

SAIIC



South and Central American Indian Information Center (SAIIC)

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We appreciate very much the support and interest given to the SAIIC newsletter during the past year. Your comments and suggestions have been helpful. We also welcome those who are reading the newsletter for the first time and urge you to subscribe. We need your economic support in order to continue bringing you information about the millions of Indians who, along with other oppressed groups, struggle to change their futures.

The acronym SAIIC stands for the South American Indian Information Center, but in fact we have always included information about indigenous peoples' issues in Central America and Mexico as well as Australia, the Pacific, and North America. At the suggestion of readers, we have changed our name (but not the acronym) to the South and Central American Indian Information Center.

We want the information from our newsletter to reach as many people as possible. Feel free to quote us. We appreciate reference to SAIIC whenever you publish information you find here.

1985 has been a year marked by many accomplishments by Indian communities. The participation of indigenous organizations in the United Nations has been strengthened through a number of international and regional gatherings, and the negotiations for peace between the Nicaraguan government and the Miskitus have given hope for the future. On the other hand, there have been numerous negative events, such as the continuing massacres and oppression of all types against Indian people and others who suffer from poverty, especially in Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Colombia, and Chile.

However, there is no doubt that Indian people continue to walk forward along the road to liberation, for which international solidarity and support is necessary.

Warm greetings and wishes for a good year in 1986.

In solidarity,
Nilo Cayuqueo
and the SAIIC Committee



NINTH CONGRESS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN INDIAN INSTITUTE Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 28-November 2, 1985

The Inter-American Indian Institute was founded in Pátzcuaro, Mexico, in 1940 and now functions under the auspices of the Organization of American States. The Institute convenes a congress every four years to discuss Indian issues; the Ninth Congress was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, from October 28 to November 2. In addition to the government-appointed delegations which attended the Congress, there were many representatives of Indian organizations and organizations with interests in indigenous rights, community development, and the environment. SAIIC sent four representatives.

One very important aspect of the Congress was that it demonstrated how strongly Indian people in North, Central, and South America desire to establish ongoing communication with one another and to gain a deeper understanding of the connections among all indigenous people of the Americas.

Events during the Congress also made clear the relationship between resources sought by national governments and multinational interests and Indian control of the land where these resources are often located. Indian people from South and Central America at the Congress expressed their concern about their land and water, the issues of sovereignty and exploitation, forced relocation, and the genocide of their people. Particularly strong statements from community representatives from Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, among others, sounded like a loud chorus repeating what we have heard from Indians in the United States. The complex issues addressed at the Congress regarding Big Mountain were parallel in many respects to the problems discussed by those attending from Central and South America.

During the Congress, some of the complexities of the Nicaraguan situation were also aired as the Sandinistas, Miskitus, Sumus, and Ramas try to work out an accommodation in the face of intervention by the United States.

The issue of Indian refugees from Guatemala and other Central American countries was addressed at the Congress, both in official sessions and informally. Many of the problems these refugees face every day are only too familiar to Indians in the United States: daily survival in terms of food, housing, and medical care, and the maintenance of cultural integrity and continuity. Among Guatemalans there was a strong expression of the need to preserve the spiritual foundation both in Guatemala and at refugee centers.

While not addressed directly, the relationship between Indians and industrial technology came up again and again: How might technology be

Victoria Bombarry (left), Muskogee Creek and editor of Native Self Sufficiency, and Rosa Isolde Reuque, of the Mapuche Community Organization from Chile, speaking together in Santa Fe.



Photo: S. Lobbo



Photo: S. Lobo

Tarcisio Kuja (center), representing CONACNIE from Ecuador, speaking at a meeting in Santa Fe. Seated at the table on Tarcisio's left: Jorge Valiente, Kolla from Argentina. On Jorge's left: Nicanor Atirillo, of the Association of Indian Parties from Paraguay. At the opposite end of the table (in white hat): Adrian Aquino, of the National Association of Salvadorian Indians. Between Tarcisio and Jorge in the row behind them: Armando Rojas, Miskitu from Nicaragua.

used as a tool by Indians rather than as a weapon against them? For example, there were those at the Congress who spoke of the resurgence of the use of native non-hybrid seeds.

Communication among Indians was a major issue. Many spoke of community-based radio programs and the possibility of exchanging taped shows. People passed out newsletters and other literature from their organizations. Indian writers and journalists made contact at the Congress. There was talk of the use of video in communities. How can this be facilitated; where are resources to be found; and can an exchange network be developed? Also Indian people spoke of using computers.

Indian Forum

In the past, congresses of the Inter-American Indian Institute have emphasized participation by government representatives of the member nation states, with minimal attention to the involvement of Indian people. At the Ninth Congress, representatives of indigenous organizations in the Americas as well as Australia and India were present in substantial numbers for the first time. As non-delegates holding observer status, indigenous participants decided to hold parallel sessions that were called the Indian Forum.

South and Central American Indians involved in the Indian Forum included representatives from the National Indian Organization of Colombia (ONIC), the Regional Indian Council of Cauca (CRIC) from Colombia, the South American Indian Council (CISA), the Inter-Ethnic Development Association of the Peruvian Jungle (AIDSESEP), the Kolla Center from Argentina, the Mapuche Community Organization from Chile, the Union of Indian Nations (UNI) from Brazil, the Association of Indian Campesinos of Eastern Bolivia, the National Indian Confederation of Ecuador (CONACNIE), the Confederation of Indian Nations in the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), the Shuar Federation from Ecuador, the Movement of Indian Refugees in Mexico, Corn Maya from Guatemala, MISURASATA and



Nilo Cayuqueo (left) interviewing Biraci Brasil, Yawanawá from Acre, Brazil, who represented the Union of Indian Nations at the Santa Fe meeting.



other Miskitu delegates from Nicaragua, the Guaymi Congress from Panama, and the Zapotec/Chinantec Assembly from Mexico.

Representatives from organizations in the United States included those from the American Indian Youth Council, the International Indian Treaty Council, the Iroquois Confederation, Navajos from Big Mountain, Pueblo representatives, the Seventh Generation Fund, the Congress of American Indians, the Indigenous Peoples' Network, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Committee for Hawaiian Sovereignty, and many more.

From Canada there were representatives from the World Council of Indigenous People and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Assembly of First Nations. The National Federation of Land Councils from Australia was also represented.

The final declaration of the Indian Forum states: "Given that the Inter-American Indian Institute has always made decisions about Indian people without consulting authentic Indian organizations, the Indian Forum proposes that all decisions should be made in close consultation with the representative Indian organizations and that at the same time a human rights section be formed with the participation of representatives of Indian organizations." These proposals were not recognized by the official Congress.

The statement by the Indian forum also included a strong denouncement of the oppression suffered by many indigenous people. Ample cases were cited from each country to demonstrate that multinational corporations and large landholders continue to exploit Indian lands and people and that such exploitation involves the complicity of national governments that oppress Indian people.

Through the pressure of Indian representatives, a proposal by a representative from Spain (who participated in the Congress as a "special guest") which suggested a 1992 celebration of the arrival of the Spanish to be called "Meeting of Two Worlds" was tabled.

The next Congress is to be held in 1988 in Argentina. SAIIC looks forward to the active participation of many Indian delegates.

—Nilo Cayuqueo

—Susan Lobo

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS AT THE SANTA FE CONGRESS

Grace Smallwood, National Federation of Land Councils, Australia:

"I've come to the Congress to get the aboriginal point across. There is very little understanding of the oppression my people have suffered for 200 years. Even though most of the delegates at the Congress do not speak English, there have been translators, so people identify with the need for solidarity, particularly when I tell people about the appalling statistics in our country. We are 2% of the population and we have an infant mortality rate that is four times greater than the non-aboriginal Australians. Forty per cent of people in prisons today are aboriginal Australians. The latest statistics show that aboriginal unemployment is four to five times greater than the non-aboriginal people. We only received citizenship in 1967.

"I believe that all indigenous people who have been colonized are now showing solidarity. Every indigenous person at the Congress who has spoken to me, we are all dealing with the same problems, so we are now showing solidarity. It's bound to get better, since the situation we face couldn't get any worse."

Jesús Avirama, President of the Regional Indian Council of Cauca, Colombia:

"Within the past two years there has been a dramatic increase in guerrilla activity in our country, especially in the Cauca region. At the same time, the government military forces enter the area and respond with violence, but not necessarily toward the guerrilla forces, who usually flee the area. It is the Indian community that suffers. Currently there are a number of Indian communities that have been leveled by the military forces. Bombs are used indiscriminately in village areas. We are very concerned and we are asking international human rights organizations to intervene to stop the destruction and bombing. There are also many deaths as a result of actions by paramilitary troops. In the Cauca there are paramilitary groups called the Pajaros who are specially trained to kill community leaders.

"For us now, the gravest problems are the militarization, the loss of land, and our lack of civil rights."

José María Cabascanga, National Council of Indian Organizations and Communities of Ecuador:

"Indian people represent 60 per cent of the population or about 5 million people. One of the major problems that we face is that the government has become increasingly sympathetic to multinational interests such as United Fruit, which has created many problems for Indian people. The government is moving increasingly to a capitalistic right which favors multinational business and large landowners rather than the interests of the Indian people."

José María Cabascanga

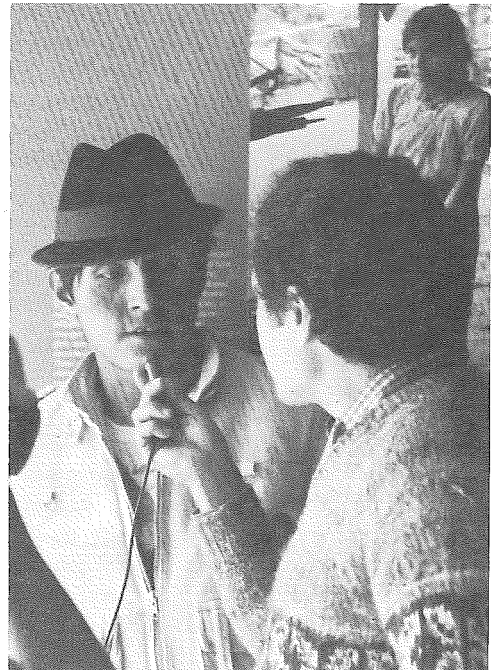


Photo: S. Lobo

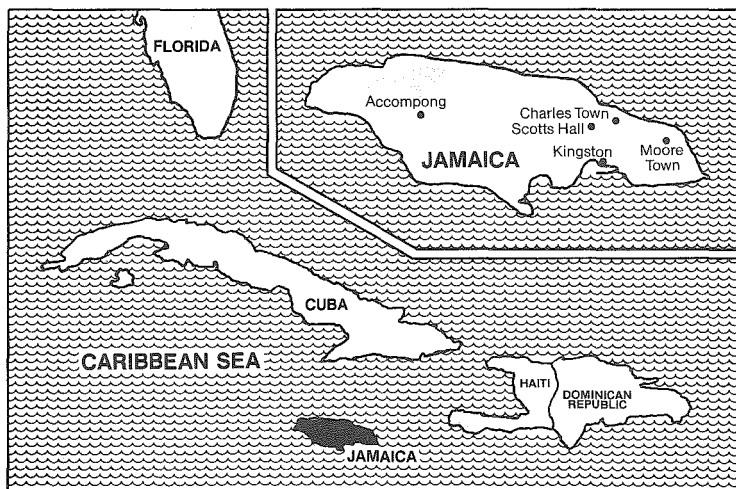
JAMAICA



According to the official written history of Jamaica, the indigenous people of the land, the Arawaks, were exterminated by the Spanish prior to the British takeover of Jamaica in 1655. However, the Jamaican Maroons, free blacks who waged guerrilla war against the British, claim otherwise. Roy Nigerian Harris, leader of the Young Maroons of Jamaica, states, "Most of them died, but the remainder were living in the Maroons communities with the Spaniards who flew to the hills. Three groups of people, the Maroons, the Spaniards, and the Arawaks defended the island against the English. But because the English promised the Maroons peace, they stopped fighting. The Spaniards flew because they could not fight without the Maroons. The Arawaks lived with the Maroons all the time. They cross-bred with the Maroons but the African blood stands out."

Today, there are four major Maroons communities in Jamaica, born of treaties completed with the British in 1739. The treaties recognized Maroon freedom, their right to the land, and Maroon self-government. Accompong is one of the original villages located in the rugged western Cockpit Country; and Moore Town, Charles Town and Scotts Hall were originally settled by the Windward Maroons. Only Accompong and Moore Town, however, maintain a way of life based on the original treaties, such as communal land tenure, exemption from government taxation, and governing Maroon councils headed by elected officers. Still, Maroons throughout Jamaica rely on traditional medicine and practice a clearly distinct tradition of music and dance, which contain African and Arawak influences.

Despite their proud history of freedom and resistance, the Maroons are a forgotten people in Jamaica. According to Nigerian, "Government does not share whatever happens in Jamaica with the Maroons. Musicians sing, but not about the Maroons. They teach, but not about the Maroons. The Maroons have no hospitals. We have the highest malnutrition rate in the country. We have serious cases of gastroenteritis. We cannot transport our sick for we have no roads. We can't afford meals. We are starving. There is no community activity for the youths. The children are harshly brought up with the whip and harsh words because of the



pressure that have burdened the people. It is discouraging." Continual attempts are made to rob the Maroons of their commonly-held lands through private purchases, and to undermine their independence by withholding public services, the same techniques that have been used to eradicate indigenous land tenure and indigenous peoples around the world.

Still, Nigerian says, "Sometimes we cannot blame strangers for all the bad things that befall us—we must also

blame ourselves and our own Maroons leaders. We would like to collaborate with everyone and make this world a better place, but first we have to help ourselves by getting rid of the rifts in our communities.” To begin this process, the Maroons have formed a new federation to create a stronger representation and voice for the people. Nigerian concludes, “We have a legacy here in Jamaica that we can afford to extend to all the peoples of the Caribbean, and this legacy lies within the realm of the Maroons. It is in the history of the people and their will and determination to fight against evil and overwhelming powers. Our history, if told correctly, can be of benefit in many ways. It would surprise many.”

—Randi Kristensen

SAIIC has also received a letter from Roy Nigerian Harris with the following comments:

“I am the vice-president of the newly form Maroons Federation of Jamaica. We would like to Federate with you as we share the same problems. We could open a communication connection and rise everyone to the occasion. I myself have been much concerned about the Indians of the Americas. Let us join hands for the Federation of Man.

For more information regarding the situation of the Maroons, the new Federation, or the Maroons Cultural Centre, contact Roy Nigerian Harris, 12 Harbor Street, Port Antonio, Portland, Jamaica, W.I., or Randi Kristensen, 1727 Delaware Street, Berkeley, CA 94703.

GUATEMALA

The government’s assault on guerrilla groups in rural areas of Guatemala has involved the destruction of many Indian villages and the deaths of many Indian people. Others have fled across the border to Mexico to protect their lives. Nilo Cayuqueo recently asked Domingo Lopez of the Indian Movement of Guatemala, who is among the refugees in Mexico, about the situation in the refugee camps:

“It is a very difficult situation, but we have to recognize that the very fact that we are now in Mexico is a gesture of support by the Mexican government. Otherwise, we know that there would be no other place for us to be. Actually, even though there are many limitations, we know that the refugees are struggling to survive in all aspects of life. We are trying to survive, and we have the hope that we might some day return to our country, but that will only be when we know there are genuine changes.”

Jeronimo Camposeco of the Corn Maya project in Florida comments on what can be done to assist Guatemalan refugees in the United States:

“One important step is working to build a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood on the part of Indians in the United States toward Guatemalan refugees now living here.”

Another Guatemalan Indian voice is that of Pedro Ixcoy:

“We continue our traditional religious practice, even though we are persecuted and killed for it. It is seen by the government as very subversive. There can be a unity of understanding among Indians of all the Americas from our knowledge of the religious basis of life.”

The newly-elected civilian government in Guatemala brings hope for change. SAIIC strongly supports a move toward peace and social justice.



Guatemala News and Information Bureau, 1982.



Photo from *Como nos organizamos (How We Are Organized)*, an excellent 36-page document which SAIIC has received from the Cauca Regional Indian Council (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, or CRIC, Apartado Aéreo 516, Popayan, Cauca, Colombia). The booklet details the activities and discussions surrounding the formation of CRIC in the early 1970s and describes some of CRIC's successes in reclaiming Indian land. Please send \$3 to SAIIC if you would like a photocopy. (Currently available only in Spanish.)

COLOMBIA

SAIIC has received two news releases from the Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC, National Indian Organization of Colombia, Carrera 3a. No. 15-48, A.A. 32395, Bogota, D.E., Colombia). The first concerns Indian communities in the Cauca Valley which have been disrupted by recent fighting between the Colombian army and guerrilla insurgents:

"Nearly 1,500 Indians have taken refuge in the city of Florida [southwest of Cali in the department of Valle de Cauca; see map, page 11]. Many are ill, and the authorities have not responded appropriately to their problems.

"The refugees normally reside in the surrounding countryside, which has been the scene of combat between the Colombian army and guerrillas of the M-19 and Ricardo Franco organizations since Monday, Sept. 16, when the army began bombing the zone.

"The communities affected include La Diana, San Juanito, Los Caleños, Lomagorda, Salado, Guacas, Rivera, Granada and Cumbre. Indians have been forced to abandon their fields and their livestock to protect their lives.

"We demand that the authorities move immediately to resolve these problems. The departmental government must intervene to permit the evacuation of the zone and to stop the bombing. We demand compensation for the damages which have been inflicted.

"We ask that the Red Cross be mobilized to help those displaced by the fighting. We ask that community organizations, unions, and *campesino* organizations express their solidarity

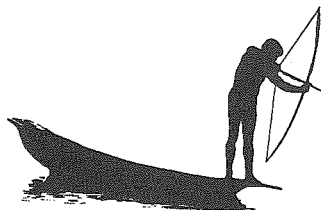
with the Indian people in Florida through letters to the authorities who are responsible for providing immediate solutions to these problems.”

The second ONIC press release concerns the murder of Indian activist Luís Antonio Perez Sánchez in the department of Meta, southeast of Bogota:

“ONIC condemns before national and international public opinion the assassination of *compañero* Luís Antonio Perez Sanchez, who worked since 1972 with UNAMA, the organization of the Sikuaní and Piapocos peoples in eastern Colombia. His primary work was developing a program of Indian education which beginning in January, 1986, will include a boarding school run by UNAMA.

“Luís’ defense of Indian rights created many enemies for him and many difficulties in his life. At 12:45 a.m. on Sept. 25 he was shot in the back while visiting two women who witnessed his death. A member of the House of Representatives stated publicly in the departmental legislature in Villavicencio [capital of the department of Meta] that Luís had traveled to Villavicencio three days earlier solely for the purpose of informing the authorities that he had received a death threat from Luís Calistro Rondon Alvis, the mayor of Puerto Gaitán, who stated, ‘I’m not leaving Puerto Gaitán until I’ve killed someone.’

“Luís had also been threatened several times by the parish priest of Puerto Gaitán, who had said to Indian people at various times that he wants to take over the local Indian center. In February of this year the Indian center was burned along with four nearby houses that had been constructed by the Indian community.”



SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL

FOR THE RIGHTS OF THREATENED TRIBAL PEOPLES

ECUADOR

Survival International (29 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NT, England) has sent the following urgent action bulletin:

“The invasion of Indian lands in Ecuadorian Amazonia has accelerated dramatically over recent months. In spite of the serious damage it is causing to the environment, the government is actively promoting oil palm cultivation on a massive scale, with financial backing from Belgium, Britain, and Germany. It has manipulated the use of conservation zones for its own commercial ends, and Indians are now being pushed off the lands they have lived on for centuries. In an attempt to resist this invasion, the Indians recently killed a colonist in a conflict over land.”

In September the Confederation of Indian Nations in the Ecuadorian Amazon, which represents the Shuar, Quichua, Cofan, Secoya, Siona, and Huaorani Indian nations, published *Palma Africana y Etnocidio*, which gives a detailed account of the effects of the spread of oil palm cultivation. For a copy, send a minimum donation of \$5 to CONFENIAE, Av. 6 de Diciembre 159 y Pazmino, Oficina 408, Casilla 4180, Quito, Ecuador.

PERU

Voz Indígena is published by AIDSESP (Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana, San Eugenio 981, Santa Catalina, Lima 13, Peru) and emphasizes current information regarding the jungle regions of Peru. The most recent issue includes articles on the following topics:

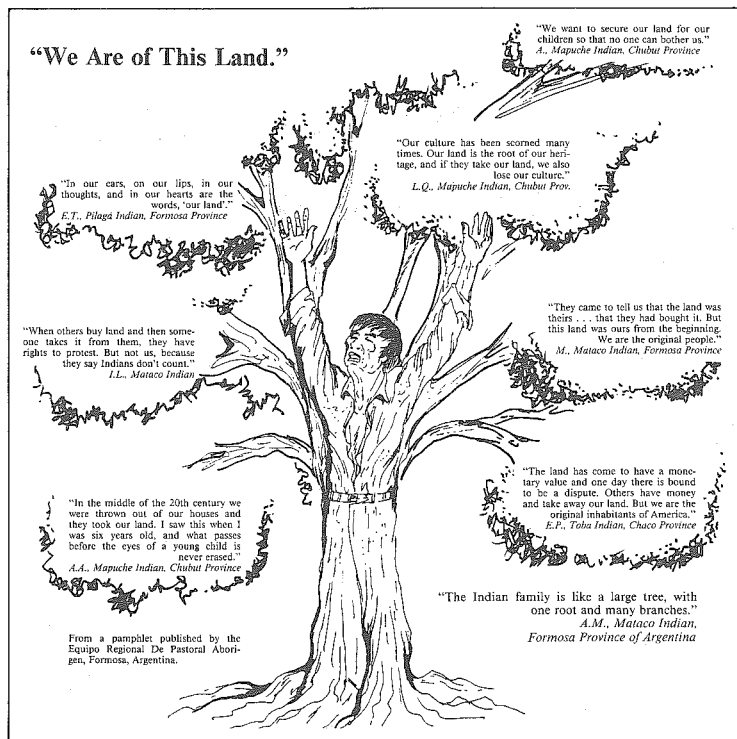
- Native communities and the new Peruvian government
- Current situation and plans of the Indian organizations in the Peruvian jungle
- Tenth Congress of AIDSESP
- Santiago River: Native communities displace colonists and defend their lands
- Update on OAAM (Aguaruna Organization of the Upper Mayo)
- Interview with representatives of the Cocamilla communities

The December, 1985, issue of *Andean Focus* (198 Broadway, Room 302, New York, NY 10038) includes the following comments on Peru:

"Thousands of peasants have fled the war-torn countryside of Ayacucho and Huancavelica. They make their way to the jungle, the coast and other parts of the mountains. Many have gone north to the city of Huancayo, in the central Andes. Huancayo is a stopping off place for those who are headed to the mines of La Oroya, to the coffee fields of Chanchamayo or to seek work in Lima. There may be as many as 5,000 refugees in Huancayo today.

"In the city, the refugees live in utter poverty. They have left behind their belongings and their land. Local customs are foreign, the climate is different and it is difficult to find housing and work. "The women who make up the National Association of Prisoners, Disappeared and Kidnapped are admirable. Most of them are Quechua-speaking. They have lost a husband, a son, a brother—or all three. Month after month they make the rounds of police stations and judicial offices searching for news of their loved ones and demanding justice."

Another periodical published in English which SAIIC recommends for up-to-date information about South and Central America is *Latinamerica Press*, Apartado 5594, Lima 100, Peru. The October issue (V. 17, no. 40) is a special on indigenous people.



CHILE

In August of 1985 Juan Francisco Fresno, Cardinal of Santiago, issued the "National Agreement for the Transition to a True Democracy" which called for reconciliation and a move toward democracy. This statement from the Catholic Church establishment has evoked responses from various sectors.

From AD-MAPU, one of the Mapuche organizations: "In response to the Cardinal's call, we call for a new society that is just and democratic in which our people participate with equal rights in relation to other sectors of the country. We believe that a new democracy without the participation of the Mapuche people cannot be a democracy. . . . We struggle for autonomy and self-determination for our people so that we will be the prime movers in our own destiny. We urge participation in the development of a new constitution that acknowledges and guarantees our rights and cultural heritage in accordance with our identity. . . . We want it clearly understood that we will continue to struggle for a genuine consensus with all those who embrace an authentic and true democracy." The statement is signed by José Santos Millao, María L. Traipe, Aucan Huilcaman, Domingo Marileo, Domingo Jineo, Ana Maria Llao and Gabriel Chicabual.

In *Fortin Mapocho* (Aug. 19, 1985), one of the workers unions (Comando Nacional de Trabajadores) lists a number of points seen as necessary for the future peaceful stabilization of the country. Among them: "For the Mapuche nation, we demand their recognition as such in any future constitution as well as a recognition of other ethnic groups. We also demand the immediate repeal of laws 2568 and 2750, which divide and subdivide Mapuche lands and leads to their expropriation and loss by the Mapuche to whom they rightfully belong."

AD-MAPU also states: "The establishment of laws 2568 and 2750 have divided and subdivided our sacred communal lands. Article 1 of Law 2568 says, 'Once the community is divided and individual titles to land have been received, said lands cease to be Indian lands and the inhabitants cease to be Indian.' So in the eyes of this law our People would no longer exist."



BRAZIL

Filmmakers Monti Aguirre and Glenn Switkes have returned from a six-month research and filming trip in Brazil. Their film, *Amazonia* will analyze the occupation of the Amazon Basin, including the fight by Indian people to protect their lands.

According to Monti and Glenn, "The situation of native people in the Brazilian Amazon is critical. Indians face invasions of their land by mining and lumber companies, large landowners, and landless peasants. The demarcation of Indian lands is a hot political issue, and Brazil's new civilian government has not yet made a commitment to protect these areas."

Also they report:

Pataxó

Just before dawn on November 22, 130 heavily armed military police violently attacked an encampment of 30 families of the Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe in the state of Bahia. At least 30 people, including children, were wounded. Two days earlier the Pataxó had reoccupied their traditional lands which had been invaded by cattle ranchers and cacao growers.

Xokó

The Xokó people of the island of São Pedro in Sergipe in northeastern Brazil have been under constant harassment by ranchers who want their land. Xokó people have been ambushed and leaders have been forced to flee under the threat of death. In November, ranchers threatened to bomb their village if the Xokó did not abandon the area, forcing the Indians to flee into the forest.

Upper Rio Negro

Gold seekers continue to enter the Upper Rio Negro area despite the fact that many have already been expelled by police. Their influence has been so pervasive that there are now 8,000 Indians, including Tukanos, Baniwas, Tarianos, Desanos, and other groups from the area, who are also hunting for gold. However, the principal threat to the peoples of the Upper Rio Negro may be the arrival of mineral companies in search of gold, zinc, lead, and copper. In September, Brazil's National Department of Mineral Production (DNPM) issued a list of 127 authorizations for mineral exploration, almost all on Indian lands and thus prohibited by law. Five days later the director of DNPM revoked the approvals, stating that the companies would only have a "priority right . . . should mineral activities be permitted in Indian areas."



According to Gabriel Gentil, a Tukano and a member of the Association of Indian Communities of the Tiquié River, several mineral companies have



already begun exploration in the area without waiting for official approval. The Brazilian giants Paranapanema and Brumadinho, the multinational Brascan/British Petroleum, and GoldAmazon, a company closely linked to the governor of Amazonas state, are some of the companies coveting the resources on Indian lands in the Upper Rio Negro.



FUNAI

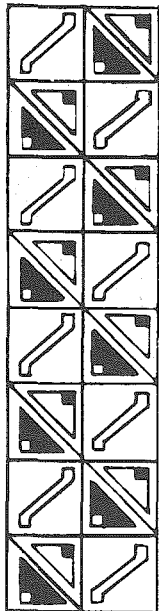
Since September there have been two changes in the presidency of FUNAI, Brazil's Indian agency, but its basic structure, which excludes participation by Indians in critical decisions which affect their survival, remains the same under the new civilian government as under military rule. Gerson Alves gave way to Alvaro Villas-Boas, who has since been replaced by Apoena Meirelles, a second-generation FUNAI functionary whose brutal style of contacting Indian groups in the early 1970s resulted in death and cultural disintegration in several communities.

One of Meirelles' first official actions was to travel to the state of Rondônia to discuss the governor's demand that the demarcated area of the Uru-cu-uau-uau Indians be reduced. The 4.5 million acre reserve of the Uru-ea-uau-uau was created under pressure from the World Bank, which earlier this year temporarily halted funding of the Polonoeste colonization program in Rondônia. (See article on Rainforest Conference on page 17.)

UNI

One of the more positive developments in the struggle of Brazilian Indians has been the emergence of the Union of Indian Nations (UNI) as a force in Indian affairs. UNI has coordinated regional conferences of Indian leaders, spoken out at international forums, and begun working with lawyers on legal issues affecting Indian law.

Suruí from Rondônia.



(Photo Kim-Ir-Sen/AGIL; reproduced from *Povos Indígenas no Brasil/83*, Centro Ecumênico de Documentação e Informação, São Paulo.)

A letter to SAIIC from Domingos Veríssimo Marcos, Terena Indian representative of the Central Western regional office of UNI, says:

"Within the current national debate concerning the reform of government institutions in Brazil, the Indian question has been raised by the Indian nations within Brazil and their leaders, as well as non-Indians who are aware that their own freedom and prosperity cannot be based on the oppression of other people.

"Discussion among Indian people is based on how Indian nations want to be seen and treated by Brazilian society and the state. This debate involves three principal elements: citizenship, land, and Indian representation.

"The current constitution does not deal with the citizenship of Indians. It only says that those who were born in Brazilian territory are Brazilian. Thus all Indians are subject to Brazilian laws. In our opinion, a new constitution must resolve the right of Indians to hold Brazilian citizenship without ceasing to be citizens of one of the more than 150 Indian nations that continue to survive in Brazil.

"The question of citizenship . . . brings up another point that is just as important as nationality itself, the recognition of Indian land as a legally defined entity. Today Indian land is recognized in Brazil as public land, that is, land that is property of the state with uses designated for the public good. This has caused many problems."

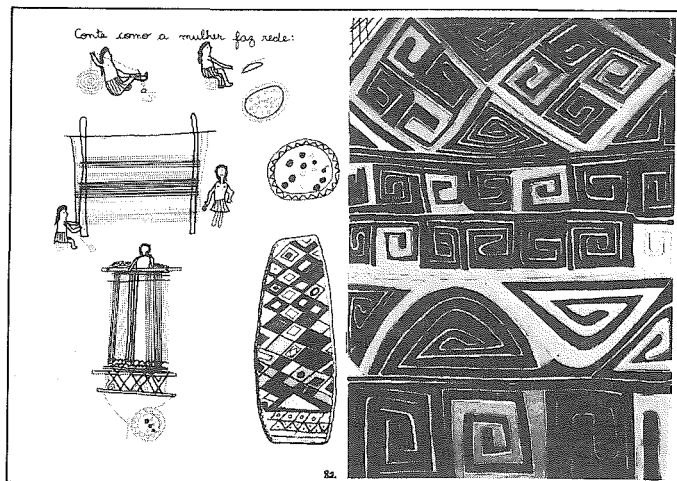
On the question of Indian representation, UNI has called for replacing FUNAI with a council on which Indians would have direct representation, according to Ailton Krenak, director of publications for UNI. UNI is also trying to negotiate Indian representation on the assembly which will draw up a new constitution for Brazil in 1987. UNI will press for Indians' rights as citizens of sovereign Indian nations, clearer definition of the "special status" of Indian reserves, and the right to representation in governmental affairs, possibly via UNI, which now includes more than 80 Brazilian Indian groups.

Monti and Glenn have recorded interviews with Indian leaders in Brazil and will be reporting on the Brazilian Indian situation on "South and Central American Indian Update" the first Friday of each month at 8:00 p.m. on KPFA FM94.1 in northern California. More information regarding the film *Amazonia* may be obtained by contacting SAIIC.

Domingos Veríssimo



(Reproduced from *Índios: Direitos Históricos*, Cadernos da Comissão Pro-Índio No. II, São Paulo.)



"How women weave."

(Reproduced from *Educação Popular: Alfabetização e primeiras contas*, Cadernos do Centro Ecumênico de Documentação e Informação, No. 13, São Paulo.)



ARGENTINA

Argentina has a population of 29 million people, including a large percentage of European ancestry, primarily Italian and Spanish. Following the "Independence from Spain" in 1816, the people of European ancestry took control of the government and took over the major part of Indian land. The last large armed Indian resistance ended in 1879 when the Argentine military defeated the Mapuche Confederation with the support of the United States, which sent Remington rifles to Argentina following the U.S. Civil War. Since that time Indian people in Argentina have faced a government campaign of annihilation and the destruction of their culture.

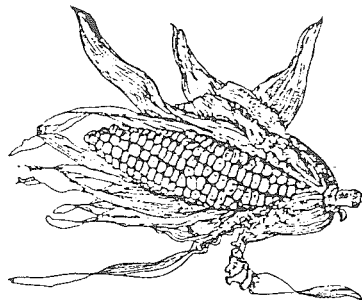
In spite of genocide and ethnocide, today there remain 13 Indian nations with a population of approximately 1.5 million people. There are at least nine Indian organizations at the national level that petitioned the government of President Raúl Alfonsín and the Congress to pass a law to validate the historic rights of Indian people vis-à-vis the national government. This past October 23, Congress approved the law regarding "Indian policies and support to aboriginal communities," in which, for the first time, Indian rights to constitute and live within communities are recognized. The issues of lands that have been taken and the need for bi-lingual and bi-cultural education are also addressed. The law's objectives include the statement, "It is declared in the national interest, as an act of historic reparation and of patrimonial restitution, that aboriginal communities demand attention and support for their defense and development as full participants in the socioeconomic and cultural process of the nation."

It is worth adding that large segments of the general public, such as the rural and urban unions, as well as progressive artists and intellectuals who previously denied or gave no importance to Indian political participation, supported passage of the law.

However, simply passing this law does not solve the problems faced by Indian people. Long-standing institutions of oppression remain intact, allowing large enterprises such as mining, lumbering and large landowning to continue to violate the human rights of Indians and poor campesinos. One Mapuche leader declared, "Unity of all affected segments of the society is necessary in order to oblige the government to comply with its promises."

INDIGENOUS SEEDS

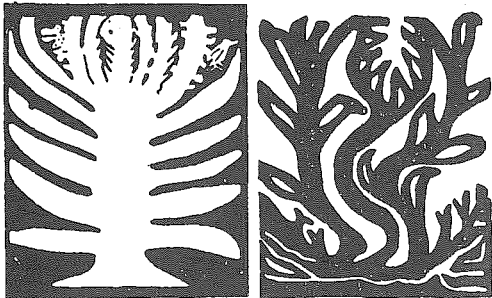
The interrelationship of all living things is seen in the renewal of the seasons and through the cultivation of seeds that are nurtured to become plants, providing sustenance for people and for animals. Caring for the earth, for the gifts from the earth, and for one another is an interdependent pattern that has sustained life for generations past and for those to come in the future. For many Indian people who have an intimate reliance on and knowledge of plants, the cycle of renewal, based on spiritual principles and lived daily, is the essence of survival of individuals, of communities, and of peoples. Genocide and ethnocide can come in many forms and in seemingly small or insignificant ways.



In the Americas, prior to the European invasion, there were thousands of plant varieties, many cultivated, others wild, that were used for food, medicinal purposes, clothing, and in many other ways. These ancient varieties are open pollinating in contrast to modern hybrid varieties. Food crops raised for thousands of years by Indians in the Americas have qualities that are suited to the particular environment of an area, often including extremely high levels of tolerance to drought, heat, salinity, rodents, and diseases. Some varieties have very high protein and mineral contents, making them concentrated sources of nutrition.

Population expansion, invasion, destruction of agricultural land, and more recently, the development and spread of the use of hybrid seeds have had a profound impact on Indian communities, as well as everyone living in this hemisphere. Hybrid seeds dependent on an artificial environment of chemical fertilizers and pesticides are often promoted by multi-nationals, nation states, and development projects. A system of planting hybrid seed may mean profit for these entities but disaster for the self-sufficient indigenous farmer. Hardy native varieties of seeds are replaced by hybrids often without the capacity to withstand local conditions and which produce plants with poor nutritional value. As indigenous varieties are not planted, they may cease to exist, and the resulting genetic uniformity invites catastrophe. Also, community self-sufficiency is lost through the development of a local dependency for survival on a national economy that creates the need to purchase seed, fertilizer, and pesticides. Because of these and other factors the cycle of renewal that is essential to sustain this earth and those on the earth becomes more difficult . . . but always necessary.

Some organizations have begun to search out, save, and encourage the replanting of indigenous seeds. Native Seeds (3950 West New York Drive, Tucson, AZ 85745) makes available indigenous seed samples to those who want to maintain diversity in their gardens. For example, 58 varieties of native corn from the Southwest are available. All proceeds from the sale of seeds go toward the conservation of native crops and their wild relatives.



able indigenous seed samples to those who want to maintain diversity in their gardens. For example, 58 varieties of native corn from the Southwest are available. All proceeds from the sale of seeds go toward the conservation of native crops and their wild relatives.

The Talavaya Center (P.O. Box 9289, Santa Fe, NM, 87504) also works to preserve genetic diversity through encouraging the cultivation of indigenous plants, including Hopi corn and South American grains such as amaranth and quinoa.

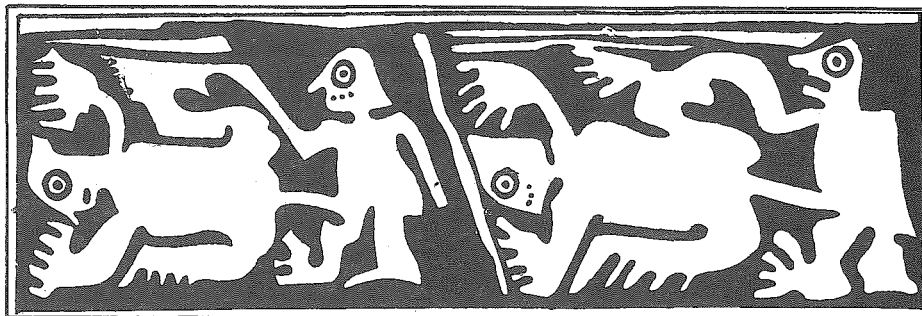
—S. Lobo

GRASSROOTS RAINFOREST CONFERENCE

On the weekend of November 15 through 17 SAIIC joined a wide range of environmental and indigenous peoples organizations for a Grassroots Rainforest Conference held near Sausalito, California. The conference was an educational and brainstorming session put together by the Rainforest Action Network of San Francisco in order to forge an international coalition of organizations to mount a campaign to stop the destruction of the world's rainforests. Environmental organizations which sent representatives included Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, Earth First, Greenpeace, Threshold Foundation, and World Resources Institute. In addition to SAIIC, indigenous peoples organizations which participated in the conference included the International Indian Treaty Council, Akwasasne Notes, Hopi Traditions, the Indigenous Women's Network, Cultural Survival, and people from Hawaii, Mexico, Kenya, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

A major inspiration for the conference was the successful effort early last year by environmental lobbyists in Washington, D.C., to temporarily halt World Bank funding for a major economic development project in the Amazon forest in Brazil. This was the first time

that the World Bank acknowledged the ecological implications of a development project in its funding process. Two participants in the



lobbying effort, Bruce Rich of the Natural Resources Defense Council and Barbara Bramble of the National Wildlife Federation, detailed the 18-month campaign. Interestingly, it was conservative Republican members of Congress who oppose U.S. foreign aid on ideological grounds who were most successful in confronting the Reagan Administration on the funding issue. The danger of continuing to work with such allies, the temporary duration of the funding halt, and the extent of damage to the rainforest already caused by the project under consideration were emphasized by Bruce and Barbara. They concluded that preservation of the rainforests depends on the political mobilization of people in countries where the forests exist and indicated that environmental groups in the United States will be increasing their efforts to coordinate activities with kindred organizations in the tropical regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Discussions at the conference were permeated by recognition of the key role in rainforest preservation which is played by people whose culture is indigenous to the rainforest environment. Protection of the right of indigenous peoples to pursue their traditional ways of life was acknowledged as a primary goal of the coalition formed at the conference. The importance of seeking in the knowledge of indigenous cultures appropriate methods for utilizing rainforest resources without destroying the rainforest environment was emphasized by conference participants. The necessity of developing cooperative relations between environmental activists in industrialized countries and indigenous groups in rainforest areas was a

major strategy agreed on at the conference.

The Rainforest Action Network is located at 466 Green St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133, (415) 434-1403.

—Pete Hammer

FIRST LATIN AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF INDIAN PEOPLES FILMS

The Brazilian monthly *Porantim* (Edifício Venancio III, Sala 310, Caixa Postal 11-1159, CEP 70084, Brasília, DF, Brasil) carried the following report written by Cláudia Menezes, director of the Indian Museum in Rio de Janeiro, in its October issue:

“Two weeks before the earthquake which partially destroyed Mexico City, the ancient Aztec capital hosted the First Latin American Festival of Indian Peoples Films. Organized by the Inter-American Indian Institute, the Film Society of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and the National Institute of Anthropology and History, the festival ran from September 5 to 8 and presented nearly 100 films and videos from 15 countries . . . which exposed the tragic living conditions of Indian people throughout the Americas.

“In addition to the film showings, several decisions were made, including (a) the creation of a Latin American Committee of Indian Peoples Film, with headquarters in Mexico City-Tenochtitlán, and four regional subcommittees; (b) plans to develop a catalog of Latin American films to serve as a base for an audiovisual archive; (c) promotion of the production and distribution of Indian films, especially projects directed by Indian communities; and (d) scheduling of the Second Latin American Festival of Indian Peoples Films for Rio de Janeiro in 1987. . . .

“The prizes in the categories of best film from Latin America, best film from outside Latin America, best ethnographic film, and best cinematography were awarded, respectively, to *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro* [*Our Voice of the Land, Memory and the Future*], by Martha Rodríguez and Jorge Silva (Colombia); *The Tree of Life*, by Bruce Lane (United States); *El pueblo Ona: vida y muerte en tierra del Fuego* [*The Ona: Life and Death in Tierra del Fuego*], by Ana Montes and Annie Chapman (Argentina); and *Los hieleros del Chimborazo* [*The Icemen of Chimborazo*], by Gustavo Guayasamin (Ecuador).”



Logo from the 1985 Indigenous Women's Network Gathering held in August, 1985. For information, contact Julie McCloud, Puyallup Tribe, P.O. Box 8279, Tacoma, WA 98408.

“Working within the framework of the visions of our Elders”

Maria Massolo, who has been an active and much appreciated member of SAIIC, participating in the radio program and preparation of the newsletter, will be in the Islas Malvinas for the next year with her husband, Wayne Bernardson. All of us at SAIIC will miss her and look forward to the insights she will bring us next year from the perspective of the Malvinas.

SAIIC welcomes the energy and ideas of volunteers. We are also in need of the following equipment: a computer, a typewriter, and a camera. All donations are tax deductible. If you can help, please call us at (415) 658-9395, 527-5687, or 452-1235, or write us. Thanks.

Special thanks for production assistance on this newsletter to the American Friends Service Committee, Intertribal Friendship House, Peoples Translation Service, Leanna Wolfe, Miguel Cavallin, Antonia Luisa, Wes Huss, Bobsey Draper, Bill Coburn, and the SAIIC Committee: Pete Hammer, Peggy Lowry, Rayen Cayuqueo, Anna Lugo Stephenson, Maria Massolo, James Muneta, and Jo Tucker. This issue co-edited by Pete Hammer.

Nilo Cayuqueo, SAIIC Coordinator
Susan Lobo, Publications Editor

NEWSLETTER

To receive the SAIIC Newsletter for one year, and to remain on our mailing list, please send a donation of \$6 for addresses in the United States, Mexico, and Canada or \$8 for addresses elsewhere.

WORKING COMMISSION REPORTS

To order a copy of the *Working Commission Reports: Second Conference of Indian Nations and Organizations of South America. Tiwanaku, Bolivia*, published by SAIIC, 1984, please send a donation of \$3.

TAPES OF RADIO SHOW

One hour tapes are now available of the SAIIC radio program "South and Central American Indian Update." Each program includes news, interviews, traditional music, and more. \$8 each.

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Please make out all checks, which are tax deductible, to American Friends Service Committee/SAIIC, and mail to South and Central American Indian Information Center, P.O. Box 7550, Berkeley, CA 94707, USA.

Mariana Chuquin, who is Quichua Indian from Otavalo, Ecuador, is now visiting the San Francisco Bay Area with her family, who are weavers. She extends the following message to readers of the SAIIC Newsletter:

"This is a message for everyone. We as Indian people must maintain unity through brotherhood and sisterhood across all communities and all continents, and understand deeply that we are Indian. To assure that our world unfolds in the best possible way, there must be unity and also an ending of egoism so that our culture and traditions are maintained, and so that we continue to strive forcefully, with all our strength and spirit, to assure the well-being of our Indian community."

Mariana spoke recently on the SAIIC radio program "South and Central American Indian Update," which is heard at 8:00 p.m. the first Friday of each month on KPFA FM 94.1 in northern California. The program includes interviews, news reports, and music from Indian communities in South and Central America. Listen in.



Photo: S. Lobo

Rosa Andranjo, Rosita Checaeza, and Mariana Chuquin

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