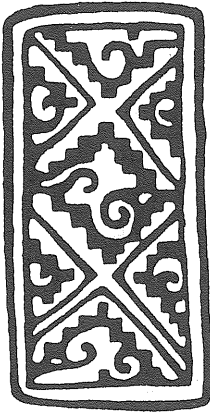


PARAGUAY

Conference in Asunción



A Mbyá family experiences the frustration of being evicted from their native homeland, in Estancia Las Golondrinas.

photo: AINDIP

On June 13-17, 1988, the Centro de Estudios Humanitarios (CEDUL), the Universidad Católica, both in Paraguay and the Centro Ecumenico de Documentação (CEDI), and the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista from Brazil, organized a conference in Asunción. The purpose was to analyze the consequences of major development projects in Paraguay and Brazil. Several Indigenous Representatives attended the conference. They discussed four fundamental points:

(1) In Brazil and Paraguay, the socio-cultural rights and language of the Indigenous people are not recognized nor do they have a right to be different.

(2) The governments treat Indigenous land as "no man's land" and make it available for development projects, such as roads, hydroelectric plants, colonization or exploitation of the natural resources.

(3) The people who are affected by these development projects are neither consulted nor

incorporated in the planning process, even though such measures have drastic effects such as loss of lands, forced migrations, a deterioration of health care and social disorganization.

(4) Frequently, these projects respond to national or international interests which are alien to the reality of Indigenous peoples as well as to the regional communities that are being affected by these plans.

There were eleven important recommendations passed at this conference which are available upon request. In summary, the recommendations define the rights of Indigenous people to determine their destiny, including direct participation and consultation in any development projects, their right to define the criteria for land demarcations, and that any development projects consider the concepts of self-sufficiency and renovation of natural resources.