



EDITORIAL

NEW HISTORICAL TRENDS that recognize cultural diversity, and the legal and human rights of Indigenous peoples should continue to be implemented. Indigenous peoples have expressed their will to carry on their long term struggle for the full recognition of their rights.

In recent continental gatherings we, as rearticulated Indigenous peoples have broadened our perspectives and our demands at a continental level. Indigenous people are no longer isolated entities, we have overcome the colonial boundaries imposed on us for 500 years.

This 1992, the 500 year's commemoration and events, have triggered a continental reorganizing and gathering of all Indigenous nations. Internationally, and since the late 60's, representatives of the Indigenous peoples have been meeting in South America, Central America, Mexico, and North America with the purpose of reconstructing their communication network and sharing their concerns for the legal and human rights of Indigenous nations.

Indigenous encounters have served to enhance cultural pride, self-determination, autonomy, and territoriality, and to demand equality within current nation-states.

Nation-state policies of "integration" and "assimilation" of Indigenous nations have been enforced in both violent and seemingly passive ways, undermining thus, policies of cultural plurality that have denigrated Indigenous nations, languages and cultures.

Indigenous peoples, an active part of the world community today, and the United Nations have declared 1993 The Year of Indigenous Peoples. This however, does not mean that the conditions under which we interact in relation to nation-states are those which promote equality and harmony.

1992 can be seen as the end of this century. We are now beginning a new cycle. Indigenous peoples look at it with hope. At no other time have we felt responsible for the land, the means of our existence, so that we would like to warn the world community of the urgent need to rethink our human existence on this planet to guarantee that natural resources are not exhausted.

Having established communication links, Indigenous peoples will, from their traditional ecological beliefs, continue to denounce the abuse of our planet. These recent years have witnessed militant Indigenous marches that remind governments and nation-states of the urgent need to implement the rights Indigenous peoples have been denied for centuries. Recent land grants, governments' recognition of the Right of Indigenous peoples to their confiscated lands are examples of compromise, dialogue, understanding, but there is still much resistance to recognizing Indigenous rights.

Nevertheless, current economic trends are working against the will to build a better world, and specifically in Latin America these realities are causing the impoverishment of people who increasingly are unable to make ends meet. Clearly, Indigenous peoples have repeatedly pointed out the structures based on inequality that must be changed if we are to survive.

In this issue, we are presenting our recent thoughts, experiences, frustrations and hopes for a better world as we dialogue with the Indigenous people of the continent.

Let Indigenous people speak for themselves on these issues.

