

BOLIVIA



Aymaras Replace Peasant Union with Traditional Ayllu Federation

In the rural community of San Andrés de Machaca, in the Ingavi Province of the Department of La Paz, traditional forms of social and political organization have prevailed over the nation-state proposals to assimilate Indigenous cultures.

Following the recommendations of the October 1992 National Congress of the Confederation of Campesino Unions of Bolivia, CSUTCB, a regional congress gathered on April 10-11, 1993, in the province of Ingavi. Four hundred and fifty Indigenous campesino delegates, angry at established political parties of the left and the right who had manipulated their leaders in the past century, unanimously voted to dissolve the former campesino union and replace it with a Federation of Ayllus and Indigenous Nations.

Genero Oliver continued

SAIIC: Would you like to add anything to this interview?

GO: I would like to let people know that this kind of direct interview with a true representative of an Indigenous community allows others to learn about what is really happening in those communities. Traveling in Europe, we have found that invited political representatives are often people disengaged from the Indigenous Peoples. Many no longer live nor know what is happening in the communities themselves.

Paulino Guarachi, executive secretary of the CSUTCB, and Florencio Mendoza of the Tupa Katari Federation attended the congress but only as guests. The Indigenous campesinos of San Andrés de Machaca discussed how traditional Aransaya and Urinsaya sections of the community have reinstated a communal regime where *mallku* and *mama ta'qlla*, the Indigenous authorities, follow the ancient dictates of their ancestors. Political power has also been restored to the elders of the community.

The native authorities believe that the *Anuqara*, *llunk'u*, and *sallka*, corrupt local politicians of the past, had betrayed the community by selling the political positions of the traditional authorities to national political parties. "The result was the transformation of the Indigenous community into an urban dominated appendix of the nation-state, which has only sporadically answered the needs of the community itself."

Community representatives at the congress agreed to end all affiliation with political parties, speak and write Aymara-Spanish and respect cultural traditions.

Source: Aquí, La Paz, Bolivia



The province of Ingavi is reinstating its Indigenous authorities

Photo Aquí