



## BOLIVIA

### Indians Seek representation in Peasant Confederation

Interview with Genaro Oliver, CSUTCB

*The following is an interview with Genaro Oliver, an active member of the Confederation of Campesino Unions of Bolivia (CSUTCB). We spoke with him in Genoa, Italy in August 1992, at the Soconas/Incomindios meeting of European organizations in solidarity with the Indian Nations of the American Continent. We offer Mr. Oliver's perspective as a new current within the CSUTCB. His main tenant is that the Campesino Confederation must consider the reality of ethnic identity.*

SAIIC: Who do you represent Genaro Oliver?

Genaro Oliver: I am a member of the Confederation of Campesino Unions of Bolivia (CSUTCB). The CSUTCB is organizing the First Meeting of Nationalities in October 1992. This First Meeting seeks to bring together all Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia, and its main objective is to regain the participation of the Indigenous Peoples that have not been taken into account by the Campesino Confederation.

The name "Confederation of Campesino Unions" shows the lack of genuine representation of the Indigenous people of Bolivia. The name indicates that the organization represents "unions", and unions were imported from Europe. The term "campesino" (peasant) is an imposed name as well. In the "Indigenous Peoples Meeting" we would like to re-establish our ancient ways of organizing ourselves.

SAIIC: What is the Labor Confederation of Bolivia's (COB) position?

GO: The COB is rethinking some issues. If the Campesino Confederation tries to reestablish contact with its Indigenous base, the COB will also have to address the issue of representation. At the moment it only represents waged workers but not Indigenous Peoples.

SAIIC: Do you believe that out of the meeting a larger entity will arise, maybe an entity that will be larger than the current COB or even the CSUTCB?

GO: This is what we are thinking. The Indigenous people are a majority. There are more of us than there are waged workers, and waged workers are not the only people to be represented. We think there will be interesting discussions with other workers' organizations.

SAIIC: What is your opinion about women's participation in the Indigenous Peoples' Meeting?

GO: This is a topic that will have to be discussed by women. There is a large women's organization which is a part of the Campesino Confederation. But as is the case with Indigenous people, the Campesino Confederation does not adequately deal with the problems of women. Their participation as women and as Indian women in the Indigenous Peoples' Meeting will be extremely important.

**"The name of Campesino Unions' shows the lack of genuine representation of the Indigenous people of Bolivia"**

# 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 Tupaq 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*