and offset by the more concrete terms applied to Indigenous territories. The principal changes are summarized in the following points:

A) Indigenous land holdings which have been protected under constitutional law since 1933, are to be declared open to land markets. This modification, coupled with the lack of access of Indigenous peoples to civil justice, government corruption, and the twelve years of persecution and displacement of Amazonian

peoples by the installation of terrorism in the region, could escalate the violence that already exists.

B) Under the new text, Indigenous lands are subject to seizure. This measure, proposed to facilitate access to credit, puts at risk communities that might be persuaded to follow the government's promotional campaigns and



Illustration by Francisco Oballe

seek credits offering their land as collateral. C) Most importantly, Indigenous lands classified as abandoned can be taken over by the state and sold to individual investors. This point is of grave consequence since the classification is carried out by government functionaries working under questionable assumptions: After two years without cultivation, lands are declared abandoned. This criterion undermines the swidden/fallow (slash and burn) agricultural practices of many commu-

nities which make use of long rotation cycles. Under these systems, the forest is left to rest for years before it is once again cultivated. Under the new Constitution, fallows are erroneously considered abandoned lands.

D) The criteria applied to the demarcation of lands represents another threat to the territorial integrity of Indigenous peoples. By dividing communal land holdings into independent agricultural plots, the communities will become extremely vulnerable.

With this constitutional project, the edifice of the once pioneer Indigenous legislation of Peru is in danger of crumbling. Coupled with the promotion of agrarian investment in the Amazon region, the privatization and alienation of indigenous territories represent a detrimental blow to the Indigenous peoples of Peru. Under the Fujimori regime, we are not taken into account, or at least not as different peoples. The forest's communities and their economic, cultural and social practices are at best, considered an obstacle to the government's development priorities for the rainforest. The purpose seems clear: To impose on Amazonian and other original communities an agrarian vision along with the extractive one that has, in the last few years, devoured more than 10 million hectares.

Source: AIDSEP



photo SAHIC

## INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN BOLIVIA SET EXAMPLE FOR ABYA YALA

The Indigenous women of Bolivia have come to occupy an important and influential role in the Indigenous movement after many years of struggling for their rights and those of their peoples. Using Native American women as models of organization and unity, today, Bolivia has the greatest national organization of Indigenous women in the Abya Yala continent.

The Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Women of Bolivia (CCMIB) was created during the First National Gathering of Indigenous Women on July 1993, in Achocalla, La Paz. The Commission's purpose is to strengthen the Indigenous, popular, and campesino (peasant) movements through the active participation of women. By organizing different gatherings and seminars, the Commission seeks to unite all the Indigenous and non-Indigenous women's organizations working throughout the country and promote the formation of leaders in the various member organizations.

The Commission is guided by the fundamental principles of decentralized authority and respect for the autonomy of each member organization. In addition, though it is a women's organization it is not "feminist." Instead, the Commission looks to complement its activities with those of its male counterparts, since, as one participant affirmed, "in original, traditional communities, separate levels of power between a man and woman did not exist. A couple made decisions of mutual accord, because the struggles of both the men and the women were the same." Nevertheless, taking into account the marginalization that the government's exclusion policies makes them face, the Indigenous women have considered unification a priority so that they can begin to devise their own methods to elect representatives of their nationalities to the Bolivian government.

During the Encounter, the unification of 25 women's organizations was consolidated in the CCMIB, and an interim Board of

Directors was elected to organize the Second Encounter, which will take place next year, and where a permanent Board will be elected.



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# INTERVIEW WITH MAURICIA CASTRO

*In 1991, Vicente Matute, former FETRIXI president, and other members of the Directive Commission were ambushed and assassinated. Mauricia Castro, Xicaque, then Secretary of FETRIXI, assumed the presidential office which she holds to this date. She is married and is the mother of three children.*

**M**auricia Castro: My name is Mauricia Castro and I come from the Department of Yoro in Honduras. I am part of the peoples of Xicaque or Tolupan, located in the North of the country.

**SAIIC:** Very little is said about the Indigenous peoples of Honduras. How many are there and what groups do they belong to?

**Mauricia:** In Honduras we have 6 groups, 7 including the Chortis who are not yet organized. Within those 6 groups, with their diverse languages and customs, there are almost half a million Indigenous peoples. There are the Lencas, which number 80,000; the Peichen, about 2,000; the Garifunas, 300,000; the Misikitos 40,000; and the Xicaques which number about 32,000. The Lencas live in Lempira, La Paz, and Intibucan. The Peichen and Miskitos live in Pahuacas, Sumos, Gracias a Dios, and Colon.

**SAIIC:** Do these Indigenous nations still conserve their languages and traditions?

**Mauricia:** We, the Xicaques are on the verge of losing our language. This is why we are working so hard to strengthen it and spread it.

**SAIIC:** What is education like in your schools?  
**Mauricia:** This is the most serious problem of the Xicaques. The majority of the schools are

run by Ladinos and the children are prohibited from speaking their native languages. We had a case in which a first grader forgot to greet his teacher in Spanish and instead greeted her in Tolupan. The teacher said she could not understand him and that he could no longer be in school. The child was then forced to abandon his classes. Socially, the native language is not spoken, only in the home.

**SAIIC:** Is there racism?

**Mauricia:** In Yoro there is tremendous racism. Our people are working to develop consciousness of our own identity but, for example, wearing our traditional clothing only serves to frighten people or create a spectacle.

**SAIIC:** How is the land situation in Honduras? Do you have enough? Are your communities respected and recognized?

**Mauricia:** The situation is critical. The government passed a law called "modernization of the agricultural sector" by which they give power to the large landowners to appropriate more lands. This law converts the land into a marketable good that can be sold to the transnational corporations and foreigners. The specific problem of the Xicaques is that, even though we were given titles to our properties in 1861, people keep appropriating our land due to this law of "modernized agriculture".

**SAIIC:** Does the government have any law that recognizes the indigenous communities?

**Mauricia:** Nothing specific. There is only one article that refers to Indigenous peoples in the constitution. There is no law from which we can infer bylaws. The organized nations of Indigenous peoples have passed a legislative proposal that we call "Protection Law for Indigenous Nations". We did this with the help of some lawyers and with the backing of our Indigenous peoples. It has been in Congress for more than four years. One administration takes over, then another, and there is no one to promote this. We are also taking action for the ratification of covenant 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) but there are very few of us. In addition, the government functionaries are very clever. Some of them come to the Indigenous communities and if there is a problem, they say they will solve it and we never see them again.

**SAIIC:** The Honduran peoples are traditionally agricultural?

**Mauricia:** We, the Xicaques cultivate corn and beans and we make some crafts, such as baskets, mats, and pottery. The Lencas make weavings from wool and they also cultivate corn and beans. The Miskitos dedicate themselves to collecting coconuts, oranges, and to planting rice. In Amuskiti, which is a very



photo by SAIIC

Mauricia Castro at the Inter-American Encounter on Indigenous Rights and Common Law

swampy, the people fish. They have little parcels, islands in the middle of the lakes. It's an extraordinary place. The rivers Patuca, Platano, and Coco are very large and navigable. Last year, the president wanted to give a concession to exploit the jungle of Amasquitia, a virgin jungle. I believe that in Central America this is the most luxurious and most dense tropical forest.

"The Spanish gave us the name Xiquaques because we were not easily tamed so we decided to keep the name, always rebels."

SAIIC: Have you tried to exploit those resources?

Mauricia: The government tires. There is a law called the law of Honduran Corporation and Forest Development that says that the forests belong to the state, independent of the fact that these lands may be private lands. So now the government has the autonomy to sell the forests of our communities. But these has been much resistance. In some cases the Indigenous people have said that it was the responsibility of the government if these people entered and later found their machines burned.

This issue has led to a campaign organized by the Indigenous peoples of Honduras and people from the popular sector, syndicates, farmers, and organizations, because this is an attack against humanity.

The Union of Farm Workers (UTC), wanted to come into Yoro and there was a very serious confrontation. We know that this was not the desire of the farmers themselves but rather of some of the leaders and some of the cattle ranchers, and although we were in jail for several days, we earned respect for the autonomy of the Indigenous people. Now, even the coffee growers have to consult with us before they can mechanize their plantations.

SAIIC: Do you have traditional forms of organization? Has it been difficult to form

federations that are based on Western forms of organizing?

Mauricia: The Tribal Councils existed but they were not united. But with the help of the Catholic Church, the missions, and some of the farmers that wanted to "make friends" with the Indigenous peoples to recuperate vacant lands, we began to know each other. From 1970 to 1977 there was a process of exchange between the tribes in order to share experiences and get better acquainted. In 1977, the federation was organized but in an almost ghostly fashion. Every year we planned meetings but something always happened. Between 1981 and 1983, we began to organize the councils and in 1985, the First Ordinary Congress was held which gathered all the tribes of Yoro, El Negrito, Olanchito, Mozaran, and others. The Congress of Tribes was established and the statutes were made. There were many discussions about the name of the federation because many said we were Tolupanes and not Xicaques. The Spanish gave us the name "Xicaques" because we were not easily tamed so we decided to keep the name, always rebels.

SAIIC: What is the name, then, of the federation you belong to?

Mauricia: Federation of Xicaque Tribes of Yoro, FETRIXI.

SAIIC: Do you belong to any confederation?

Mauricia: This work came after FETRIXI. We began to realize that on the one hand there were the Miskitos and on the other, the Lenkas and others, so, with the help of some university students, anthropologists, that always study us, we managed to have the First Gathering of the Indigenous Peoples of Honduras in 1987, one year after having formed FETRIXI. In 1988 we held the Second Encounter from which a provisional committee for the confederation was born, and where we realized that there were other organized groups. The Third Encounter was held in Yoro and the Fourth in Tegucigalpa when our leader, Vicente Matute, was assassinated. Between



1986 and 1992 we formed the Confederation of Autochthonous Peoples of Honduras (CONPA).

SAIIC: What led to the assassination of Vicente Matute and the repression? We know various Indigenous leaders have died. Who are the repressors?

Mauricia: [The repressors are] the land holders and the cattle ranchers of Yoro. We realized only at the end that the military killed Vicente. There is a whole tribe that is under the control of a general of the Armed Forces of Honduras. Vicente was a very honest and quiet man and in a meeting with president Calleja-we have the video and the tape recording-said that he would not be surprised if the Indigenous peoples of the San Francisco tribe go into a field to get their firewood and are hanged and taken away. Apparently they killed him for talking like that.

SAIIC: Have other leaders been assassinated?

Mauricia: In 1991, the year they killed Vicente, they advised us that they were going to kill five of us and that's what they did. They said it would be those of the directive board. I was

the secretary and they said that we were going to be dead. But the five, two women and three men, were from different councils.

SAIIC: Does the intimidation continue?

Mauricia: The other day I received a call saying: Mauricia Rivera de Zubirana is paying someone to kill you and two other leaders of the tribe. But I don't know...who knows? We have no protection. I could believe that the Police are protecting me but it's just as likely that they are investigating me. The Police are like that always. The federation has been given many diplomas of recognition but you see that it's all politics. The deputy of Yoro is the one that exploits the Plangrande tribe. He is a landholder, the deputy, so how are we going to register a complaint if he is the one who is exploiting us? There are Indigenous zones, where more than 200 non-Indigenous families live, that they want to turn into municipalities. There are schools, electric light, roads, and even though we have property titles, we indigenous peoples live clinging to the cliffs. We have resisted during three regimes because we are the legal owners.

SAIIC: What is the situation of women in relation to the organizations?

Mauricia: FETRIXI is the only organization

that has three women on the board. Five men and three women, and we believe that in the next term there will be four. Women participate in decision making, whether the men like it or not. If I see that it is in favor of the majority, then that is my decision. Since 1987, women leave the house and go to the assembly. Because the worst problem is that women stay in their house, and how are they going to be taken into account if they don't go to the sessions? No one is going to come to the house to tell them: "we named you Cacique". In other communities, there are no women in the organizations. In FETRIXI there are women who have a man as

"We have no protection. I could believe that the police are protecting me but its just as likely that they are investigating me."

secretary and they tell him what to do. But we don't wish to make a parallel organization of women because we believe, and this is a custom of the Xicaques, that women without men can do nothing, and equally men without women. Even though "machismo" always exists, we resist by saying: "Don't walk in front of me, don't fall behind, let's walk together".

SAIIC: How is your spiritual life? Is there much Catholic influence?

Mauricia: There is a lot of influence; little of our spirituality remains. The Evangelists introduce themselves into our communities and put them to sleep. They don't want people going to meetings. They say it's a sin to promote the development of the community, that the riches are in heaven, that the poor are blessed. They put all this in peoples' heads so they later say: "But well, this is how God wants me to live". I don't go to mass. Priests have come to visit me and ask why I have not baptized my children. I tell them I don't interfere in their spiritual lives. I don't want it and my children don't miss it.

SAIIC: Do you have hope in the Continental Indigenous Movement now that you have made contact? Do you think you should unite with the Indigenous peoples of America?

Mauricia: The principal goal of CONPA is to bring our forces together, search for our ancestral past, and communicate with all Indigenous peoples of America. We know that we are not all the same, but we know what we want at the continental level.

SAIIC: Anything else?

Mauricia: I want us to prepare ourselves so our rights as women are respected, so we are given the space that has long been denied to us. This does not mean we want to take it from men, we want to be given an equal opportunity. Greetings to all the Indigenous women of the continent and let's keep going forward because the struggle is ours.

# EPIDEMIC HITS COMMUNITIES OF SAN LORENZO, PERU

In the Peruvian Indigenous communities of San Lorenzo, located close to the Ecuadorian border, an unidentified epidemic resembling the measles has spread voraciously, killing 5 and infecting 88 others. Symptoms include high fevers, skin eruptions, respiratory difficulties, hemorrhages, vomiting of blood, diarrhea, and bone pain. Representatives from the Ministry of Health have flown to the respective sites to collect samples which are currently being evaluated in the United States. In the meantime, a vaccine against measles has been discovered to diminish the intensity of the illness, resulting in a campaign to vaccinate 13,000 people.

The Ministry of Health made an official agreement with the Inter-ethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle (AIDSESEP) to develop an "Action for Health" program serving 150 Indigenous communities of the High Amazonas regions via the San Lorenzo Health Center. Each community elects Indigenous youth to be part of the "Promoters of Health" network that is trained to respond to the needs of the community during times of crisis. In addition, the Ministry of Health appoints an Indigenous representative to be in charge of the health needs of 8-10 communities. Previous cholera and malaria epidemics were effectively brought under control through

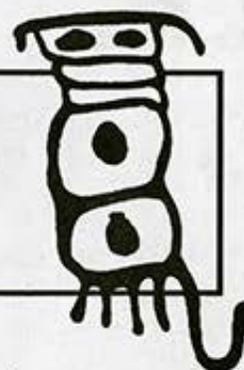
these networks.

This is the second epidemic to reach the San Lorenzo communities in recent years. Malaria Falsiparum, before coming into San Lorenzo, had spread in the border petroleum exploitation regions of the Ecuadorian rain forests with the arrival of obreros (oil workers) from other parts.

Despite these positive efforts, both the impacts of disease and severe water shortages are driving San Lorenzo into an increasingly alarming health crisis. As a result, AIDSESEP, its member organizations and the San Lorenzo Health Center are calling for a revamping of Peru's health care system for its Indigenous communities.

For more information contact:

**AIDSESEP**  
Av. San Eugenio 981  
Urb. Santa Catalina-La Victoria  
Lima 13, Lima, Peru  
Tel: 71-6621  
Fax: 72-4605



## PAHO ADOPTS INITIATIVE ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH

After reviewing the "Health of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas" initiative formulated at the Working Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Health, held in Canada, from April 13 to 17, the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), resolved to adopt Document CD37/20 during its Fourth Plenary Meeting held last September. The document which describes the initiative, was presented to PAHO by Colombian Senator Anatolio Quir, Juan Reategui of Aidesep, Peru, and Mirna Cuninham, Miskito from Nicaragua.

The resolution urges member governments to take steps in improving the deficient health and living conditions of the estimated 43



Juan Reategui of Aidesep

million Indigenous persons of the Americas as well as the participation of Indigenous leaders and representatives in this process.

The resolution further calls on governments to strengthen the technical, administrative, and managerial capacity of national and local institutions that are responsible for the health of Indigenous populations with a view to progressively overcoming the lack of information in this

area and ensuring greater access to health services and quality care, thus contributing to a higher degree of equity.

Member governments are further urged to work toward the transformation of health systems and the development of alternative models of care, including traditional medicine and disease prevention programs.

The directing council also calls for the participation of Indigenous persons and their communities in all aspects of PAHO's work.

For more info: Pan American Health Organization 525 23rd St. N.W.  
Washington DC 20037, USA



# VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN PERU: THE ASHANINKA MASSACRE

By Katia Arya

On August 18-19 1993, the village of Mazamari in the province of Satipo, located in the central rainforest region of Peru, was attacked by 150 guerrillas belonging to the revolutionary Maoist group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). The massacre resulted in the death and brutal mutilation of 87 Ashaninkas, about a third of which were women and children.

During the early morning hours, a band of Sendero guerrillas came disguised in traditional Ashaninka garb demanding weapons. When the villagers did not comply with their demands, the brutal attacks began.

This has been the worst attack on the Ashaninkas since the capture of Sendero Luminoso's leader, Abimael Guzman. This massacre is just one of the many genocidal actions system-



*The massacre left more than 200 orphans*

atically conducted against the Indigenous communities that refuse to submit to Sendero's Maoist doctrine of a "Revolution for the People". Due to the Ashaninkas' resistance, they have been targeted and persecuted. Throughout Peru, violence and terror on the part of Sendero Luminoso and the Armed

forces have plagued the nation's inhabitants. In the rainforest regions, since 1992 alone, there have been 1,491 indigenous victims.

According to the local people, some of the attackers of the august 18-19 massacre were young Ashaninka rebels. Sendero will often plant Indigenous rebels within the villages and instigate the Armed Forces' violence against them to prove the government's hypocrisy and betrayal of Indigenous peoples.

About 700 families have been severely

affected by the terror, abandoning their lands, villages, and their way of life. Due to the rapid changes wrought by the invasion of both Sendero guerrillas and the Peruvian Armed Forces, traditional ways of life have been severely disrupted, causing extremely unstable living conditions. The continuous threat of

Sendero's terrorism has forced Ashaninkas and other Indigenous communities of Peru's Central Jungle to concentrate all their energies and human resources toward self-defense.

In response to the unwarranted violence and brutality, the Indigenous peoples of the

Central region are actively engaged in community organizing and creating alliances with Indigenous organizations. The First Congress of the Ashaninka Indigenous Peoples of the Peruvian Amazon will be held from November 29 to December 3, 1993, in Satipo, Peru. Other Indigenous organizations, such as CECONSEC, ANAP, and FECONACA, as well as representatives from concerned public and private institutions will also be attending.

## ACTION

There is an immediate need for relief funds for the 200 Ashaninka orphans and widows as a result of the massacre in the Mazamari village. CECONSEC is also in need of economic aid to continue supporting the organization of the First Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the Central rainforest region of Peru. For more information on how you can help, please contact:

Katia Arya  
4015 Rhoda Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94602  
Tel: 510-482-4682  
FAX: 510-421-4758  
or SAIC



## DECLARATION OF THE ASHANINKA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR THE RIGHT TOWARDS SELF- DETERMINATION

In response to the ongoing violence against and the recent massacre of the Ashaninka indigenous people in the village of Mazamari, province of Satipo in the Central Jungle of Peru, We the Ashaninka People feel it is necessary to have an EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OF THE CENTRAL JUNGLE REGION OF PERU.

### THE FOLLOWING ISSUES AND PROBLEMS WILL BE ADDRESSED AT THE CONGRESS:

1. The problems the Ashaninka communities are dealing with in the face of the adversity they are experiencing.
2. The problem of the Ashaninka refugees and displaced individuals and families and how to regain land rights.
3. Analyze the situation of abandoned lands by the indigenous communities due to Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) brutal displacement tactics.
4. Analyze the related and acute problems of health, education and food of the communities that have arisen with the increase of refugees.
5. Evaluate public and private institutions and persons that are developing favorable actions towards assisting the Ashaninka communities. Also analyze those who are benefiting from the state of emergency we are currently living in.
6. The impact that the approbation of related articles regarding native lands in the Peruvian Constitution will have on the communities' right towards occupying and protecting their lands from exploitation and invasion.



URGENT  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
ACTIONS



## ONIC DENOUNCES WAVE OF MURDERS

**T**olima: The death of two Indigenous people adds to the reported murder on November 2 of Nelson Moreno, president of the Ortega Municipal Council and leader of the Indigenous Regional Council of Tolima (CRIT).

**Cauca:** Saturday, November 6, in Rosguardo de Paletará, an armed group assassinated Jorge Vargas, interim governor of the Town Council, and member of the Indigenous organization and former guerrilla group, Manuel Quintín Lame. The group identified itself as part of the Coordinadora Guerrillera Simon Bolivar and was looking for other Indigenous members of the community.

**Sierra Nevada:** Tuesday, November 2. Two armed men appeared dressed as civilians in the community of Guamacas, district of San Juan del Cesar (Guajira) near Marocazo, where in April, the leader Arsario, Gregorio Nieves, was assassinated. Francisco Mujica, leader of the community of Guamacas, was also murdered. The fact that a few days before, the group UNASE appeared in Marocazo with a list of names among which were the commissioner of Marocazo, Rafael Francisco Nieves, and the general secretary of the organization YUGUMAYU BUNKUNARRUA TAYRONA, Victor Julian Alberto. The group was accompanied by a hooded man.

zone, several incidents have occurred that threaten the security of the Indigenous peoples of the area. The Armed Forces have surrounded and searched several Indigenous households in search of information regarding supposed links with guerrilla groups. On October 7, armed men dressed in civilian clothes broke into the house of Manuel Narciso Suárez, the treasurer of the Indigenous Town Council of Volao. They demanded information on guerrilla groups, and when he denied having knowledge of them, he was assassinated in front of his family. Before leaving, they issued the following threat: "Anyone who gives even a drop of water to the guerrilla, will be killed."

The Indigenous peoples living in Urabá, in the department of Antioquia, an area of armed conflict, are constantly subjected to the crossfire between the Armed Forces and the guerrilla groups which frequently engage in combat on Indigenous lands.

For more information, contact:

ONIC  
Carrera 3 # 15-48  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: 57-1-342-8017 and 284-2168  
Fax: 57-1-284-8196 and 286-6569

Antioquia: In the Department of Antioquia and especially in the Urabá

Source: National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC).

## INDIGENOUS ACTIVIST HELD IN GUATEMALA

On Oct. 27, Marco Choco Damas, Qeuchki man and active member of the Consejo Nacional de Desplazados de Guatemala (National Council for the Displaced of Guatemala - CONDEG), was detained by soldiers in la "Cumbre" in Salama, Baja Versapaz, while on a bus to Guatemala City. He is reportedly being held in the army barracks in Salama.

CONDEG was founded to defend the rights of Guatemalans displaced by the army's counter-insurgency campaign. The army considers the members of CONDEG to be "subversives." In recent years, members and leaders have suffered human rights violations, including their disappearance, extrajudicial execution, and intimidation.

Human Rights organizations are concerned for the safety of Marco Choco and ask that you immediately send letters or faxes expressing your concern for the safety and well-being of Marco Choco Damas.



## ON-GOING VIOLENCE AGAINST MACUXÍ

Conflict between the Macuxi and local land owners regarding the demarcation of Indigenous territory in the state of Roraima, Brazil, has led to continuing violence against the Macuxi.

On November 6 1993, Democlides Albuquerque Carneiro, a 23 year old Macuxi Indian, died in police custody. According to reports, he had been arrested on suspicion of having stolen some cattle. A plot to cover up the real cause of his death was discovered when a police officer confessed to the shooting.

Letters should urge that his legal situation be clarified and that he either be released or brought before a competent court.

Please send letters to :

Gral. Mario Enriquez Morales  
Ministro de Defensa  
Ministerio de Defensa  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala City  
Guatemala  
Fax: 011 502 2 537472  
Telefax: 301 5361 CONGUA GU

Send copies of letters to SAHC and to:

CONDEG  
7a Avenida 8-56, zonal  
Edificio El Centro  
7 Nivel, Oficina 7-12  
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Source: Amnesty International

Since late September, a military road block has been operating in the Raposa/Serra do Sol Indigenous area. The Macuxi have campaigned for the demarcation of the area as an Indigenous reserve but local politicians, influential land owners, and the state government of Roraima are vehemently opposed to the demarcation. As a result, the Raposa/Serra do Sol area was not demarcated within the constitutional deadline of October 5, 1993. Consequently, reports of increased official harassment against Indigenous communities have been transmitted.

Please send letters expressing your concern about the death in custody of Democlides Albuquerque Carneiro on November 6, 1993, in the police station of Alto Alegre, Roraima. Call for an inquiry into this death and ask that the responsible be promptly brought to justice; urge a full inquiry into reports of ill-treatment and harassment by official security forces of members of Indigenous communities at the military police barracks in the Raposa/Serra do Sol area.

State Head of Police Exmo. Sr. Secretario de. Segurança Publica do Estado de Roraima Sr. Rubens Braga Quintela Av Capitao Ene Garcez no 324 62.300 Boa Vista, RR Brasil	State Governor Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado de Roraima Sr. Ottomar Pinto Palacio 31 de Marco Praca do Centro Civico-Centreo 69.3000 Boa Vista, RR Brazil
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Please send copies to SAHC and:  
Roraima Indian Council  
Conselho Indigenista de Roraima  
Caixa Postal 163  
70.300 Boa Vista, RR Brasil

Source: Amnesty International



## DINEH STRUGGLE AGAINST PEABODY COAL CONTINUES

**I**n the wake of fragile ecosystem destruction, desecration of sacred sites, and the depletion of valuable water resources, a major campaign to hold Peabody Coal Company accountable for its actions is being launched by the Dineh peoples of the Four Corners area in the North American Southwest.

Black Mesa/Kayenta mine is the largest strip mine and only coal slurry line in the U.S.

It has been carved into the most sacred area of the Hopi and Dineh people, destroying all homes, grave sites and sacred areas in its path. Even though Peabody has been conducting its mining activities

illegally for 9 years, the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) and U.S. Department of the Interior have purposely neglected to enforce the law and require Peabody to stop mining with invalid permits. In addition, there have been recent reports of livestock confiscation in the region.

Your immediate action is needed now. The destruction and suffering must be stopped! Help bring justice to the sacred lands of Big Mountain by sending letters and faxes expressing the need to uphold legal mandates to:

Secretary Bruce Babbitt  
U.S. Department of Interior  
18th and C Streets, N.S.  
Washington, DC. 20240  
Fax: (202) 208-6956

For more information, please contact:

Marsha Monestersky  
Dineh Hopi Alliance  
2045 W, 3rd #34  
Winslow, AZ. 86047  
Fax/phone (602) 289-2707

## ECUADORIAN INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT THREATENED

**O**n the evening of October 31, COICA's headquarters were broken into and robbed of over \$6,000 worth of office equipment. The week prior to the incident, COICA was prompted to take extraordinary steps to improve its security when it learned that CONFENAIE's office had suffered a similar break-in.

Earlier in the month, a dead dog was found near COICA's office with messages on it saying, "Mate un indio y haga patria" (be a patriot, kill an Indian) and "Muera Lucho Macas el reformista" (Death to

Lucho Macas, the reformist). The first of these messages has also been painted on numerous walls around Quito. Luis Macas is the president of CONAIE, Ecuador's National Indigenous Federation.

While this hate crime is particularly ominous and disturbing, there is no evidence that it is connected to the burglary. As this type of event is unusual in Ecuador, members of the Indigenous community believe it could signal the emergence of a right wing effort to undermine the movement.

Valerio Grefa, General Coordinator of COICA, has written the Coalition in Support of Amazonian Peoples and the Environment asking for its moral, political and financial assistance.

Please mail or fax letters to President Sixto Durán with copies for the Pichincha police chief. Besides expressing your concern and hope that the government will take steps to protect COICA from threats and violence, your letters should state that we are closely monitoring the situation and will report any future incidents to the US human rights community and NGO's working in solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

Presidente Sixto Duran  
Casa Presidencial  
García Moreno 1043  
Quito, Ecuador  
Fax: (593) 2-580-569

More information can be obtained through Dennis Udall, Acting Coordinator for the Amazon Coalition at (617) 728-2578.



Illustration by Oswaldo Guayasamin

## SEEKING UNITY IN GUERRERO

Representatives from Nahuatl, Mixteco Tlapaneco and Amuzgo communities attended the First Congress of Indigenous representatives of Guerrero from September 23 to 26 1993. This conference was a big step forward in the unification of Indigenous Communities of Guerrero and their struggle to establish autonomy.

The rights of Indigenous communities, including land rights and perspectives regarding culture and development, were among the themes addressed during the conference.

In terms of Indigenous rights, the need for the recognition of individual rights as well as traditional forms of enforcing justice was expressed. The election of commissioners within municipalities and the partitioning of Indigenous land by the Department of Agriculture was denounced as going against the traditional communal land structure. Proposals in relation to these issues were taken to the National Consultation Forum of Indigenous Nations, where land issues and the enforcement of Article 169 are dealt with. In addition, a proposal for the passage of a law entitled Indigenous Electoral of the Sixth District, which would allow for Indigenous representation



Mixteco, Tlapaneco, Nahuatl, and Amuzgo leaders at the closing of the conference

photo by SAIC

within the Chamber of Deputies, was put forth.

The need for direct participation in development programs taking place throughout the region was discussed. In this context, a format for devising solutions to problems of education, unwieldy infrastructure of services, the sustainable use of natural resources and the financing of agricultural production was designed. In order to implement the solutions and projects, the creation of a government fund for the economic development of Guerrero's Indigenous communities, to be managed by the communities themselves, was suggested.

In order to preserve their traditional cultures, the representatives proposed the creation of educational programs in which children could learn the music, dance and language of their people.

The Second Conference will be taking place March 15, 1994.



## INTERAMERICAN ENCOUNTER ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND COMMON LAW

The Interamerican Encounter on Indigenous Rights and Common Law took place from June 16-19 at the headquarters of the Alliance for Development in Guatemala. The event was organized by Maya Culture Center (CECMA). Representatives from different Indigenous organizations from throughout the continent participated, including: National Indigenous Organization

of Colombia (ONIC), The Honduran Federation of the Xicaque of Yoro Tribes (FETRIXI), the General Guayami Congress and Kunas United for Nappguana both from Panama, Sejekto of Costa Rica, the Council of Mayan Organizations of Guatemala, representatives of the Autonomous University of Mexico as well as representatives from SAIC in the United States.



## INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY NETWORK

The Indigenous Biodiversity Network (BioIndio) was formed in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 1993, by Indigenous representatives attending the First Intergovernmental Committee on the Convention on Biological Diversity held since the Rio Conference in June, 1993. BioIndio is a growing network of global aboriginal groups and organizations working together to protect biological diversity through active Indigenous participation in the formulation of policies, laws and programs relating to biodiversity protection, including ratification and implementation of the Biodiversity Convention. To strengthen the role of Indigenous peoples and their communities in biodiversity protection, First Nations have to forge international connections. Presently, BioIndio is working to establish a non-centralized structure and reaching out to native groups and organizations from the four corners of the world to discuss cooperation at the global level.

BioIndio was motivated by the need of having direct Aboriginal presence and autonomous voice on the Biodiversity Convention's implementation phase. Negotiations of the convention did not include Indigenous peoples even though the richest ecosystem, biological and genetic diversity is usually found on Indigenous territories. BioIndio will work to ensure Indigenous participation in the implementation of the convention and seeks to cooperate with NGO's and international

agencies to improve its implementation at the international level. While the convention will be a major focus, BioIndio will also serve to support a range of Indigenous initiatives on biological diversity protection around the world.

BioIndio is made up by:

Asian Indigenous Women's Network  
Asociación de Derecho Ambiental de la Región Inka-Perú  
Congreso General Guayami, Panamá  
Cultural Conservancy, USA  
Cultural Survival, Canadá  
Sobrevivencia, Paraguay  
SAIIC, USA  
Gabriel Muyuy, Indigenous Senator of Colombia

For more information, please contact:

Alejandro Argumedo  
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 620  
Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1N 7B7  
Tel: 613.233.4653  
fax: 613.233.2292  
e-mail: susanodo@web.apc.org



## PEOPLES OF THE RAIN FORESTS HOLD GLOBAL CONFERENCE

Representatives of Indigenous organizations from tropical rainforests around the world met at the Second Conference of the Worldwide Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Rain Forests held in Iquitos, Peru, from August 25 to 31. The conference, organized by the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin (COICA), was a success not only because of the large number of participating organizations but also due to the decisions that were reached.

The acknowledgment of Indigenous autonomy was the central theme during the Second Conference which included the participation of 80 representatives from 26 different organizations from the Americas, Africa and Asia. The members agreed on a resolution that seeks

to apply the recommendations made in the 1991 U.N. meeting in Nuux, Greenland, which focused on the right of Indigenous peoples to govern themselves through their own laws, social norms and cultural values in a territory designated as their own. A second resolution issued at the conference asks for the ratification of covenant 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) also dealing with indigenous self-determination.

The Alliance was formed during the First Conference held in February 1992, in Penang, Malaysia. The Alliance seeks to influence the development policies of governments by urging law makers to respect the rights of Indigenous peoples whose livelihood is tied to the forests.

## AIPIN

From October 13-24, members of AIPIN (International Association of Indigenous Press) met to publicly announce recognition of their official status by the International Press Association. AIPIN is comprised of Indigenous people and organizations that work with various mediums of mass communication, press, radio and television. It's objective is to make the Indigenous voice an active one within mainstream society.

## RADIO WAVES FOR WOMEN

A recent conference organized by the "Mujeres Aymarasy Comunicación" program of the Center for Education and Communication in Puno, Peru, brought together Indigenous Women who make community-level radio programs in Peru and Bolivia. The programs, made for and by women, deal with problems faced by women everywhere, such as domestic violence, discrimination, and marginalization. Their object is to unite women around their mutual concerns

and to provide an avenue through which women can mobilize for social change. The conference provided the women an opportunity to share their experiences and to create a network of support. As Rosa Palomino, who produces a radio program in Peru noted at the end of the conference: "The radio programs provide a system of mutual support, a form of development. If we don't include the women, we will not develop..."



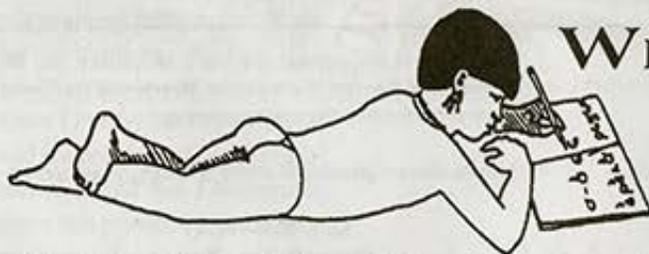
## IN DEFENSE OF INDIGENOUS MIGRANT WORKERS

United Farm Workers (UFW) And Representatives of the Binational Mixtec-Zapotec Front (FM-ZB) have signed a joint agreement to spur organizing and advance the defense of human and labor rights of Indigenous migrant workers in the U.S.

Thousands of Mixtec and Zapotec Indigenous peoples comprise the latest immigrant group of workers toiling in the agricultural fields and the service industry of California. Mixtec-Zapotec Bi-national Front is the largest and most important Oaxacan organization in California. The new immigrants are Indigenous workers from the

Mexican State of Oaxaca who, through a joint effort of the UFW and FM-ZB, will be encouraged to join the United Farm workers Union while still maintaining the autonomy of their own organization, under an agreement that was signed on September 24, 1993.

UFW President Arturo Rodriguez and FM-ZB General Coordinator Arturo Pimentel Salas signed the agreement in Los Angeles, California on September 24, 1993. The agreement is expected to boost a new union organization campaign begun by Cesar Chavez shortly before his death last April 22.



## WINGS FOR THE YOUNG

ALAS, Solidarity Alliance of Latinamericans, is a project driven by Carnita Piedra Castaneda Foundation of Ecuador, that seeks to promote links in the union among the young Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala to initiate solidarity and an international support network. This project covers three specific areas:

- 1) The creation of a network of communication on a national and international level allowing young people access to information in order promote exchange between different community organizations.
- 2) To promote national and international gatherings with Indigenous youth.
- 3) The creation of popular education programs what will be a "schools

without walls", community workshops, and the "university of the Streets", utilizing the methodology of "learning/doing, the community teaches the community".

The objectives of ALAS are to achieve unity and leadership of young people on behalf of communication and education so young people can become fundamental to the development of their communities.

ALAS will hold the Continental Encounter in Riobamaba, Ecuador next year, People interested can contact:

**Mauricio Cisternas**  
 Coordinator/Secretary  
 City of the Young-Penipe  
 Box 826  
 Riobamba, Ecuador  
 Tel: 474-124  
 FAX: 593-2-962263

NOV. 29  
- DEC. 2

**ASHANINKA SUMMIT  
AGAINST VIOLENCE**

recent violence against Ashaninka communities in Peru (See article on page 30).

For more information contact:

AIDSESEP  
Av. San Eugenio 981  
Urb. Sta Catalina, La Victoria  
Lima, Peru  
Tel: 724605  
Fax: 051-014-724605

The 8 Ashaninka organizations affiliated with the Inter-ethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle (AIDSESEP) will hold the First Summit Gathering of the Ashaninka Peoples in Satipo, Peru, from November 29 to December 2

The purpose of this important meeting is to analyze and formulate the policies and strategies that should be taken in view of the

DEC.  
9-12

**INTERNATIONAL  
TESTIMONIALS  
ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

before a Council of Listeners that will produce a document for submission to the United Nations and other forums. The event is co-sponsored by the Continental Coordinating Commission of Indigenous Nations and Organizations, the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance, and the Tonantzin Land Institute.

For more Information contact:

Tonantzin Land Institute  
P.O. Box 40182  
Albuquerque, NM 87196, USA  
Tel: (505) 766-9930

The International Testimonials on the Violation of Indigenous Human Rights, to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from December 9-12, 1993, will bring Indigenous peoples and organizations together to present and hear testimony on the impact nation-state governments have had on Indigenous sovereignty rights. Indigenous testifiers from around the world will present their cases

DEC.  
12-15

**CONAIE TO HOLD  
FOURTH CONGRESS**

and Amazonian communities, on behalf of the nine Indigenous nations of Ecuador. 2,500 people are expected to attend.

For more Information, contact:

CONAIE  
Av. Los Granados 2553 and Av. 6 de Diciembre  
Casilla Postal 92-C, Quito, Ecuador  
Tel: (2) 248-930  
Fax: (2) 442-271

The Fourth Congress of the National Indigenous Confederation of Ecuador (CONAIE) will take place from December 12-15 at the headquarters of the National Ecuadorian Amazonian Indigenous Confederation (CONFENAIE). New leaders will be elected to serve a three year term by representatives from Coastal, Andean,

MAR.  
17-20

**KANTO DE LA  
TIERRA  
MEDICINE EAGLES  
GATHERING**

The issues of environment, the free trade alliance, and the contamination of the river that separates Mexico and the United States are at the focus of this year's gathering.

Participants who are planning to attend in March, please contact:

Kanto de la Tierra  
Reymundo Tigre-Pérez  
Executive Director  
P.O. Box 3277  
Laredo, TX 78044  
Tel: (210) 791-3674

Preparations are underway for next year's Kanto de la Tierra, Medicine Eagles Gathering, to be held in Laredo, Texas, at the Old Mines Road site, from March 17 - 20.

MAR.

**FIRST GATHERING OF  
SPIRITUAL ELDERS OF  
THE MILLENNIAL WISDOM  
OF ABYA YALA**

Traditional Ways of friendship, trust, cooperation and, above all, the building of a Peaceful Future of co-existence with all our Relations and our Mother Earth.

For all communications contact us at the following address:

Proyecto de Desarrollo Santiago  
Km. 15 Carretera Roosevelt  
Apdo. 13-B C.P. 01903  
Guatemala, Guatemala  
Fax: 953913

The gathering will address the main issue affecting the Indigenous Peoples of Abya Yala, the danger of Extinction of the Wisdom keepers-Spiritual Elders due to the almost irreversible damage to our Traditional Ways. Our plan of action is to strength the

Dear Brothers:

I congratulate and thank you for your invaluable magazine and radio programs, they have been so helpful for us here and the Indigenous cause as a whole. The abundant information and material from all over the Indigenous world has both stimulated and informed us.

Soon we will also be sending information about Napuruna and who we are.

Yesterday, "Voz de la Selva," a radio station in Iquitos working at the forefront with Native communities, did a national report on the contamination of the Napo River. Valerio Grefa of COICA is a paisano and we speak in Quichua. It seems as though a petroleum company is going to start operations in Peru close to the Curary river which leads to the Napo river. If this happens, where are we going to find fish to eat and clean water?

Since I live by the Napo River, I told the people in charge of Conservation and the Environment about this possibility so that they might start doing something. Unfortunately, they are in the clouds. But, if we keep talking to them, they might do act. They have said to me, "You, the Native peoples, are the voice of alarm." They also would like to receive your news journal.

Padre J Coquinche Mercia  
Mision Napuruna, Rio Napo  
Iquitos, Peru

Dear Friends:

I have received two cassettes of your radio program, Voces Nativas. I greatly appreciate finding out about activities that are happening in the Indigenous world, reclaiming rights to land, natural resources and life. The SAIIC program is important for both Indigenous support groups and Indigenous peoples themselves.

I will be sending you information and photographs about us and the activities our men, women and children are involved in.

Loila Renner  
Managua, Nicaragua

Dear SAIIC Staff:

I was delighted to receive your news journal for the first time. I found it very useful to show and educate people that come through the park and research station (Parque Amacayacu, located in the Colombian Amazon). However, articles describing what is happening with nature and everything that lives within it, were missing.

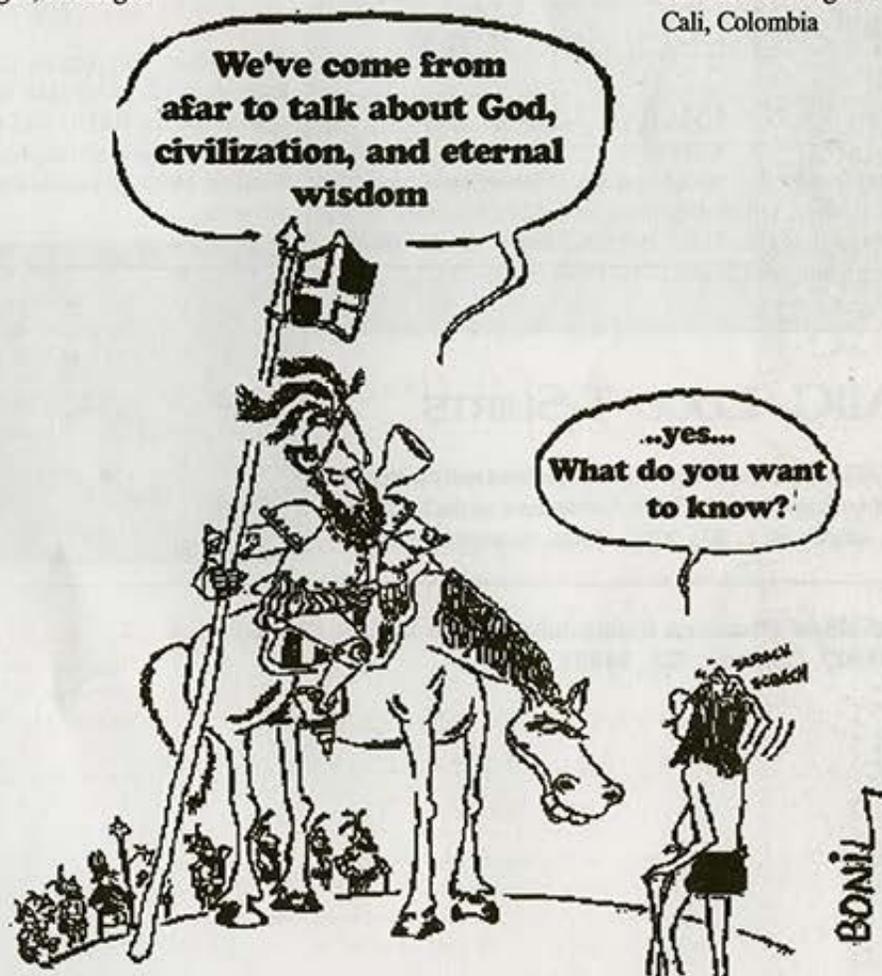
Rodolfo Pinilla  
Parque Amacayacu  
Letica, Amazonas Colombia

Dear SAIIC Staff:

I would like to unite my voice with the other people that see and read the Boletin, even though I am far away, with unified sentiments in an echo that will grow louder every time.

I am a mestiza from a region of Colombia and have worked many years with various ethnic groups. As an anthropologist, I work with women and thus am very interested in forming a women's group in the future. For this reason, I would very much like to receive your book Daughters of Abya Yala.

Amanda O. Delgado  
Cali, Colombia



## 1992 INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY & RESOURCE GUIDE

An annotated directory of over 600 international organizations that participated in 500 Years of Resistance projects. Includes declarations from Indigenous conferences and organizations and information on curriculum resources, speakers bureaus, computer networks, audio-visual resources and print resources. \$8 + \$1.75 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. Forty-eight pages with beautiful black and white photographs. Printed on recycled paper. \$8 + \$1.50 shipping. Soon to be available in Spanish.

### AMAZONIA: VOICES FROM 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 \$8.50 + \$1.75 shipping.

### VIDEO: A SKIRT FULL OF BUTTERFLIES

15 minutes. A love poem to the Isthmus Zapotec women of southern Oaxaca, Mexico, by filmmakers Ellen Osborne and Maureen Gosling. For every purchase made, a second copy will be sent to an Indigenous women's organization as a gift. \$19.95 + \$3 shipping.



## ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM SAIIC

### 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 for \$25 + \$1.75 for shipping & handling.

### VIDEO: REBUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES

Indigenous leaders from Central and South America discuss the 500-years campaign, which began as an Indian response to the Quincentenary celebration and has developed as an ongoing dialogue among indigenous activists. Produced by SAIIC. \$18 + \$1.75 shipping.

### SAIIC LOGO T-SHIRTS

Three color T-Shirts with the SAIIC logo on the front and the logo of the condor and the Eagle from the Quito Conference on the back. \$12 + \$2 shipping, specify M, L, XL, XXL: White, turquoise or Red.

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