



**SOUTH AND MESO
AMERICAN
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CENTER**

*Linking
Indian
People of the
Americas*



Newsletter

Vol 6 No 3, Spring & Summer 1992



March on Quito

AMAZON INDIANS DEMAND TO BE HEARD



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Editorial

Since the publication of our previous SAIC Newsletter, Indigenous unity and continental organizing continues to be a subject of dynamic discussion. More Indigenous peoples have been contacted, and we have witnessed encounters with younger leaders, men and women, who continue to take political responsibilities within Indian communities.

This year's meetings have resulted in strengthening ties among Indigenous peoples. They have helped to clarify our positions within the larger spectrum of societies, and international organizations. The Indigenous perspective is contributing to promote a process of mental decolonization, and is opening spaces of dialogue unknown before.

Demands continue to be positive as in the case others have untenable are questioned. However, continue to receive reports of the struggle of Indigenous people in their efforts to achieve greater levels of influence. These have increased as these groups better understand their own current nation-states.



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AMAZON



Ecuador

MARCH ON QUITO

AMAZON | INDIANS DEMAND TO BE HEARD

We come to speak in the name of all the lives of the jungle, especially for those which are disappearing.

*They are the water spirits:
the Yacurunas.*

*They are the jungle spirits:
the Sacharunas.*

They are the fertility spirits.

They are the sowing spirits.

They are the harvesting spirits.

They are the gods of abundance.

Allpamanda! Causaimanda!

Jatarishum!

(For land! For life! We all rise up!)

— from a flyer distributed by the marchers

In the last three years the Ecuadorian government has been intensifying the exploitation and exploitation of the natural resources in the Amazon region, especially in the Pastaza Province, homeland of the Quichua, Shiwiar and Achuar Indians. As a way to defend their territory the Indian People, led by OPIP, have been trying to persuade the government and oil companies to recognize Indian territories and conduct rational exploitation of the resources in these territories. After exhausting the possibility of a negotiated settlement, the Indians felt their only recourse was to march on the capitol.

Thus on April 21, 1992 10,000 marchers arrived in Quito, led by 2,000 Indians from the

Pastaza Province, to demand that the Indian voices be heard.

The marchers called on the government to legally recognize their territories, and reform the National Constitution to protect the different nationalities and cultures of Ecuador. The Indians are demanding control over the largest remaining Amazon rainforest lands. Under very heavy military guard, the government of President Rodrigo Borja partially met their demands by officially recognizing over two and a half million of the almost five million acres of lands they occupy. The government also called for a special session of Congress to review Indigenous Peoples' demand for constitutional reform.



Photo OPIP

Woman with bouquet at the march

The Amazon march was coordinated by the Organization of Indigenous People of Pastaza (OPIP) as a response to nearly three years of fruitless dialogue between the government and the national Indian federations, culminating in the government's refusal to legalize the Indian territories and its acquiescence to pressure from trans-national oil, timber, mining and tourism industries to exploit the Amazon rainforest.

The Quichua, Shiwiar, Zaparo and Achuar marchers were following in the footsteps of their ancestors. Ninety years ago, led by the legendary chief Palati, leaders of these groups marched from their communities in Pastaza to the capitol of Quito to meet with the government over the rights to the territory which they have occupied for a millennium. The leaders returned to their communities with a title to all the lands of the Pastaza Province. This title to seven-million acres was buried and forgotten when the chief died.

On April 23, President Borja warmly greeted and thanked the Indians for their courage and agreed to negotiate the first of their demands of the legalization of their traditional territories. Despite the warm welcome and promises, the peaceful marchers were met by a massive contingent of police and military in riot gear and army tanks. Tito Merino, the communications coordinator of OPIP commented wryly that he did not realize that Ecuador was at war.

One hundred of the Indian leaders were allowed to pass through the military blockade to present their demands to President Borja. Indian leaders, from Luis Macas, the President of the National Indian Confederation of Ecuador (CONAIE), to a traditional midwife urging the President to legally recognize Indian rights.

The negotiations with the Indian People of Pastaza reached a deadlock over the government's refusal to legally recognize Indian territory which falls within a 25 by 120 mile swath of land along the Peruvian border. The main force blocking the legalization of these lands is the Ecuadorian Institute for Agrarian Reform and Colonization (IERAC).

IERAC claims that this border area is necessary for "national security" and has re-

ders." Citing the loss of nearly half its territory to Peru this century, the Ecuadorian government claims it is encouraging development along its borders to prevent further incursions.

The Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza are not asking for areas already colonized, but only land which they currently use. Close to 35 percent of the Pastaza Indian communities are located within the border region slated for colonization. They are demanding that this security zone be reduced considerably.

On May 13th, the Borja administration formally handed over title to over one-half of the Indian-occupied lands. The Indians claim that all of their territory must be legalized and that these lands be contiguous so as not to separate communities of the same nation. Instead, the government is recognizing 19 separate blocks of lands as the properties of individual communities.

The military charges that the Indians are attempting to divide the country by claiming their "nation-hood." CONAIE disagrees. "In no way are we calling for dissolution of the Ecuadorian State. We only want our country to legally recognize the fact that we Ecuadorians are made up of different nations and cultures," stated one member of CONAIE.

The Indians suspect that oil interests are at the root of the government's reluctance to formally recognize all their territory. PetroEcuador, the pow-



Photo OPIP

Ecuadorian March

cently begun a campaign to colonize the region under a program known as "Living bor-



Photo OPIP

Rally In a town after the march

erful branch of the Ecuadorian government which oversees oil concessions to trans-national oil companies, announced the day before the marchers arrived in Quito that the US based oil company, ARCO, had discovered a huge reserve of oil within the territories being claimed by the marchers.

OPIP organized the march to prevent the ecological and cultural devastation which they witnessed in the Northern and Southern Ecuadorian Amazon regions. Due mostly to oil development, Ecuador has the highest deforestation rate of any South American country. The Pastaza province contains the largest remaining pristine rainforest in Ecuador.

Since Ecuador's oil boom began in the early 1970s, over twelve million acres of Amazon rainforest have been turned over to trans-national oil corporations. Millions of gallons of oil and toxic waste by-products have been spilled or dumped into the rainforest, contaminating the soil, air and water. Oil development has brought deforestation, colonization, militarization, prostitution, alcoholism, violence, poverty, malnutrition and disease to the Indigenous Peoples.

"They treat it [the Amazon] like a box full of resources," says Tito Merino on the government's attitude toward the Amazon, "They turn it upside down and shake it out and leave nothing for those who live there."

"We marched along with the men to Quito to demand the recognition of our ancestral territories," said Patricia Gualinga, a Quichu women from the Sarayacu commu-

nity. "The women in Amazonia are fighting together to defend our people from the oil companies' threats to our territories. The oil companies come in and they bring disruptive ideas. They are trying to change the way our men act. One example is that they are trying to prostitute our women. So, we have to be strong. Some women get pregnant. This is very bad for the community. The women feel embarrassed, and they move to the cities."

Along with their demands, OPIP presented a natural resource management plan in which they explained their traditional, non-destructive use of the forest, "not only for short-term benefit, but for the benefit of the children of our grandchildren."

The concept of indigenous territoriality is a fairly new one for the Ecuadorians. The only lands currently recognized as Indian territories in the country are those occupied by the Huaorani—also located in Pastaza—and the Awa on the Colombian border. These territories were legalized in the 1980s due to international pressure placed on the government. Over the last decade, environmental and human rights activists have become increasingly aware that territorial rights are necessary for the survival of Indigenous Peoples and for the protection of rainforests.

OPIP now wants to extend these territories to include the rest of the Pastaza Indian lands. They claim that territorial rights are necessary in order to guarantee the survival of their cultures and their communities.

The Organization of Indigenous People

of Pastaza is calling on the government to change Article I of the Constitution to read, "Ecuador is a pluri-national, sovereign, independent, democratic and unified state which recognizes, protects and respects cultural diversity."

Most South American countries have either reformed or are in the process of reforming their constitutions to recognize and protect the rights of Indigenous People. However, the popular concept in Ecuador *is* still that Indians belong to the past, part of what *is* known as "folklore," to be commercially exploited.

In an attempt to contrive a single and uniform cultural identity, the government has been actively promoting the "integration" and "civilization" of Indian people since its formation in 1830. This strategy has led to the social, economic, and political exclusion or exploitation of Indian people who comprise 40-45% of the total population of Ecuador.

After three weeks of camping in a public park in Quito, the Indians left with less than they came for. They gained the titles to little more than one-half of the lands they use and Congress called a special session in June to review the Indians' demand for constitutional reform. Another important achievement was winning the hearts of the Ecuadorian people. Long thought of as "invisible savages," the Indians are now recognized *as* courageous and articulate people.

The marchers met in Puyo, the capitol of Pastaza, on April 10th, many of them having

Argentina

HISTORICAL REUNION OF THE MAPUCHE NATION

After one hundred years, the first reunion of the Mapuche nation took place in Neuquen, Argentina. Over a hundred lonkos, spiritual leaders of Nagmapu, Chile, and over 200 traditional leaders of different communities in Argentina met to analyze the situation of marginalization and oppression that the national states of Chile and Argentina are imposing on the Mapuche people. They also reaffirmed their historical rights of existence as a nation, the rights to exercise their traditional law and speak their own language, and

agreed on the creation of a Mapuche flag. The reunion ended with a ceremony with the participation of more than a thousand people.

A complete report will be published in the next SAIC newsletter.

Also for more information write to:
Nehuen Mapu
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walked and canoed there from their communities 150 miles away on the Peruvian border. Men, women and children nervously set out from Puyo on the 11th in the pouring rain, holding leaves and plastic over their heads to keep dry. When they entered a community, throngs of people met them, offering donations and support.

On their fourth day out, they were greeted by musicians and a fiesta in the Indian village of Salasaca. The community had built bamboo huts in the center of town for the marchers to rest. The "Salasacas" opened all public facilities to them and greeted them with speeches of solidarity.

Over one-half of the marchers' enormous needs for firewood, food, drink, blankets, clothing, shelter and medicine were met by donations from communities along their route. In a press release, the Indians stated, "Our historic walk has definitively changed the relations between Indian people and the white/mestizo society: the demonstrations of solidarity with our objectives are a clear sign that it is possible for us to live side-by-side, respectful of unity within our diversity."

Many of the marchers came down with severe colds and were treated by one of the doctors and/or shamans accompanying the march. The people of the Pastaza rainforest are accustomed to a very warm climate at near sea-level. During the march, they had to climb to altitudes of up to 14,000 feet where the nights were sometimes below freezing.

In reaction to the gala jubilee celebra-



tions being planned by governments and corporate interests throughout the Americas and Europe to mark the 500 years since Columbus began the process of colonization of Indian

lands, leaders of the march declared, "Now is the time for de-colonization, the time to recognize our rich cultures and build a new Ecuador."

SACHA YACHANA RESEARCH CENTER

The Sacha Yachana Research Center (CISAY) was created in February 1992 as the scientific arm of the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP). It was established to advise OPIP and its member communities and associations on issues related to the management and conservation of ecosystems in the indigenous peoples' territories of Pastaza.

The goals of CISAY are:

- o To conduct studies of indigenous peoples' territories and their natural and managed ecosystems

- o To research cultural and ecologically sound socio-economic development plans for Indigenous communities

- o To evaluate governmental and non-governmental organizations' economic development projects for Pastaza that affect indigenous peoples' territories.

- o To evaluate governmental and NGO scientific projects within Pastaza's indigenous peoples' territories.

- o To develop guidelines for scientific research, socio-economic development, resource extraction, and conservation within indigenous peoples' territories in Pastaza.

CISAY's finances and management are independent from OPIP. However, CISAY is accountable to the policies emanating from OPIP's congresses and assemblies. A diagram of CISAY's internal organization follows.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR CISAY'S SCIENTIFIC TEAM

1. A workshop for team pre-candidates will take place in Puyo in May 1992. The theme of the workshop will be: natural resources and environment, traditional Quichua knowledge, environmental policy.

2. Candidates will be chosen because they are: bilingual (Quichua/Spanish); at least high school graduates; inclined to work



on environmental issues; and, experienced in community activities and organizations.

3. Team members will be chosen among those who have: good training, a commitment and understanding of indigenous and environmental issues, understanding of the national mestizo/creole society and the other ethnic groups of Ecuador, and also on the basis that they exercise their traditional and cultural practices.

Currently, CISAY is formed by Leonardo Viteri, Director; Alfredo Vargas, Hydraulic Engineer; Wilfrido Aragon, Zootechnist; Olga Pineda, Research Assistant; Maritza Toala, Secretary; and Ricardo Grefa, Cartographer.

THE ORGANIZATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF PASTAZA (OPIP)

OPIP was established in 1978 by the Quichua, Achuar, Shiwiar, and Zaparo peoples of Pastaza. It is formed by 148 communities with a population of nearly 20,000 people.

The grass-roots members of OPIP are

organized in centers (settlements); and associations (groups of centers). The first authority of OPIP is the Congress which meets every three years with delegations from each community. Additionally, there are annual assemblies and ordinary bi-annual assemblies. OPIP also has aboard of directors elected by the Congress which are: President, Vice President; Director of Promotion and Organization; Director of Territories and Natural Resources; Director of Education, Science and Technology; Director of Community Health; Director of Community Development; and Director of Women in Development.

The goals of OPIP are:

1. To promote the unity and develop the organization of the peoples of Pastaza.

2. To obtain land rights to our ancestral territories from the government of Ecuador.

3. To develop policies for conservation and sustainable management of natural resources on our territories, for the benefit of indigenous people and for the rest of humankind.

MILITARY RESERVES ON INDIAN LANDS IN THE AMAZON

The Brazilian military controls 25 million acres of land in the Amazon. Presidential decrees have allotted and reserved 36 areas for the armed forces. According to Angelo Pansa, an Italian priest who is a member of the International Tribunal for the Rights of the People and who is also active in CIMI (Indigenous Council of Missionaries) there are 6 areas that transcend Indigenous lands, totally or partially. In the southern part of the state of Pará, where 2,600 Indians live, the military holds 16 million acres, an area twice the size of the Kayapó Indian reserve. The majority of the land reserved for the military is devoted to the establishment of living quarters, the stationing of battalions and border platoons as well as for military training in areas that are remote and sparsely populated.

Source: *Jornal do Comércio*, 21/11/92 (via alternex)



GOLD-MINERS AND SOLDIERS SPREADING VENEREAL DISEASES TO INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Indigenous women and young girls in the Amazon have been contracting venereal diseases from gold miners and soldiers. According to CIMI (Indigenous Missionary Council) and Indigenous leaders from Pará, Amazonas and Acre, many of them, lured to the cities, end up in brothels and in the trafficking of babies throughout the Amazon.

"Prostitution among indigenous girls is alarming. Indigenous women come to the city and don't have job qualifications, so selling their bodies becomes the only alternative", said Antonio Apurina, Coordinator of UNI-Acre (The Union of Indigenous People in Acre). Anthropologist Antonio Maria de Souza confirms that soldiers have been known to gang rape Indian women in the city of Sao Gabriel da Cachoeira, on the border of Brazil and Colombia, in the state of Amazonas.

Source: *Folha de Sao Paulo*, 2/10/92 (via alternex)



FACING COLONIZATION

INTERVIEW WITH ALFONSO PALMA PRESIDENT OF ONIC

SAIIC: What region do you come from and who do you represent?

AP: My name is Alfonso Palmas, I come from the department of Tolima from the interior of the country, and represent ONIC (Organization of Indigenous Nationalities of Colombian), of which I have been the president since June, 1990.

SAIIC: What is the role of ONIC?

AP: Our role is to train, orient and promote organization in the indigenous communities, because we believe that it is the indigenous peoples who must look for solutions to our own problems. ONIC promotes programs, we like to promote inter-ethnic relations among the different ethnic groups in the country and with those in other countries.

SAIIC: What is the indigenous population of Colombia, and how many groups are there?

AP: There are about 100 indigenous groups, and we speak more than 80 languages and are located all over the country.

SAIIC: How would you describe the situation of the indigenous communities in Colombia?

AP: Up to this moment the wave of violence against indigenous peoples continues in Colombia: very often the leaders are persecuted and even assassinated. We continue to face colonization of traditional lands — that is indigenous lands are still being taken —



Alfonso Palma, center, describing the situation in Colombia at the SAIIC office with representatives of the Tonantzin Land Institute and Bay Area Indian Alliance

the drug problem, guerilla organizations... all these groups have lack of respect for the indigenous communities. In addition, a major problem is that of communication, there is no permanent communication. We have no means to communicate among ourselves, much less with indigenous communities of other countries. The state does not provide us with anything, in fact the government has sponsored division among us by creating organizations similar to, but self-sufficient from those of the indigenous peoples. Therefore we cannot analyze or understand other communities problems, nor can we be updated on issues which involve us, or evaluate the actual national situation.

Another problem is the exploitation of natural resources by foreign and even national companies. They never consult with the in-

igenous communities and their acts only bring more problems for us. First of all, the cultural clash. Then, contamination of all living creatures and plants, and death of our people. Also, we have land but no means to produce, and if we do produce then the production goes through an intermediary and this person retains all the profit, leaving the indigenous with little or almost nothing.

SAIIC: Can you tell us about the massacre of Dec. 16 and what ONIC does in such cases?

AP: In Colombia there are, legally speaking, "indigenous reservations", these cannot be sold nor rented (leased), and they are imprescriptible; that is the indigenous communities can claim them whenever they want. In this case there are many territories

with colonial titles that belong to the indigenous communities, but the farmers, ranchers, and landowners, and production companies have kicked out indigenous communities by violent means, and this is what has happened in Colombia. In the case of the massacre, the killing took place in the department of Cauca in the PAES territory, where they had been reclaiming their land from the government for four years. However, this land has been invaded by big landowners who form large groups and send them to kill the indigenous. In this case, the indigenous had communicated to the government about their claims, however, the State did not answer, therefore the massacre took place. In these cases, ONIC, first of all issues denunciations at the national and international levels. We've denounced this and many other problems which are unknown to the international community. For example, the massacre of December last year, where five compañeros were burned alive by narcotraffickers. We denounce all of this violence against indigenous peoples. Last year ONIC met with the Government Ministry, and the senators and we demanded that the state respond to all of these acts of terror and what the State was doing to investigate. Until now, all we know is that there is an investigative commission and that there is a negotiation being carried with the institute of land reform. However, we are pessimistic about these type of investigations because our experience is that such investigations do not bring any results, as occurred with the indigenous peoples of the Aruaco community, where the armed forces and even government people were involved, and nothing was ever done. In that case, more than 20 compañeros were assassinated.

SAIIC: What are the activities of ONIC planned for 1992?

AP: At the local level, we are working with the organizations in the interior of the indigenous communities. We are working with students, professors, the popular sectors, blacks, environmentalists and other people who see in the campaign a positive aspect, that it is important to reflect and cultivate our magnificent and rich culture, also that we evaluate and reflect what these 500 years have meant for our culture. Also in the



proposals for the Constitution we have to make clear that Colombia is a multi-ethnic pluricultural country, and we have to work closely with other indigenous peoples who are working on the campaign, who have similar and different problems, so that we can create bonds of fraternity and unity among indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

SAIIC: There were 3 indigenous representatives elected to the congress of the country. Who are they? What are their proposals to the national Constitution?

AP: Compañero Gabriel Muyuy, representing ONIC, and Anatolio Quira of the Social Indigenous Alliance and Floro Alberto of the Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia. They represent different indigenous sectors, however we are trying to work in unity and present our proposals together. In addition, we believe that by having our own representatives we can have a voice; we are open to work with other people and like that other sectors of the society of Colombia work with us in problems which affect not only the indigenous peoples but all Colombians. Concerning the issues of the national Assembly, we have obtained that in the constitution it be stated that Colombia is a pluricultural state; the harmony of many cultures is declared; the issue that the state must protect our national identity, that is our customs, traditions, language, all that makes us different. We have now achieved the recognition of our languages in our territories, that education be bilingual. We have about 40 groups who live near the border with other countries and the governments do not understand that for indigenous peoples there are no borders. So now they have double nationality. Another achievement is the recognition of ownership of our territories. Right now there is a discussion with the government because the government does not want to recognize territories traditionally occupied, which are large extensions. They want to recognize only the reservations; now we will struggle for the recognition of traditional lands, reservations. For this we are proposing a plan to the government so that we do not have foreigners coming to our communities and plan our development, but instead that this planning be left to us, once

we're trained. Another important aspect is that of jurisdiction; that is each community has its own form of sanction and imposition of penalties. We will try to fix this according to the national system. Now this is considered. Another issue is that in relation to the natural resources, its exploitation must be consulted with the indigenous peoples. For this we are hoping to write a guide, rules from all indigenous Peoples communities, that will be followed, because even if there are already laws they do not represent our view, nor are they followed. However we must organize within the communities, so that we can face the problems and present plans. For this we are planning a meeting for December 1992 to discuss the problems we have, how will we participate politically speaking.

INCORA is the institute in charge of handling extensions which have been traditionally occupied by the indigenous peoples who have always lived there and have no titles for it. They are called "traditionally occupied". The reservations are where INCORA has handled titles, but this sort of land is not defined yet.

SAIIC: If you could realize anything in the world, this year of 1992, what is the outcome you would hope for?

AP: At our level it will be that the Constitution serve our interests and not those of a few people, as has happened historically. We want to retain our cultures. We hope to unify at the continental level. We want to avoid past mistakes and work towards understanding among different communities; we are not going to celebrate the genocide, we want to analyze the past so that we can work for the future. We want to make demands on the UN since 1993 has been declared the year of indigenous peoples. We want a strong United Nations (UN) presence so that human rights violations be watched carefully and that something more than just condemnations be made. We want protection.

SAIIC: What role do you see the government playing in this multi-ethnic and pluricultural state?



AP: I believe that the government should facilitate changes. They are not only indigenous peoples but blacks and other groups; the government should protect the culture and promote overall cultural development.

SAIIC: What do you say to the Crioles, Campesino people who are afraid of losing land while indigenous peoples recuperate their lands?

AP: First of all, we are not claiming land which is not ours. Our claims are over lands which we have been on for hundreds of years; therefore we believe that if there are cases where there are Campesinos who have come to our land due to many problems, we demand the government carry out an integral agrarian reform, that they be relocated to lands where there are no indigenous communities, and to lands where they can survive and develop economically.

SAIIC: What ONIC is doing about education?

AP: We are talking to the government. We are participating in certain areas of education, such as health and agriculture. We believe that the state should provide access to education for indigenous peoples because it is only in this form that we can become independent and govern ourselves.

SAIIC: Can you comment on the continental struggle against 500 years of colonization?

AP: By being here and after exchanging views and talks with other people, I acknowledged the we the indigenous peoples all through the continent face the same problems such as land recognition, development, etc..

We must acknowledge how can we unify and defend ourselves as communities. First of all, indigenous peoples' lands must be recognized. Secondly, the state must respect cultures, different cultures from those which were brought to Latin America by the Europeans. Therefore we must communicate and join together in order to demand this from states and from the UN. We need to develop a means of communication. We need to know the problems of our brothers and sisters in other countries. In reference to

the campaign, we must develop the campaign in an autonomous form that is because the situation, even if it similar, is also unique in each country. We do have commonalities. We have to negate these state celebrations and come up with specific proposals, because for us the campaign does not end this October. In fact, this is only the beginning; the plans of the Indigenous Continental Alliance is to continue working for the rights of indigenous peoples and others with similar problems to those we have. Therefore the campaign for us goes beyond this year.

At the community level, we can talk about how to develop solutions, alternatives on development. In Colombia we are trying to find solutions for our communities.

SAIIC: What do these Continental Conferences mean for the communities?

AP: First of all, we discuss and share to analyze the situation of the indigenous people of the continent. We want to know what the specific problems of indigenous peoples are. Once we acknowledge this, we can start to think about solutions, alternatives which we ourselves formulate. Those encounters try to find this diagnosis of the problems, but also through them we solidify our links at the continental level.

In Colombia, since we have such a variety of indigenous peoples, we say that our country can achieve development once the communities and their cultures have developed to the utmost. This identity of the country is important to look at from different points of view, in the mutual harmony of different communities, so that we learn to live and recognize cultural and historical differences, which have been denied for 500 years. We consider that this identity of Colombia must be looked at from its territorially, regions, religions, anthologies, different cultures, rites, practices. We have to analyze what is Colombia, because throughout all of the years in Colombia others have been wanting to impose one culture, different to ours, and this is not possible. We are a country rich on cultural traits, therefore we must try to live in harmony among all of these cultures.

SAIIC: What does development means for Indigenous Peoples in Colombia?

AP: In Colombia, with the so-called economic internationalization, or the economic aperture, the indigenous communities will suffer problems because most of these projects carried out in the name of development will exploit and explore the wealth, the natural resources, diversity, wild life. In the area of the Choco (Pacific coast) and the Amazon, the resources are being negotiated behind our backs. These negotiations are going to be carried out among the government and the large foreign companies. They do not consider the people living there. We are never consulted. We need to put international pressure on the government.

SAIIC: What is economic development for indigenous peoples in your opinion?

AP: First of all, let's look at the word development, for us development is not just economics, it is integral; that is to have autonomy, to have organizational and administrative capacity. In these terms, when promoted like this, we can realize development for the community *as a whole*. Most of the time when talking about economic development, it means to have economic possibilities for the betterment of our compañeros. For us, however, it would not just mean individually, but at the collective level; it means to propose solutions for the community. We have to generate many alternatives such *as* appropriation of technology, credit possibilities, adaptation of an economy proper to us, an economy that allows us to control our means, that allows the communities to develop their autonomy.

SAIIC: Can you talk to us about environmental organizations in Colombia?

AP: I believe that the environmental organizations and indigenous peoples have one thing in common, that is the defense of nature, of the environment. However, we indigenous peoples go beyond that, we defend human life too. We have to initiate a dialogue so that we can work for nature but also for human life. Environmental organizations can coordinate international actions so that projects are carried out only if indig-

enous peoples have been consulted. We really need to work on a dialogue in order to see how indigenous peoples can work together with environmental organizations.

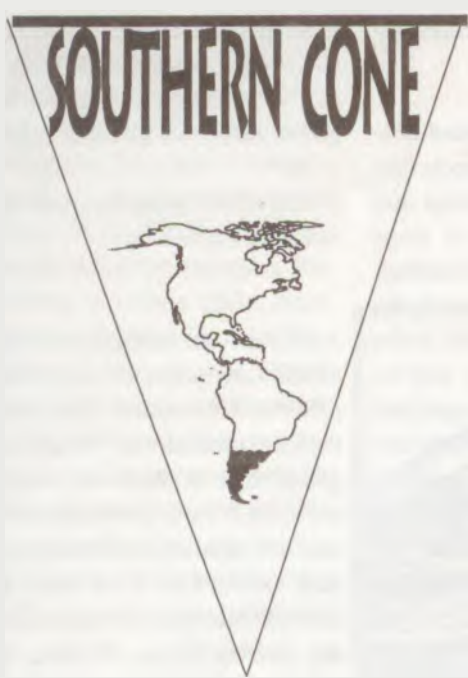
SAIIC: Could you please talk about culture in Colombia?

AP: One of the main purposes of ONIC is to protect and promote indigenous peoples' cultures. We consider that culture is an authentic expression of peoples or a specific group; that is, their very own traditions, practices, form of government, values, organization, adaptation to changes maintaining their values. One of our achievements has been the recognition of a multi-ethnic society, country. For us, education is important because through it we learn to value our culture, because right now we have problems mainly with religious organizations which want to wipe out our cultures and create foreign one. Through education we value our cultures and learn the differences

SAIIC: What about oil companies in Colombia?

AP: There are now oil companies going to Colombia wanting to explore and exploit our lands in search of oil and other precious minerals. In our proposals to the constitutional reforms we proposed recognition of our right to the land; that is, the soil and subsoil, because for us land is property which belongs to the community and soil and subsoil are not separate, they are an integral part. However the state did not want to recognize this right, because they know there is enormous wealth, so there is an article which states that where there are minerals, oil, or other exploitable resources there will be consultations with the indigenous peoples. At this point the foreign companies are experimenting in many places in order to find oil and other resources. Where there is oil the government takes the land even if it belongs to the indigenous peoples. It is for this reason that we believe it is crucial that we organize so that we can defend ourselves, that we learn Spanish so that we can talk their language and conduct a dialogue.

March 1992



Tartagal. Gerardo Tortelli, a medical doctor who lives in Salta, arrived in Misión La Paz and said that, "drinking water in this area is contaminated with cholera, but we cannot do much about it, except to tell people to add the chlorine we are distributing to the water, and to boil it before drinking."

Landowners in Salta, Argentina, have used the cholera epidemic to accuse Indian communities of hosting such diseases. Journalists asked Health Minister Julio César Aráoz, if it was true that local landowners had said that "due to a bunch of shitty Indians our Province will lose a lot of money." The Minister answered, "Whoever is thinking that way is stupid and inhuman... What I am interested in is not the Salta landowners, but people infected with cholera, and not trying to confine it to this sector [the Indians']. Afterwards we will talk to the landlords."

Local landowners, exporters of fruits and produce, have pressured Health Minister, Julio Cesar Araoz into not reporting the presence of cholera in Salta, "because the cholera presence would affect the export and sales of our produce on the market."

Health Secretary Alberto Mazza reported to President Menem, the press corps and administrators in Tartagal, that the total number of people with cholera has risen to 154 cases Mazza also noted that the cholera type is different from that in Bolivia and Peru, and that most of the affected people are children.

Source: *El Tribuno (Jujuy)* and written by journalists Diana Alvarez and Walter Echazu

Argentina

The Mataco of the Gran Chaco

HARASSED AS THEY FACE CHOLERA OUTBREAK

More than one hundred Mataco and Toba people who have lived for centuries in the Gran Chaco, a territory that comprises the colonial boundaries between Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay, are facing incredible hardships due to an outbreak of cholera on the Pilcomayu River where they traditionally fish. Local authorities have been accusing the Mataco of being responsible for the cholera outbreak, and have closed off the Mataco's territory, not allowing them to leave, nor allowing people to enter their territory. This forced isolation by the Argentinian authorities has led the Mataco to denounce their discriminatory treatment. "Our source of life is the Pilcomayu river. If we are not allowed to fish there, we will die not of cholera, but of hunger," said Noe and Martin Bravo. The Mataco harvest squash and watermelon on their tiny plots of land, but they have been forbidden to sell, buy, or exchange with local merchants. Mataco Indians also live from selling folk art, and their small surplus of produce and fruits. "Authorities do not allow us to leave or travel," a Mataco Indian recently reported in

The following is excerpted from a letter to the newsletter in *Boletin de las*

December, 1991

I am writing to inform you that our work continues at our own pace: we are preserving the production of quinoa and kiwicha seeds, and it looks like some small farmers in the south of Mendoza are seriously considering cultivating them commercially. We are in touch with a similar group in Bolivia with whom we are attempting to resolve some of the problems we are having.

We recently completed 54 houses in rural areas utilizing our traditional technology and we colored them with paints which were used by our ancestors thousands of years ago. We even extracted them from the same sources our ancestors used!

We continue to videotape life in the Andean world. We have taped more than 100 hours which will be edited as soon as we have the opportunity.

We have finished installing the offices for Radio FM Pirca in Tilcara. Occasionally, we have been able to air our programs thanks to borrowed equipment.

Well, the struggle continues, with all the usual problems. Nevertheless, we are progressing.

Please receive from all of us a fraternal hug.

Armando Alvarez

Proyecto de Rescate de la Cultura Andina (PIRCA)

CC 6 (4624) Tilcara, Jujuy, Argentina.

VICTIMS OF CHOLERA

AFTER 500 YEARS EPIDEMICS BROUGHT BY "CIVILIZATION" ARE STILL KILLING THE INDIAN PEOPLE



On Jan. 1, 1992, during a long and warm summer, Argentina was hit by the cholera epidemic. The first person to acquire the disease, and the first fatal victim, was a Mataco Indian who lived in Santa Victoria Este, a province of Salta. Soon five more cases were diagnosed, all of them Indians of the same village.

The focal point of the epidemic was the area where the Mataco and Chorote people live. The area is known as "The Great Chaco" (El Gran Chaco) and it includes the provinces of Salta, Formosa, and Chaco; this area has been devastated by indiscriminate deforestation. The Indian people live in communities which lack sanitary tion.

The provincial government in Salta, implemented tight military control, with the participation of the military Border Patrol. Physicians were allowed into the area only when accompanied by military personnel. The Indian people were intimidated and forced to attend the sanitary establishments. A military blockade was set up to isolate the area.

The Mataco people still remember that during the smallpox epidemic of 1930, military personnel burnt their houses often with the sick people inside, in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease to the rest of the population. As a consequence of this treatment, many Matacos fled to the forest, allowing for further spread of the disease.

The Indian people of Argentina in general, and particularly those living in this territory, have been displaced by the national society to marginal areas; they constitute a cheap labor force, and do not have access to adequate health care and education.

They become the center of attention of government officials only when they are victims of infectious diseases which can be transmitted to the rest of the society. However, historically they have been silent victims of malnutrition, dysentery, Chagas disease, tuberculosis, infant mortality and many other illnesses which do not represent a threat for the rest of the population. It is not by chance, that Indian people have been the first victims of cholera, "the disease of poverty".

Attitude toward the Indian People

The statements of the mass media regarding the cholera epidemic showed that in Argentina Indian people are seriously discriminated against. The discourse of the press blamed the Indians' way of life for the acquisition and transmission of the disease, ignoring their historical experience of exploitation and discrimination. We can provide many examples of the disdain and ignorance of the press in their coverage of the "news about the cholera epidemic": A woman legislator said: "these groups do not have culture or education, what can we expect of the Indians?" The latifundists of the province of Salta, who export vegetable crops, declared to the local press: "Because of a few shitty Indians we are going to lose a lot of money."

Arguments of the press and health officials for explaining the epidemic: "The Indians eat raw fish, they use the river to defecate." None of these statements are true. The Mataco people do not eat raw fish, and they are very careful to avoid contamination of their rivers. Headlines of a newspaper of nationwide distribution stated: "The

Racial conflicts in Argentina are usually covered by a discourse which presents the Argentine society as a homogenous population of European descent. It conceals and ignores the fact that Argentina is a multiethnic country, like any country in the American Continent, and most of all, it conceals the discrimination against Indian people.

Five hundred years after the arrival of the colonizers, the epidemics continue to be a weapon for the extermination of the first nations of this continent. To protest the discrimination, and most of all the fact that the Argentine society consistently ignores the existence of Indian people, please write to President Carlos Menem, Casa de Gobierno, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Source: *The Oyemboati Foundation for the Promotion of Indian People*

PEHUENCHE LANDS STILL NOT SECURED

CHILEAN GOVERNMENT FACES "1000 MORE QUINQUENS"

Ten members of the Mapuche Indian Nation were arrested in front of the government palace Thursday, Feb. 7, during an *anti-government* protest against their anticipated expulsion from land they have lived on for years. The protest was organized by the National Council of Indigenous Peoples (CNPI) in support of the 22 Pehuenche (a branch of the Mapuche) Indian families who face the expulsion order.

A recent judgement determined that the territory, an agricultural zone south of the Chilean capital, belongs to a group of families called the 'the Gallatue Society.'

CNPI protested the police "repressive measures," and demanded that the government give a "justifiable explanation for this shameful action." While the police dispersed the crowd, several ministers and members of the Gallatue Society were negotiating a possible expropriation of the lands where the Pehuenche Indians live and work. "We view with profound disdain the fact that 500 years after Europe invaded our continent, we are still being robbed of our ancestral lands," said a statement read in front of the National Palace.

Representatives from Mapuche and Aymara organizations, as well as other Indian groups, took part in the demonstration. They blame the slow resolution of the problem on the "inefficiency and lack of political willingness on the part of the negotiating commission" which is addressing the issue. A committee for the defense and solidarity of Indian tribes is proposing that Mapuche representatives negotiate alongside those who claim to be the rightful owners of the territory.

Edgardo Boeninger, General Secretary to the President, has announced the government's offer to purchase the territory from the Gallatue Society for five million dollars. Although the territory is not "economically exploitable" explained Boeninger, "the offer is based on our desire to resolve this conflict to the satisfaction of the Indigenous community."

Faced with an eviction order from the Chilean Supreme Court, the 22 Pehuenche Indian families living in the Quinquen Valley are hoping for an agreement between the government and the landowners which will allow them to stay on their ancestral lands.

Officials are trying to beat the March 2 deadline set by the Supreme Court for the eviction of the Pehuenche from the 333,450



acres of the Cordillera Valley located some 385 miles south of Santiago. The Pehuenche Indians say they have occupied the lands, rich with forests of araucaria pine trees called "pehuen" in their language, since time immemorial. The Pehuenche got their name from the trees which are also their source of income.

The Galletue firm, which got its name from a river that flows in the area, claims it owns the valley and brags of land titles to prove it. Galletue, which obtained the eviction order from the Supreme Court, has refused the government's offer to buy the lands for five million dollars. The bi-monthly magazine *Página Abierta* has accused Galletue owners, Gonzalo Lledo, Miguel Lamoliatte and Mauricio Menas of trying to profit from the negotiations.

The government of President Patricio Aylwin wants to turn the Quinquen Valley, whose name means 'place of refuge' in the Pehuenche language, into a national park and reserve. In the early 1970s, the socialist government of Salvador Allende set up an agrarian reform program which expropriated the Quinquen lands from Galletue and recognized the Pehuenches' right to the land. But the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship gave back the lands to the *firm* in 1974, and later authorized it to exploit the araucaria forests. Last year, the Aylwin government declared the araucaria tree a national monument and once more prohibited its exploitation all over Chile. As a result of this decision, the state gave Gallatue six-million dollars in compensation and paid the firm another five-million to conserve the forests as a national patrimony. But Galletue is asking ten-million dollars for the lands, a sum considered "excessive" by the government and "immoral" by the Pehuenche, politicians and ecologists.

Government experts say a police eviction of the Pehuenche would elicit criticisms locally and abroad, particularly in consideration of the upcoming quinqucentennial. Local Indigenous groups waiting for the government's decision describe the case as the "robbing of their ancestral lands which began five hundred years ago." Should Galletue and the government fail to reach an agreement, Aylwin, backed by the ten parties of the ruling democratic coalition, will have to urge congress to pass the bill expropriating Quinquen. Jorge Arrate, acting president for the Chilean Socialist Party which is the second strongest group in the coalition, has accused the government of acting with timidity on the case. Fernando Quilaleo, President of Ad-Mapu (the national Mapuche organization) has called on the government to solve the case this year. "But Quinquen is only one of Chile's problems. Between the Chilean state and the Pehuenche Indians, there are a thousand more Quinquens," Quilaleo said.

MAPUCHE

PROTEST FORCED EVICTION

The Mapuche Nation of Chile has launched a campaign to draw international attention to the plight of over one million Indians threatened with forced eviction from their ancestral land.

"What we are asking is that the Chilean authorities leave our people alone," Reynaldo Manqueo of the Mapuche Committee in Europe said. This message was also communicated to Chilean Ambassador German Riesco Zañartu in a letter addressed to Chilean President Patricio Aylwin.

The Committee, representing the Mapuche-Pehuenche, said they launched the campaign to confront the "unofficial state of siege" declared recently in Indian territory in Chile.

Mariqueo said: "The government has sent in a police contingent of approximately 400 men, military vehicles, police vans, mounted police and helicopters, and (taken) other measures to prevent a possible uprising in the Andes mountains and take the land."

The community, situated in the Quinquen district of Cautín province, survived mainly on the pehuen tree, harvesting the pine nuts for food and selling or exchanging the surplus for other essential goods. But the Indians were unaware that as far back as 1918 their land had been sold by the Chilean state to private owners (non-Mapuche) who then resold it for a profit.

In 1987, Pinochet's government issued a decree that allowed timber industries to override an earlier forest protection law. When the present government came to power, another law was passed to protect the forests, which meant the owners now wished to sell the land that they could no longer exploit.

But in June 1990, the land owners filed a case at the supreme court asking the Indians to leave to facilitate the selling of the land. "The present situation is desperate. Until now the strength of opposition from Mapuche organisations has delayed the eviction pro-

cess," Manqueo said.

Orders to proceed with the operation, he said, have now been given and will be carried out by Gen. Osvaldo Muñoz Sanhueza, who was active in the Pinochet dictatorship. The objective, Manqueo said, is to transfer the people together with their personal belongings and animals to a designated area away



from the community, while their homes will be destroyed.

Mariqueo quoted Sanhueza as saying that military units from three provinces had been mobilized, and a base camp had been set up to supervise the takeover and provide logistic support.

The Mapuches, living in the Andes mountains, are the original inhabitants of what is now Argentina and Chile. During the Spanish conquest, the Mapuches signed a treaty to define the borders of their territory, which was honored by Spain. The treaty was also acknowledged by Argentina and Chile when they gained independence.

They signed several more agreements with the Mapuches but which they later broke. "Our major objective is to continue with the campaign until justice is served to our people," Mariqueo said. "If we don't campaign, the atrocities will continue. Our ultimate aim is to

press for autonomy and self-determination for our people."

Source: *International Press Service*

Mapuches Living Under the Ozone Hole

The people living in the tip of Tierra del Fuego are living under the ozone hole, which scientists have recently found to be growing much faster than anticipated. It is now four times larger than the United States and from late August until early December is directly over the high mountain homeland of the Mapuche. Walter Ulloa, a 28-year-old farmer, found that his arms burned "like boiling water" and his eyes became swollen, irritated and clouded over after working high mountain pastures. His left eye is now completely blind. After examining him, Chilean doctors said that he was probably exposed to excessive ultraviolet-B radiation. They prescribed UV-resistant sunglasses, which Ulloa can't afford.

Chilean scientists estimate that levels of the carcinogenic ultraviolet-B radiation jumped more than 1,000 percent in Punta Arenas, the largest town located under the ozone hole. Huge increases in skin cancer, and sheep, fish and rabbit blindness are being reported in the area.

Despite this startling evidence, there is very little research being done in the area. The University of Chile was unable to raise the \$11,000 for a spectral radiometer to measure radiation levels and because of this a planned three-year study fell through.



Photo Wayne Bernherdson

Bolivia

Aymaras herder with their Llama

IN SEARCH OF UNITY

INDIAN AND CAMPESINO LEADERS MEET IN LA PAZ

"Nearly 150 Indian leaders from the La Paz provinces came together in a planning and consciousness-raising meeting to consolidate the Assembly of Nationalities," reported Zenobio Quispe, permanent secretary of the Federation of Campesino Workers of La Paz (Tupaj Katari).

During the event, campesinos of La Paz, struggling for unity, reiterated the need to establish their own political party and assembly of nationalities, and determined that the Indian confederation should be formed, under its own laws, and its own political constitution "until Aymara, Quechua, Guaranies and other nationalities assume power."

The participants reject the celebration of the quincentennial because Oct. 12 is a date of pain and mourning for campesinos and Indians of the continent. For this reason, they will demonstrate with a reaffirmation of their cultural identities and

against ethnocide, genocide, and the destruction of cultural values.

Ideological and Political Unity

The participants will ask professionals committed to the cause of Native peoples for their support in creating documents and school texts, both historical and otherwise, which will encourage Native cultural values.

"This first meeting has been positive, because with the initiative of the campesino and Indian authorities, we have accepted the responsibility of strengthening our organizations," said the Director of Tupaj Katari at the conclusion of the meeting. He indicates that the most important step is to organize because the Indian, campesino, worker, and popular movements have been weakened in the current political climate. "In spite of the adverse situation, campesinos and Indians have accepted the great challenge of establishing the assem-

bly of nationalities and a political party, to provide an alternative for the marginalized and oppressed sectors of Bolivia."

Seventh Congress

The seventh congress of the Federation of Campesino Workers of La Paz (Tupaj Katari) will be held Dec. 20-22. At this event the Federation will discuss the situation of the campesinos, who categorically reject property taxes and demand that the government fulfill the numerous obligations it has made to agricultural workers.

The Federation of Campesinos of La Paz, which seems to be consolidating itself after several actions which were interrupted by official militants, "has decided to form a new pluralist executive committee, but only with leaders who fight for the people and not with those who have sold out to the oligarchy's parties."

Source: *Semanario Aqui*
[Chuquiawu, Bolivia]

SAIIC Newsletter



A gathering of Aymara Women

DROUGHT

AYMARA CAMPESINOS FORCED TO MIGRATE TO THE CITIES

In one blow the drought and freeze of 1978 destroyed the future of Nicolás Mullisaca, who as the eldest child would have been responsible for his parents' land. Like many other children of campesinos, he was forced to leave for La Paz in search of work.

"It was not a happy day, but it was the only choice because there was nothing to eat. For a campesino, leaving the land that our ancestors have farmed for generations is always a very sad thing."

Nicolás Mullisaca, and later his five brothers, started out as casual laborers in the city of La Paz. He became a mason and has worked in this profession ever since, except for two years when he went looking for gold for a company in Tipuani where he nearly died of tuberculosis.

For one year now he has worked as a mason for a construction company with about 30 employees. It is hard work, with a time card to punch and pay docked for arriving even a little late. He travels an hour from the worksite in the center of the city to his home with his wife and eight children in the barrio of Pasankeri.

Pasankeri is located high above La Paz and is one of the final rungs in the ladder of suburbs which climb up out of the city. It is the last barrio before arriving at Ciudad Satélite at the very peak in El Alto.

Their pig stays in the lower part of their yard. Above, there is a little patio that his wife Ceferina uses to wash clothes and prepare the

food, and where the kids and the dog play. The adobe house has two rooms, and alongside the bed stands a sewing machine that the two parents use. Spanish and Aymara are spoken in the Mullisaca family household, Spanish because it is more practical in the city, and Aymara so the children don't lose their culture.

"I dream of opening a tailorshop in Pasankeri. For a year and a half I've attended a sewing course at night here in my barrio and soon I'll be done," says don Nicolás.

His wife has attended a course in weaving and is hoping to get a loom. But with ten stomachs to fill, they live hand to mouth and it's practically impossible to pull together the necessary capital to start their own business or save the 150 bolivianos that a loom costs.

"I will probably be a mason for many years to come, and knowing this, I take on as much responsibility as the others in working to form a union to ask for better wages." At one time he was a campesino leader in his village.

Many migrant families suffer from the harsh conditions of the city, and from not even knowing their neighbors and have to face frequent periods of unemployment.

"We worry about the children and fear that they will fall in with delinquents or drugs," explains Ceferina Mullisaca. "In the countryside, life is far more peaceful and safe."

"Sometimes mestizos and white people ride by in mini-vans and humiliate us for being

Aymara. They harass us as we carry our loads and accuse us of being dirty."

In the city, access to medical attention and education is easier. Yet without money, life in the city is impossible, while in most cases, people in the countryside can live from what the land yields.

"Work in the city is boring and makes us feel like slaves. For a campesino, work is also hard but at least you feel free, and the work is interesting," said Nicolás Mullisaca.

His parents still live in the countryside and he and his family return during planting and harvesting to San Andrés Machaca, a village located in the province of Ingari, three hours to the west of La Paz, near the Peruvian border. For Nicolás and Ceferina, going to the country is like returning home, while their children treat these visits as outings.

"I am not ashamed of my roots as an Aymara and a campesino. I am proud of our culture. When my children grow up, I hope to go back and live in my village."

"But to make this happen, we will need economic help for digging wells and better tools to work the land. We're never going to get these with governments run by the rich who could care less about the problems and needs of poor campesinos," said Nicolás. He adds that "so long as neoliberal policies hold sway, migration from the country to the city is sure to continue."

Source: *Aquí*, [Chuquiayawu, Bolivia]



Photo SAIC

A CONSTITUTION FOR A MULTICULTURAL COUNTRY

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN COLOMBIA HELP DRAFT
THE CONSTITUTION

The following information was given to SAIC by Alfonso Palmas, President National Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Colombia (ONIC), while visiting in February 1992.

At the demand of students, activists and the general population, the Colombian government was obliged to call for elections to a National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) on Dec. 9, 1991. Aside from a few minor reforms introduced by Colombia's two political parties, the liberals and the conservatives, the Colombian Constitution had not been modified since 1886. Indigenous people had never participated in constitutional reforms, but this time the indigenous movement introduced two candidates, Francisco Rojas Birry of ONIC and Lorenzo Muelas of the Indigenous Authority of Colombia (AICO). The indigenous candidates were elected despite lack of experience and funds and the fact that a large portion of the indigenous population was not registered to vote and did not even have the official identification required to register. The indigenous movement was concerned with natural resources and regional development, and wanted to change the constitution to declare Colombia a multicultural country. But they also stressed the more general issues of democratic participation, human rights and resolution of regional conflicts, and the candidates were elected with a large percentage of non-

Indian votes.

Once in the assembly they had to broaden their proposals to benefit not only indigenous peoples but also the general population of Colombia, especially those who like the indigenous peoples, live under oppression, discrimination, exploitation and misery and who struggle to build a better society.

The indigenous movement achieved the following points in the new constitution:

I. Right to Culture: Colombia is recognized as a multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural country. The great diversity and coexistence of cultural identities made up of values, customs, community practices, rites, religions and languages which differentiate one group from another are recognized.

II. The languages of indigenous peoples will be official languages in their respective territories; and education will be bilingual and bi-cultural in those territories.

III. Dual nationality is recognized for the indigenous groups who live on the borders with other countries, such as Brazil, Venezuela, Panama, and Ecuador.

IV. Indigenous reservations are recognized as territories of collective ownership which cannot be sold, rented, or owned by other peoples because they are the communal property of indigenous communities. These territories will be administrated together with the state. Indigenous Councils will be formed and a governor will be named for each department according to the practices and traditions of the indigenous communities. These councils can develop and design plans and programs for economic and social development; in addition they will watch over the conservation of natural resources, promote public investment and coordinate programs together with the community.

V. Jurisdiction: In the indigenous communities there exists customary law which dictates how the members of the community act and how they are punished. This law is recognized but it varies greatly between communities and will be coordinated with the judicial system of the country. Nevertheless it will be indigenous peoples' authorities themselves who will judge and sanction penalties in indigenous communities, in accordance with their practices and traditions.

VI. Permanent participation of two indigenous peoples in the Senate of the Republic, which is formed by 100 members, is guaranteed.

Despite these gains the new constitution was a mixed victory. There was no change in the structure of the armed forces which have committed many human rights abuses against Indians. The constitution mentions indigenous communities and reservations but does not give Indians rights to their traditional territories. The government also retains subsoil rights.

In December 1991 three indigenous people were elected to the Senate: Gabriel Muyay of ONIC, Anatolio Quira of the Indigenous Social Alliance (ASI), and Floro A Tuñu Gala of AICO. They face a great challenge because the Senate is dominated by the traditional parties, and groups working for change have less influence than they



did in the NCA. The indigenous movement will have to mobilize the communities and get them involved in the law making process. They will also have to look for national and international solidarity to support their proposals in the Senate and they will have to fight to make sure the new laws protecting indigenous rights are enforced.

It is clear to us that laws alone will not solve our problems. In fact we recognize that we need organization, autonomy, decision making power, permanent community work and active participation. In addition we acknowledge the need for changes within the political, economic, cultural, territorial structure of the Colombian state, changes which correspond to who we are as true Colombians and not to models which do not fit our needs. In conclusion, there were already laws in Colombia which protected indigenous peoples, but they were neither enforced nor respected. Even though the killings, massacres and persecution of our leaders continue, we will continue struggling to strengthen our unity, to attain autonomy, to preserve our culture and to promote and protect our right to work for change so that we can live in a just society with opportunity and dignity for all.





Representatives at the meeting for the foundation of ONIC in Panama

Panamá

THE COORDINATING BODY OF INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND NATIONS OF THE CONTINENT

In December 1991 the main Indian organizations from South, Central and North America met in Panama to discuss the future of the inter-relationship between the Indian People of the Continent, and to define the politics and way of communication with non-Indian people due to the failure of building alliances with some of the grass-roots organizations, especially with the groups that are directing the "Continental Campaign 500 Years of Resistance of the Indigenous, Black and Popular Movement"

Some of the resolutions of the meeting are the following:

There is an urgent need to unify the Indigenous Peoples (Original Nations) of the continent. We want to re-establish and utilize the historical links that were disrupted by the invading colonizers. In this way, together, we are planning the reconstruction of our communities.

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the European invasion, we reaffirm our

historical commitment to unity and to the development of a plan to mobilize for 500 Years of Indian Resistance and Struggle against colonialism. We are declaring to the world that, despite more than five centuries of genocide, more than 40 million Indigenous Peoples from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego continue to live and plan for our future.

We maintain a firm position against all forms of colonialism, neocolonialism, and internal and external racism. We reject all kinds of manipulation and ideological or political imposition, because we, as peoples, have our own ideology. We support alliances with other popular sectors in order to change the conditions of injustice in which oppressed peoples of the world find themselves today. Hence, we have decided the following:

1. To form an Indigenous commission committed to organize a meeting of Indigenous Peoples, the establishment of a continental coordinating body of indigenous organizations and peoples. This continental coordinating body will consist of representatives

of all Indigenous Peoples, Original Nation of *Abya-Yala* (*Land of Life*, the America continent in the Kuna language).

2. To carry out a coordinated plan of action for 500 Years of Indian Resistance and Struggle against colonialism.

3. To organize workshops and continental gatherings in order to make known the Indian position regarding the 500 years, with the goal of attaining a definitive unity at the continental level.

We reject the celebrations of the so called "Quincentennial of the Discovery of America," "Encounter of Two Worlds," and the "Quincentennial of Evangelization." We are promoting actions at the regional, national and continental levels which respond to the fundamental interests of our people and honor our ancestors who gave their lives defending the dignity of our peoples. In the same spirit, we will continue to confront oppressive forces, such as military invasion and repression, and exploitation of our

We reaffirm our commitment to a continental Indigenous alliance, and to reciprocal support in our struggles for rights and self-determination, traditional ways of life, religion, culture, and the protection of our Mother Earth with all her resources.

Finally, we call on all nations, organizations, and Indian communities of the continent, even the most isolated ones, to unite in this great effort for action and continental coordination, on the path towards the liberation of our peoples.

Signed on the Dec. 21, 1991, in Kuna Yala, Panama

Indigenous Peoples Alliance Founded in North America

In Jan. 10-12, 1992, the National Indigenous Forum, the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of North America was founded. The meeting took place in Albuquerque, NM and was hosted by the Tonantzin Land Institute. The participants came from the different Indian communities of Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, California, Idaho, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota, and Alaska. The decisions that came out of the conference represent a consensus by all participants. Some of the of the main resolutions of this conference are the following:

- It was decided to create an alliance called the Indigenous Peoples Alliance. This alliance is open to all Indigenous Nations and organization who are interested in building a long term alliance of Indigenous People who emphasize grassroots community involvement in issues affecting Indigenous communities.

- The Indigenous Peoples Alliance would endorse the Continental Indigenous Coordinating Commission's resolution that was written in Kuna Yala, Panama.

- Tonantzin Land Institute was given the responsibility for sending out all communications being produced and /or being sent by the Indigenous Peoples alliance.

- The Indigenous Peoples Alliance should implement regional meetings that would focus on education and training. It was decided that the first regional meeting would take place in conjunction with the Indigenous En-



Meeting in Kuna Yala

vironmental Network conference in the Columbia River area. It was decided that the focus of the regional meeting would be on sovereignty.

- Our logo consists of a turtle (to represent Turtle Island), with the continental campaign logo of the Eagle and the Condor located inside the turtle and the North, Central and South American continent in the Center.

Second CONIC Meeting in New York

The Second Meeting of the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations and Nations of the Continent, CONIC, took place in New York City from March 4-7, 1992. The meeting was hosted by the Native Council of New York and organized by Tonantzin Land Institute and SAHC.

Delegates representing Indian organizations and nations of the continent from 17 countries participated in the Meeting.

Following are some of the resolutions that came out of the meeting in New York:

The Continental Coordinating Body has arisen due to the need to consolidate the bonds of union and communications between organizations and nations native to this continent, which include, the Southern Cone and the Caribbean.

We understand ONIC to be a communication instrument for the Indigenous Peoples of the Continent and not a representative organization.

Our objectives are the following:

1. To seek Indigenous unity on a continental level, recognizing that we have a

2

that we have decided to work together beyond the years 1992, respecting the situation and strategies which each Indigenous Nation may adopt to reach their liberation and self-determination.

2. To develop a continental communication network which would directly involve the grass-roots communities in order to strengthen our ties and make known the critical situation in which we the native Peoples live, and seek solutions for our future.

3. To promote a process leading to dialogue and consensus based on our spiritual values, life styles and millennial knowledge.

4. To form a common alliance to reconstruct our Nations which were dispersed by colonization and to fight to curb the destruction of our Mother Earth and her harmony.



Indian delegates: Kuna, Panama; Maya, Guatemala; Mapuche, Chile; and Nahuath, El Salvador

Photo SAHC

Solidarity Organizations:

Solidarity organizations and institutions may participate in meetings specifically organized to exchange information coordinate activities, or promote dialogue with members of the Coordinating body. These general prin-

iples and guidelines will continue to be discussed within each organization and in the Regional Workshops.

This Coordinating Body calls upon all the progressive, honest and committed to join against the contra-celebration of the colonialist plans. In the same form, we call upon the popular sectors and the racially discriminated to form an alliance to struggle against the oppression, respecting, among ourselves our diversity.

Regarding the "Continental Campaign of 500 Years of Resistance Indigenous, Black and Popular Sector"

In 1986, the Indigenous Movement initiated a campaign to disseminate information about the state of oppression under which our peoples live. The movement has taken the opportunity of the Quincentenary as a way to let



the world know about the situation of repression under which Indigenous Peoples live; and to show our rejection of the celebration of the so called "V Quincentenary of the Discovery of America or the Encounter of the Two Worlds," led by the Spanish government and the Vatican and supported by the governments of the colonial states of the continent.

Among the initiatives of the native peoples of ABYA YALA have been to invite the different sectors of the society to organize a common front, based in mutual respect of the differences and characteristics among sectors. This indigenous proposal has been distorted, and usurped by sectors which have always carried out discriminatory practices. Their policy has failed in our region and in other parts of the world, because their project are far from the reality of Native Peoples, because they tried to impose a system of a homogenous society which is based in centralized and bureaucratic power which ignores the right of Indigenous Peoples to Self-determination.

In conclusion, the Indigenous, Black and Popular Sector Campaign, does not respond to the demands of Native Peoples of the continent. In addition, the form in which it is structured does not guarantee that Indigenous proposals will be respected in the future, nor does it allow for an honest alliance based on the right of each people to decide their own destiny, no matter how small the group is.

Therefore, this Coordinating Body calls upon all the progressive, honest and committed people to join us in the struggle of the

oppressed peoples, to join in contra-celebration of the colonialist plans. In the same form, we call upon the popular sectors and the racially discriminated to form an alliance to struggle against oppression, respecting among ourselves our diversity.

Given in New York (Indigenous Land occupied by the United States), 5/5/92.

For more information contact:
Kunas Unidos for Nabguana (KUNAS)
Via España y Via Argentina, Edificio Brasilia, 1 er Piso
Panama 1, Panama
Tel: 507- 638-879, Fax: 507-693-514

Consejo de Todas las Tierras
Casilla 448
Temuco, Chile
Tel: 56-45-234542

Tonansin Land Institute
Tel: (505) 766-9930
Fax: 766-9930

(You may also contact SAIIC)

El Salvador

POLICE RAID INDIAN COOPERATIVE

On Thursday, Feb. 27, 1500 police raided the Corte Azul Cooperative, arresting 60 Indian men, women and children and destroying crops and supplies. The community members had peacefully occupied the unused government land to plant their crops. The police arrived at 7 am accompanied by three representatives of the United Nations Observation Team, reporters from a local television station and a group of local landowners.

The police ordered the 250 workers from the Indian community of Costa Azul to leave their fields immediately, and when asked for a warrant ordering the displacement, they replied that they did not have one, but President Cristiani had instructed them to proceed as quickly as possible. The workers responded that their crops were already planted and that they could not leave them unattended.

At 2:15 p.m., in the presence of the ONUSAL officials, along with a captain, a second lieutenant, and the director of the National Police of Sonsonate, the police proceeded to intimidate the Indians with their weapons and then arrest 60 Indigenous workers and physically remove them to a nearby command station. The Indians were then taken to the nearby hacienda of Dr. Guillermo García Guerra, where the police officers were received with a special luncheon. During this time, the arrested men, women and children were made to stand and listen to the police say things like, "We should just machine gun these sons of bitches down to solve our problems." Hours later, they were transported to the Sonsonate police station and imprisoned and not allowed to speak with family members or lawyers until Saturday, Feb. 29, when they

were released.

The following local landowners were with the arresting police officers: Andrés García Corona, Rafael Flores, Elsa Gutiérrez Candel, Julia Leiva, Juan Martínez, and the three brothers, Carlos Chacón Moreno, Armando Candel Calderón, and Guillermo García Guerra.

The Corte Azul and nearby Monzón cooperative members have received numerous threats in the past from these men, especially the three brothers, who flaunt their close ties to President Alfredo Cristiani.

The crops, hammocks, blankets, beans, corn, crates, clay frying pans and comales, and a food storage hut were destroyed in the raid.

Source: ANIS (National Association of Indigenous Peoples of El Salvador)

AGRICULTURAL REFORM THREATENING INDIAN LANDS

In December 1991, Tarahumara, Tepehuano, and Raramuri sent the Governor of Chihuahua, Fernando Balza Melendez, a document demanding the protection of Indigenous territorial rights. The document came from the Commission in Defense and Solidarity of Human Rights (COSYDDHAC) with input from eleven communities and focused on the impending agrarian reform.



As Mexico works out the details of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the government is in the process of restructuring the country's agrarian laws to, among other things, allow the privatization of *ejido* lands. Though in principle the new laws respect the territorial integrity of Indigenous peoples, the Indians have reason to be skeptical. Their lands are coveted for tourist and agribusiness expansion. "We do not want hotels and other things that do not belong to us on our land," they stated. "We do not want to work for others who come to own the land." In principle, free trade is contrary to Indigenous beliefs, "We do not negotiate the land, or the forest, or the animals; we the Raramuri do not work in order to make business of our land." Fundamentally different philosophies about human relationships to the earth arise when passing privatization policies. "The land is the one who sees that we grow, she is like our Mother who gives us nourishment, the one who takes care of us, she is all we have."

One of the significant victories of the Mexican Revolution was the 1917 Agrarian Reform Law which established communal land ownership in the *ejidos*. The *ejidos* are communal farms formed from expropriated large estates on which farmworkers are given free access to small plots. *Ejido* tenure is non-transferable.

However, under constitutional changes proposed in November by President Carlos

Salinas de Gortari, communal ownership and land distribution under the agrarian reform law would end. The amendment to Article 27 of the Constitution, was promulgated on Jan. 6, the final stage of its approval. Article 27 as amended, will abolish restrictions on corporate ownership of land (including *ejido* land), and farmers on *ejidos* (*ejidarios*) would be allowed to own their land outright and to rent or sell it to *non-ejidarios*. The law provides for the abolishment of constitutional obligations for land distribution and Indian ancestral claims, insitutional reforms, and relaxation of the limits to property size.

The COSYDDHAC proposal sent to Fernando Balza Melendez focused specifically on Article 27, section VII of the Mexican Constitution, which refers to lands of Indigenous communities. The statements by the Indians challenged the government's very right to legislate their lives and lands: "The government did not plant the grass, this was planted by God. The government did not give us the grass, God gave it to us. The trees are not government property, nor does the grass belong to the government; therefore the government cannot take our land." The legal process was criticized: "We are called only when we are needed to sign, and we are not given explanations about what we are signing." The COSYDDHAC proposal states "The

present reforms to [article] 27 of the constitution will give new impulse to the invasion of indigenous territory, against the justice that the spirit of the law seeks." The Indians say that, as it is written, "This reform is only for the benefit of the rich, it is not in favor of the poor.... The *ejido* should stay as it is." The Indians therefore proposed the inclusion of the following sentence to article 27: "the law protects the territorial integrity of Indigenous peoples."

In the proposal to the State of Chihuahua, Indigenous groups expressed concern over the uncertain future of their lands. The statements from the people included: "What is going to happen to our children? They will have nowhere to go, nowhere to live because all that once was ours will pass to others' hands." Elders are concerned for their descendants, "We the older ones will die, however what will our youth live from if they are not to inherit even the land, which is ours and which gives us what we eat."

History has confirmed their concerns. The privatization of lands held communally by Indigenous nations is a common strategy to weaken their self sufficiency. In the late 1800's the United States Dawes Act allotted acreage to male heads of households, and males over 18 years of age. This created a fictitious surplus of lands that were then sold to settlers. The Indian landholders then split up their land to give to their children, who had the power to sell. Within three generations, 90 percent of the lands allotted under the Dawes Act were expropriated by settlers.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 allows Native shareholders to sell shares of their lands to non-Indians beginning in 1991. Thus their lands are more vulnerable to takeovers by private corporations, especially when the economies of Indian commu-

nities are depressed. Alaska Natives resisting this process are encouraging members of the tribes to transfer title to the Tribal Councils from the Native Corporations, thereby protecting communal ownership. Free trade and privatization will benefit the business community, as is aptly noted in a headline in a

Bureau of National Affairs publication called BNA International Trade Daily which states "Agricultural Reforms announced in Mexico should benefit U.S. Firms, specialists say."

The Tarahumara, Tepehuano, and Raramuri of Chihuahua want the government to recognize the ethnic and cultural diversity

of Mexico and allow the Indigenous people to play a role in the national arena. They state: "For the Indians of the state to retain their identity and contribute to the identity and richness of the state, it is necessary to respect the territory that they have been defending for four centuries."

Mexico

300 TSELTALES AND CHO'OL

INDIANS VIOLENTLY EVICTED

At midnight on Saturday, Dec. 28, 1991, 200 state judicial police bearing sticks and firearms violently evicted 300 Tseltales and Cho'ol Indians from the steps of the Municipal Palace in Palenque, Chiapas. They had occupied the square two days before to protest police violence, unjustified arrests, and judicial abuse and corruption, and to demand access to interpreters in the court system.

As a result, 102 people were arrested, including Jesuit priest Jerónimo Hernández, and Cho'ol deacon Sebastian Torres.

While being held incommunicado, they were beaten, dispossessed of their belongings, and pressured to sign declarations which they were not allowed to read. The Public Ministry of Palenque denied a request on the part of local government officials that prisoners be medically examined in order to certify physical injuries suffered.

On Monday, Dec. 30, Hernandez and 92 Indians were released. The remaining nine were held without bail on charges which included disturbing the peace, inciting to riot, and sedition.

On Saturday, Jan. 5, while government officials held formal talks with the organizations involved, sentences ranging from 10 to 40 years were handed down for the nine. Non-



governmental human rights organizations took the case to the government's National Commission for Human Rights.

The wives of the incarcerated have received support from throughout the state of Chiapas, as well as from other parts of the country. Local merchants have financed paid aids requesting that the authorities respond to the Indians' petitions. Telegrams demanding freedom for the imprisoned have poured into the governor and Chief Justice's offices. Meanwhile, government-controlled farmer and workers' organizations have responded with a counter-campaign.

On Wednesday, in Tuxtla Gutierrez, one of the judges in charge declared himself incompetent to continue with the case. The three organizations who sponsored the December sit-in, the Committee for the Defense of In-

dian Freedom (CDLI), the Union of Indian Communities of the Chiapaneca Jungle (UCISECH), and Tsoblej Yu'un Jwocoltic Union, have since returned to the Plaza at Palenque, where they are holding a vigil to pressure for the resolution of their original demands and for the immediate release of the nine prisoners.

The above-mentioned organizations ask that people send telegrams demanding freedom for the imprisoned to:

- The Mexican President, Carlos Salinas de Gortari (Palacio Nacional del Gobierno; Mexico D.F.)
- The Chiapas State Governor, Patrocinio Gonzalez Garrido (Palacio de Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas)
- The government's National Commission for Human Rights president, Jorge Carpizo. (Periferico Sur #3469; Col. San Jeronimo Lidice; C.P. 10200 Mexico D.F.)

For more information contact the Miguel Agustin Pro Human Rights Center, Puebla #45, Col Roma, C.P. 06700 Mexico D.F. Telephone & Fax: 011-525-511-9097.

E-mail: igc!sipro.

PROTESTS

BLOCK LOGGING IDEAL

On Feb. 27 the Honduran government announced the indefinite postponement of the decision to give a 40-year logging concession to Stone Container Corporation of Chicago due to a tremendous outcry from national and international environmental and indigenous organizations and from the Honduran people. The concession would have allowed Stone to log 840,000 acres or four-million cubic meters

momentum continue to fight against the Wellington Hall Company, a US furniture manufacturer which is logging mahogany in the Mosquitia.

There were three demonstrations in Honduras organized to protest the concessions. One was organized by teacher unions and Miskito Indians, one by campesinos and one

daily influx of landless campesinos.

Although the contract between Stone and the Honduran government was shrouded in secrecy, activists obtained a leaked copy which revealed that more than 80% of Honduras could be subject to logging. The contract would have permitted Stone to cut trees anywhere outside of this area at anytime within



annually of pine forests of the Mosquitia, home to the Miskito, Tawahka, Garifuna and Pesch Indians. The Indigenous inhabitants were never consulted on this matter, which could have had disastrous effects on their lives, and an environmental impact study was never conducted.

The head of the Honduran Forestry Department (COHDEFOR), announced that "due to public and technical interest it was impossible to reach a satisfactory agreement with the Stone Container Corporation."

The rejection of the concession was announced as over 3,000 people marched against Stone in the streets of Tegucigalpa. Miskito forester Jorge Salaverri stated, during his speech in front of the capitol, that this is just the first victory for the Honduran people and the environment, and it is necessary that the

by university students. Never before in Honduras has there been this kind of solidarity and consensus on an issue which has united people of all social classes to protect the environment.

La Mosquitia covers the eastern third of Honduras and is not yet connected by roads to the highly populated interior. This has allowed the Miskito, Tawahka and Pesch Indians to retain their cultural and land base to a large extent. The population of the region is approximately 40,000, with the Miskito people constituting nearly 90%. Separating the Miskito Indians' coastal pine forest and the country's interior is one of the largest surviving Central American rainforests, the home of the Tawahka Indians. Although the Tawahka obtained "provisional guarantees" for their lands in 1989, the agreement is not being enforced and they are threatened by an almost

the next 40 years if they did not obtain sufficient pulp wood from the specified region. Stone intended to use the pulp wood for the manufacturing of paper bags, and disposable cardboard packaging.

The Honduran government and the Congress were bombarded by letters and faxes from all over the world protesting the agreement. Protest letters were sent nationally by groups as diverse as the Association of Honduran Loggers, Organization of Miskito Peoples (MASTA), Community Education for Health (EDUCSA) and the Association of Honduran Biologists. In North America, urgent action campaigns were organized by the Rainforest Action Network, Global Response, Ancient Forest Rescue, SAIIC and the Task Force on Multinational Resource Corporations.

Honduras



TAWAHKA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

HONDURAN GROUP PROPOSES DECREE

A proposal has been drawn up to create the Tawahka Biosphere Reserve in La Mosquitia, Eastern Honduras, by Mosquitia Pawisa (MOPAWI), a Honduran group which advocates the demarcation of Indian territories. The proposal was made, recognizing that protecting forests and the Indigenous People who inhabit them is both important and a legal obligation of the Honduran government, and includes the following points:

The goals of creating the Tawahka Biosphere Reserve include guaranteeing the Tawahka people the space they need to live in their traditional manner; protecting biodiversity in the central Patuca River area; stopping encroaching deforestation; protecting natural resources to promote ecotourism, scientific research, and sustainable development; and completing a continuous ecological corridor that would also include the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve.

The Reserve will be for the collective use of the Tawahka community and the people who now live in the area, with the goal of maintaining the traditional economy and sustainable development. The Tawahka communities will promote, plan, and execute the

management of the reserve, through the Tawahka Indian Federation of Honduras (FITH), subject to supervision by the Executive Branch.

The Reserve will be divided into three areas — a central natural zone, a buffer zone, and a settled cultural zone — which will be determined by the Tawahka community. Land and natural resources in the region will be used as they have been traditionally, and in the manner indicated by the Regulations for Land Use approved by the Tawahka Congress. Current land ownership will be respected, and sales will be allowed, with the condition that the Tawahka community be given preference over other prospective buyers.

The following activities will not be permitted in the Reserve: industrial exploitation of the lumber, pasture-intensive cattle raising, illicit removal of fauna, and other activities that work against the biological conservation of the Reserve. The Tawahka community, with the support of various governmental entities, will be responsible for protecting the resources within the Reserve. If the Tawahka community so requests, the Honduran Armed Forces will take necessary measures to eject

colonists who settle in the areas after this decree takes effect.

The exploitation of subsoil resources by inhabitants of the Reserve will be subject to federal laws and must be authorized by the government and include benefits for the Tawahka community. If people must move in order for this exploitation to be carried out, they will be compensated.

Archaeological sites and objects, historical documents, and other testimonies of the past that are found in the Reserve will be placed in the custody of Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History, in accordance with current laws about the defense of cultural heritage. The Institute will work in coordination with the Tawahka community.

"All inhabitants of the Tawahka Biosphere Reserve will have the same rights and obligations as all other Hondurans."

The government will try to gain admittance for the Tawahka Biosphere Reserve to the international network of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere program.



Canada

NUNAVUT—"OUR LAND" THE INUIT PEOPLE WIN BACK THEIR TERRITORY

After a long struggle for economic and political rights, the Inuit people won the political rights over a region which is more than 770,000 square miles (1/5 of the Canadian land mass). The government agreed to the creation of a new political subdivision of Canada, which will carry the name of "Nunavut," meaning "Our Land" in the Inuit language. In addition, the government accepted the terms that this territory be independent of the Northwest Territories.

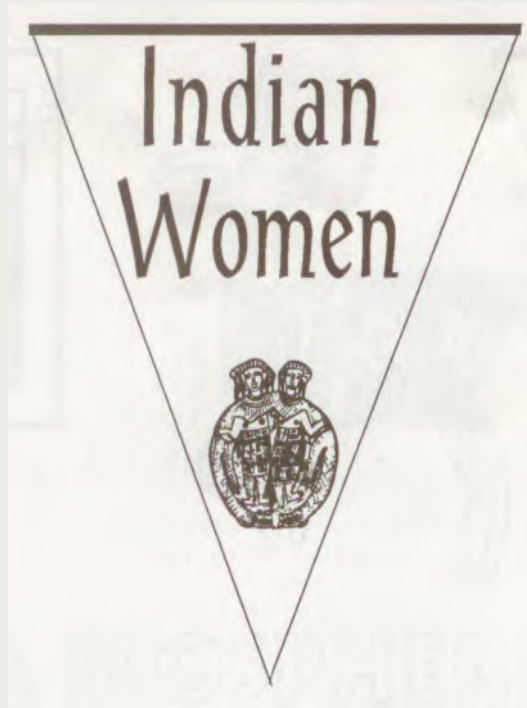
To the 17,000 limit people living in the Great North, this agreement marks a victory after a long struggle, which began after the



European explorers claimed the Arctic archipelago. In addition to political and territorial control, the Inuit will receive economic advantages through this accord in the form of an indemnity of one million dollars, payable within 14 years.

Experts believe that the Nunavut Territory is rich in oil, natural gas and precious metals. The Inuit will grant limited rights for the exploitation of these resources.

Source: *Nitanissan Bulletin*, No. 24, February 1992



Bolivia

WILLING TO DIE FOR A SISTER AN INTERVIEW WITH CARMEN PEREIRA

This report was given during the March 1992 CONIC conference of the Coordinating Body in New York. Carmen Pereira, leader of the Organization of Indigenous Women of Beni, discussed the situation in Beni following The Indigenous March for Land and Dignity to La Paz in August 1990, and the signing of the decree which recognized the territories of the communities of the area.



Carmen Pereira (far left) In a meeting with the Board of Directors of the Center for indigenous People

The cattle ranchers are still in the area. They are not going to leave until the government buys the lands from them because they have property titles. Now the government has to buy the land to give it to the Siriono people, something they have not done yet. Where I live in San

Francisco, the barbed wire has already reached the edge of the village. Now everything is flattened, the ranchers knock over the trees. The government decree is there but it is not being enforced. The logging companies also continue cutting wood. We have to travel far to plant, to the

mountain where we make achaco and plant tomatoes, rice, yuca and oranges for our daily sustenance.

We have organized watch posts in the forest so the loggers will not enter but it is difficult to control. The Indigenous women of San Ignacio together with the central organization have to go and see. We went in January and took away an eight horse power engine, two barrels of gasoline, two chain saws, their boat and their wood. This wood will now benefit the community and will be sold to make a school, sanitary facilities and whatever else is needed.

We women have only done this because, as we have said, we do not care if we die in order to get what we want. The



Photo SAIC

**Indian women at the CONIC meeting
New York, March, 1992**

logging companies are very abusive: They enter the communities and cut the wood in front of everyone.

There was a serious problem where they killed a child, Roy Juarez. This family, although it is Indigenous, has cattle and there was a cattle rancher who wanted to take their land. This rancher, who is from Sucre, sent one of his servants. As they did not find the father who had gone to the river, they shot and killed the six year old boy. The boy was with his little brothers, one who was three and the other who was one year old. The three year old grabbed his younger brother into his arms and ran to the mountain. From there he heard the shots and went to tell another family. When they got back the boy was dead. This happened in 1989 and there is a case which is still pending in court but nothing will come of it because this man has a lot of money to keep the lawyers quiet. For the Indigenous People there is no justice. For that reason we would like a law in Bolivia which would protect the Indigenous women and men.

The Organization of Indigenous Women of Beni is a member of the *Coordinating Body of Indigenous Women of Central and South America*, which is a communication and support network, by which Indigenous women can publicize and share our work, our problems and achievements. We also hold activities to promote the organization and participation of our sisters on a continental level.

For further information contact:

Carmen Pereira
Central de Pueblos Indigenas del Beni
Casilla 58
Trinidad, Bolivia
Tel: 591 464575

Alicia Canaviri
Coordinadora de Mujeres Indigenas de
Sud y Centro America
Av. Burgaleta Pasaje Callacoque 1947
Villa Copacabana
La Paz, Bolivia
Tel : 591 2 3121043 or 591 2 30478

Wara Alderete
PO Box 28703
Oakland, CA 94604
Tel : 51 0 834 4263 Fax: 51 0 834 4264



CONFERENCES



500 YEARS OF INDIAN RESISTANCE EVENTS



International Seminar of Indigenous Women

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) will sponsor an International Seminar of Indigenous Women of the Americas on June 28-30, 1992 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. This meeting will serve as a tribute to Indian women, and to support the right to life, territory, culture and political participation of indigenous people.

The seminar will be held in preparation for the WILPF XXV International Congress which will be held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia on July 1-6 and will culminate in the signing of a "Peace and Justice Treaty among the Women of the Americas."

The WILPF is an international organization which seeks to unite women all over the world in an effort to work towards peace and human rights.

For more information contact Peggy Lara, WILPF,
Casilla 5040, Santa Cruz, Bolivia;
Telephone: 011-591-3-329838,
Fax: 011-591-3-329888

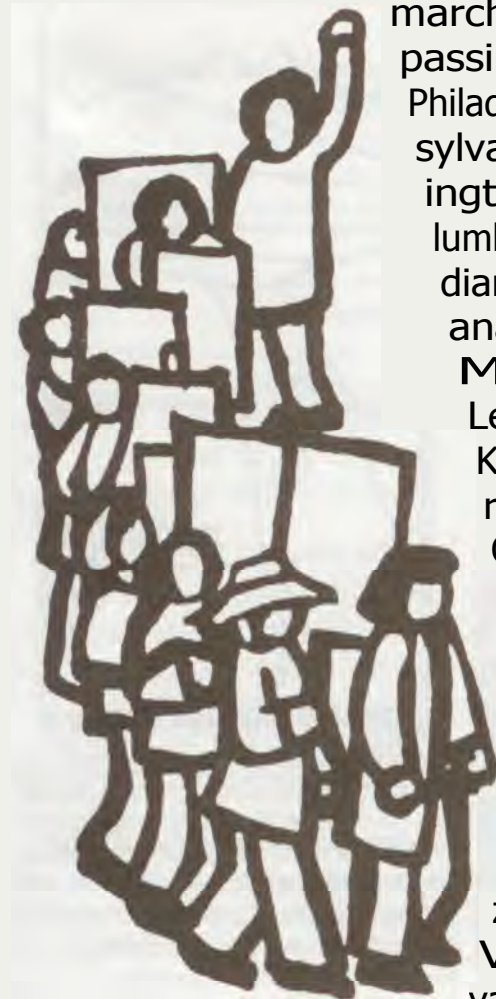
or

WILPF 1213 Race St.,
Philadelphia, PA 19107-1691, USA;
Telephone: (215) 563-7110
Fax: (215) 864-2002

WALK ACROSS AMERICA FOR MOTHER EARTH

(Ohio, USA) Walk Across America is a nine month event in solidarity and support of indigenous peoples' 500 years of struggle for their cultures and lands. The Walk is one of many events aimed at changing the destructive and environmentally disastrous course of this country. The walk began on January 31, 1992 at the United Nations in New York City. The walk will continue the 3,000 mile journey, ending at the Nuclear Test Site on Western Shoshone Land on October 12, 1992 with a massive non-violent demonstration. The

marchers will be passing through Philadelphia Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Columbus Ohio, Indianapolis Indiana, St. Louis Missouri, Leavenworth Kansas, Colorado Springs Colorado, Albuquerque New Mexico, Big Mountain Arizona, Havasupai Land Arizona, and Las Vegas Nevada. The



entire route, once indigenous peoples land, is now littered with the broken promises of 378 treaties signed by the US government. Native

speakers, demonstrations, and workshops are planned along the route to bring attention to these struggles. Between 150 and 300 participants are currently walking. Everyone is invited to walk with the group for a day, a week, or the whole way. For those unable to participate in this way, consider supporting another walker or contributing funds for an indigenous speaker, equipment, or medical assistance.

For more information about contributions, more specific routes, including local contacts, call (800)

466-9255

or write:

**Walk Across America, 1066 N. High Street,
Columbus, OH 43201**

Other 1992 activities include:

- Spiritual Gathering at Big Mountain, Arizona, USA, June, 1992.
- In October of 1992, there will be the *Second Continental Conference: 500 Years of Indian Resistance* in Panama

For more information contact SAIC or the following:

**Kunas United for Mother Earth
Apartado Postal 536, Panama 1, PANAMA
Phone: 507-638-879, Fax: 507-273-525**

**Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios (FIPI)
Apdo 28145, Mexico DF, MEXICO**

**Tonantzin Land Institute
PO Box 40182, Albuquerque, NM 87916
Phone: (505) 766-9930
Fax: (505) 766-9931**

Indigenous Leaders Sign Paris Declaration

Indigenous leaders meeting at the December 1991 NGO conference "The Roots of the Future" in Paris signed a declaration demanding that governments and international organizations guarantee the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination and control over their natural resources. The declaration rejects the celebration of the "Quincentennial of the Discovery of America" and states that "the 11th of October, 1492 was the last day of freedom for the Indigenous Peoples of America". The signers also demand the right of Indigenous Peoples to participate in the UN Conference on Environment and Development to be held in June in Brazil. The Indigenous leaders wish to present an alternative modal for sustainable development based on the traditional harmonious relationship between Indians and the environment. They reject the western development

modal based on a market economy which only benefits the powerful and which is responsible for the destruction of the environment through over exploitation of natural resources.

The following is the introduction to the declaration:

We, the Indigenous Peoples of the world have been constructing, since the ancestral times, a culture, civilization, history and a view of the world which have permitted us to co-exist harmoniously with nature. This normal process was interrupted in America in 1492



by the European invasion of the continent and has meant genocide, the negation of our culture, the violation of our human rights, racial discrimination, the usurpation of our natural resources and the occupation of our territories and sacred places. Currently the Indigenous Peoples find themselves very affected by the necessity created by the economic and cultural system imposed by the great powers and governments. At the same time we have contributed to the "development", sacrificing our peoples and resources without receiving any compensation.

For a copy of the full text send \$3 to SAIIIC.

Other News



Letter from the Indigenous Delegates present at the Palace of Nations in Geneva Switzerland, to the Pope.

Geneva, August 1, 1991

Chief of State of the Vatican
Pope John Paul II
Rome, Italy

The indigenous delegates present at the Palace of Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland, in debate regarding the Universal Declaration of the rights of indigenous people, convened by the "Working Group of Indigenous People" of the United Nations, hereby present and declare:

In view of the declaration on May 3, 4, 1493, of the Papal Bull INTER CETERA, b) which territories of indigenous people are ceded to Spain and Portugal, without taking into account the material or spiritual rights of the indigenous people in case of ABYA-YALA (America) and other parts of the world;

In defense of the sacred rights of the indigenous people, and in promotion of human dignity and harmony that should reign among humanity on this planet,

For all these purposes:

1)we demand from the vatican state a denunciation of the unilateral treaty Pope Alejandro

VI, as being contrary to the Universal Human Rights of Peoples.

2)whereas the year 1993 completes 500 years of a supposed spiritual conquest without clear rectification of this universal injustice, allowing the nation-states that have benefited from the inheritance of Pope Alejandro VI to continue programmes of genocide and ethnocide, denying the indigenous people the recuperation of a harmony based on reciprocal human respect, we demand that the Papal Bull of May 3, 4, 1493 INTER CETERA be annulled.

3)we direct John Paul II to accede to universal concepts of justice including the spiritual and material rights of indigenous peoples, in furtherance of life, harmony of human beings with our Sacred Mother, and the spiritual peace of the Great Creator in accord with the cosmivision of each one of our indigenous peoples, free from all oppression.

Thus we proclaim in the name of Human Dignity, in harmony with our Mother Nature and in the Spirit of Truth.

Signed, the indigenous delegates, and organizations.



Indian People Criticize Earth Summit

(Panama, Ecuador) Indigenous Peoples do not expect a significant reduction in the rate of destruction of the environment after the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June, and demand that their voices be heard at that conference.

For the Confederation of Indigenous People of Ecuador (CONAIE), the nature of the pre-UNCED negotiations held so far seem to point to the meeting being "great theater, with few concrete results".

Oswaldo de Leon Kantule, a youth leader of the Kuna People of Panama, said that he is opposed to the conference. He charges that it only provides a forum for governmental and non-governmental organizations and leaves out the native populations who are "the true defenders of Mother Earth."

De Leon insisted that the UN summit officially recognize Indian groups as the true environmental protectors and give them a forum from which to voice their demands after five centuries of exploitation, death and extermination.

Indigenous groups say official documents to be signed at the Rio meeting would hardly stop the current rate of environmental destruction in the region. "It will be a grand spectacle where each government will want to appear the

most progressive and Indian-friendly," said CONAIE president Luis Macas.

He criticized governments and NGOs for giving little importance to the "human aspects of conservation" during preparatory discussions for the Earth Summit. "We have seen governments and environmentalists from both North and South get deeply involved in discussions on biodiversity and technology, but without speaking about us (Indians), who have conserved the Earth for millennia," Macas said.

Delegates from the Ecuador ethnic conference had attended the Pre-UNCED negotiations which began in Kenya in August 1990 and ended last March in New York. For Macas, those who took part in the discussions "forgot the Indian tribes, who for centuries have lived in the forests and the high plateau of America."

He said Indigenous groups throughout the world would present to the Rio summit a report showing how the Indians view the universe and demanding that all economic activity in areas inhabited by Indians be administered by the Indigenous groups themselves.

Powerful countries must increase their economic aid, but at the same time, change their paternalistic and imperialistic outlook on the south," said Macas. He blamed the market society and the capitalist model for 75 percent of environmental deterioration in the world.

Vianor Perez, Kuna activist, described as "contradictory", the fact that Latin American governments wholeheartedly back the conference and at the same time, approve of the cutting down of the Amazonian forest. Every year, close to 200,000 acres of forest reserves are destroyed, territory which for centuries has provided food and shelter to the Indian population.

"A fundamental issue that the conference must discuss is the Indians' right to use their own land," said Kuna leader de Leon. "If some kind of agreement is not reached, the Indigenous people of Latin America will only be left with the air they breathe and the little land that surrounds them now."

"We indigenous people of Brazil don't expect much from that conference," said Ailton Krenack, the Coordinator of the Union of Indian nations in Brazil.

"Because the governments who will participate have made the decision a long time ago about their environmental police. It is really just a show."



Source: *Inter Press Service and SAIIC*