

GUATEMALA

A Journey To The South

"In the month of December, 1974, I journeyed into Guatemala with a group of Indian people from different parts of the United States. I myself came from a small Indian community called Tets'ugeh Owinge in the state of New Mexico. In our great big mobile home, we began a journey that was to begin the first contact between the Native People of the North and the Native People of the South. A journey, I believe, that was directed by the Spirits of Life. . . .

"In one village the women dressed me in their native costume, an honor I will never forget. Their smiles told me that I looked like

them except I was taller. The language barrier kept me from communicating what my heart felt. It was great knowing that we both lived. Those that we had the privilege of meeting, we renewed our relation to one another. It was like meeting a relative that we haven't seen in a long time. Miles separate us but our thoughts and prayers will keep us together. . . .

"I know many things have changed in Guatemala since we visited in 1974-75, but I know the people are still there. It is hard for me to imagine the situation there today. The peaceful and beautiful people that I had the privilege of meeting are now carrying arms and fighting with their lives to save the Mayan civilization. Little innocent children suffering the consequences of wars. In my heart, mind and spirit I unite with my relatives and support their struggle against the evils of mankind. The spiritless soul of the non-Indians can change our appearance but he will never take our minds, hearts and spirit. We will always be a free people. This spirit is what binds us in the North and the South.

"What can we do to help our relatives? As Indian people from the North, we who are still very strong in our original instructions can offer our prayers every day for our relatives and especially remember them in ceremonies. As Americans we must voice our support for the indigenous people of the world, through our governments. As grassroots people we must aid those fleeing for their lives, not because they want to be a part of the world of the Americans, but because their very existence is threatened. Many of our relatives want to return to their homeland. They will gladly return if they will be guaranteed a free life. We must also give our support to those Americans who are being prosecuted for aiding fleeing refugees.

"May these words bring peace and harmony to our relatives in Central and South



"Woman with Fire" etching. © 1975 Ester Hernandez

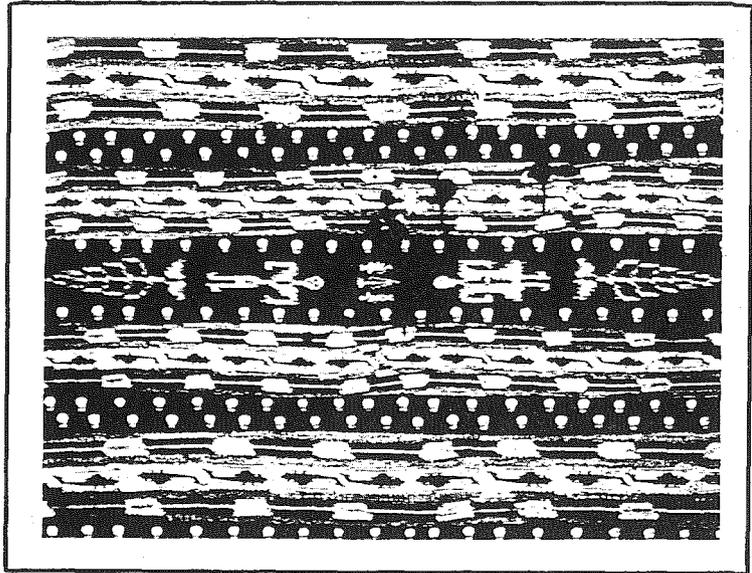
America. We are united with them in the Spirit of Life.”

In spirit with my Brothers and Sisters,

K'uu yaa Tsa-wa

Journey to the South will be printed in its entirety in *Native Self-Sufficiency* (Vol. 8, no. 2, April 1986), P.O. Box 10, Forestville, CA 95436, or may be ordered from SAIIC. (See order form on page 19.)

“*Tejido de los Desaparecidos*”
silkscreen. © 1984 Ester
Hernandez



Inauguration Day In Guatemala

Bruce Curtis, who works with the organization Plenty (651 Santa Ray, Oakland, CA 94610, 415-465-1328) arrived in Guatemala in February this year as part of the Central America Peace March, which began in Panama in December, 1985. In this report, Bruce describes some of what he found in Guatemala the day the new civilian president Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo was inaugurated.

I went to visit a Mayan friend, José Poaquil (not his real name) who lives in Guatemala City. José is a traditional Mayan who is careful to keep a low profile because of the heightened persecution which traditional Mayans have experienced in Guatemala since 1980. I asked José what he thought about the new civilian government. He said only time would tell, but that he was cautiously optimistic, a view I heard repeatedly during my stay in the country.

While the entire city was distracted by the inauguration ceremonies, José and I drove outside the city limits to visit a refugee camp. It was a camp mostly for Mayan peasants who had left their highland villages and come down to the city looking for safety and work. On the way we rode through a middle class suburb that bordered a large, flat empty tract of land that was being prepared for another suburban housing development. The lots were sectioned off and the street signs were in place. Suddenly, we noticed hundreds of people streaming onto this empty tract, and in their midst we could see held high the bright green flag of the newly-elected Christian Democratic Party. Later we would learn that it was a land invasion by homeless refugees who intended to build shacks and squat on this unused plot of ground. The land belongs to the government of Guatemala.