



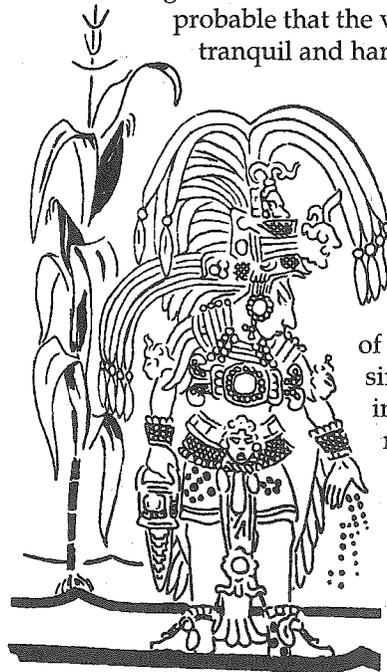
Massacre of Tzutujil Indians in Santiago Atitlan

(Guatemala) On December 2, 1990, after midnight, members of the military garrison at Santiago Atitlan fired upon a crowd of 1500 people who were protesting the harassment of civilians from their village.

There were confirmed reports of 11 dead and 19 wounded. Other sources claim 26 dead and 71 wounded. By December 4, 1990, three more wounded had died, bringing the confirmed total dead to 14.

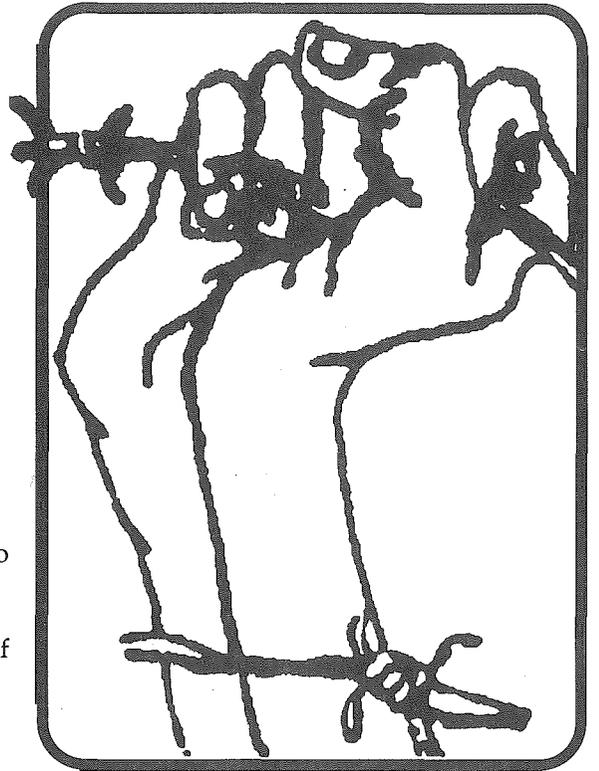
The evening of the massacre, soldiers entered the town, robbing a store and kidnapping its owner. Relatives of the shopkeeper woke other residents by ringing the church bells. When villagers heard the commotion, a crowd of 1500 gathered in the town plaza and proceeded to the Panabaj army garrison to protest the incident, shouting "Leave us in peace!" A short time later, the army opened fire on the crowd.

The army claims that the crowd fired the first shots. Nevertheless, the commander at the garrison was immediately relieved of his post. According to Guatemalan Archbishop Prospero Penados, "... it is not very probable that the villagers might attack the garrison. They are a tranquil and hardworking people."



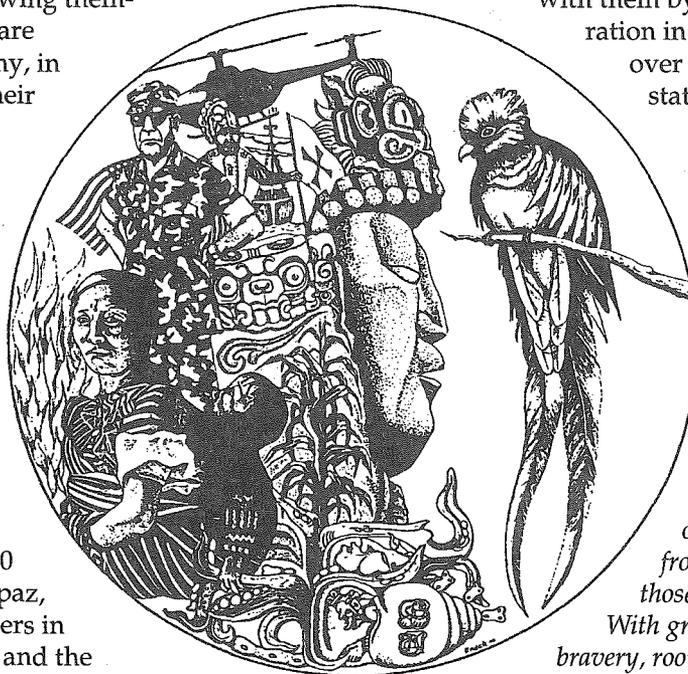
Within hours of the incident, villagers had collected 15,000 signatures on a petition demanding prosecution and punishment for the military personnel responsible, and the withdrawal of the army from Santiago Atitlan.

Santiago Atitlan has been the site of massacres and continuous murders ever since the army permanently occupied the town in 1978. Mayor Delfino Rodas is calling for a rapid investigation into the massacre and prosecution of those found responsible as well as the removal of the army garrison from Santiago Atitlan. Referring to the army base, he states that "Instead of protecting us, it is they who, under the effects of alcohol, become the assassins of the residents of this area." The people of Guatemala have



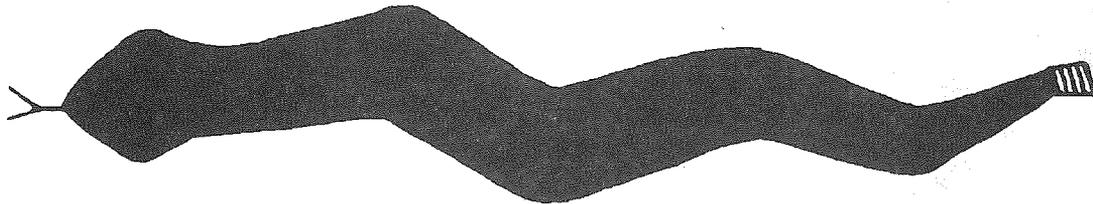
expressed their solidarity with the people of Santiago Atitlan on a huge scale. Many Indian, religious and human rights groups are demanding justice. The people of Atitlan are not allowing themselves to be intimidated and are coming forth to give testimony, in spite of repeated threats to their well-being.

The military is emphasizing that the massacre was a "mistake committed by the officers and soldiers of the garrison." According to the Guatemala News, the massacre was no mistake, but part of a well-orchestrated plan to intimidate and hold back the growing tide of popular discontent. The 1978 massacre of over 300 farmers in Panzós, Alta Verapaz, the killing of 39 political leaders in the Spanish Embassy in 1980 and the "scorched earth" policy that did away with more than 440 villages and countless human beings between 1982 and 1984, were all carried out on orders



that filtered down through the military chain of command. Indian organizations in Guatemala are requesting that people throughout the world express solidarity with them by reading the following declaration in their respective languages over local radio and television stations:

We, the people of _____
[country, organization, community or Native nationality] express our anger and anguish over the massacre by the Guatemalan army of the people of Santiago Atitlan on the 2nd of December, 1990. We join with the orphans, widows, families and neighbors of those killed in cold blood to demand the immediate removal of the Army and National Police from Santiago Atitlan and that those responsible be brought to justice. With great admiration for your unity and bravery, rooted in the strength of your community we appeal to those who rule Guatemala: the Army, the landowners, the industrialists, to match your determination for peace and justice.



Please write letters, send Faxes, telexes or call to:

1) Demand the prosecution and punishment of the military personnel responsible for the massacre.

2) Demand the respect of the villagers' petition to remove the army from Santiago, Atitlan.

3) Demand that the U.S. Congress withhold all U.S. aid to Guatemala until the villagers' petition is respected and those responsible for the massacre are brought to justice.

Direct messages to:

***Brig. Gen. Juan Leonel Bolaños
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, Guatemala
Telex: 305-5321 RELEXTGU
Tel: 011-502-253-7472 ext. 2226
Fax: 011-502-253-7472***

and:

***Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo
Presidente de la República de
Guatemala
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, Guatemala***

(Suggested salutation: Your Excellency)

Tel: 011 502 22 1212, 011 502 22 2266

Fax: 011502 253 7472

Telex: 305 5331 CAPRES GU

Telegrams: Presidente

Cerezo, Guatemala, Guatemala

ACT NOW!!!

Your prompt action is urgently needed! Please feel free to reprint this and help to spread the word!