

## BOLIVIA

# Indian Participation In The National Parliament

The following comments by Luciano Tapia, 62, a founder of the Tupak Katari Indian Movement (MITKA) and a member of the Bolivian parliament from 1982 to 1985, appeared in the February issue of *Boletín Chitakolla* (Casilla 20214, Correo Central, La Paz, Bolivia; annual subscription \$15).

"Our representation in Parliament was completely useless, not only because of our small numbers [Luciano was one of two members representing Indian political parties], which limited the development of a political program, but also because of the political composition of Parliament. Reactionary forces constituted the majority, and within the left forces we found a tremendous sectarianism which in no way favored the interests of the people.

"At first I had great hopes. I presented some projects, but they didn't even manage to make it before the whole Parliament. My bill to make Aymara and Quechua official languages in Bolivia is still being held back, opposed precisely by those who proclaim their support of Indians by talking about land reform. A bill I proposed to protect the national wheat supply was ignored. A plan to place the transportation system under public control was also blocked.

"From the experience of my many years of struggle, I think that to vitalize the struggle of Indian people it is necessary to clarify our political thought, to consider ourselves a Nation before we consider ourselves a class. We need to establish some concrete objectives and communicate them to the Indian people, who are a great force despite a feeling of weakness in the absence of an instrument of struggle. This weakness is a subjective feeling, because the Indian people are the true people. Here in Bolivia we are the Nation. We must provide our people with a forceful and concrete instrument with which they can see the light of liberty."



## CHILE

# Cultural Projects Sustain Traditions

*Peggy Lowry, a member of the SAIIC Committee, recently returned from a trip to Chile, where she had the opportunity to visit several Mapuche communities and organizations. In the following comments she talks about what she learned.*

AD-Mapu is known throughout Chile as a strong organization for and by Mapuches. One of the ways AD-Mapu informs people of the Mapuche situation past and present is through a theater group. They have a group of nine people, all volunteers, who write and perform plays. I was fortunate to be in Temuco when they were presenting a cycle of plays that lasted five nights, two per night. Half of the plays were in Spanish and the other half in Mapudugún. They included traditional stories, the relationship between the Mapuche and the

Spaniards, and contemporary problems, like lack of land, flight to cities, lack of money, loss of culture. This theater group travels to different communities to present their plays, which is one reason they are written in Mapudugún. The second reason is that it has forced the actors to practice, and some even learn, their native language. It is a way for Mapuche people living in urban areas to maintain their culture. The plays were all very moving.

Also in Temuco I was invited to visit the Centros Culturales, another Mapuche organization. Their main work at present is in the traditional communities, where 550,000 Mapuche live. Centros Culturales works in agriculture and animal health and sets up community stores.

I also visited the Centro Cultural in Santiago, Folil-Che Aflaii [Eternal Indigenous People]. Sofia Painiqueo, who toured the United States last spring and was sponsored in the Bay Area by SAIIC, is active in their organization. Like many urban Indian centers in the United States, Folil-Che Aflaii works to maintain Mapuche traditions and community strength for those living in the city. They have classes in Mapudugún, music, weaving, pottery, and other traditional skills. They also have a community garden and publish a bilingual newsletter.

The Mapuche are suffering greatly from the current economic situation. Their lands are being divided rapidly and they often don't have enough left to plant for their own consumption. I heard numerous accounts of Mapuche people cutting down trees and making charcoal, putting it in bags on ox carts and traveling for days to sell it in Temuco. There they made enough to buy flour and maybe sugar and traveled for days to return home again. The people who gather *cochayuyo*, a seaweed, dry it and also pack it on ox carts to sell it under similar conditions. In the communities people told me that they earned as much selling a whole cow as they were charged for a couple of pounds of beef.

Mapuche lands, or the lands they have been pushed back to, are not good for agriculture. They are coastal, hilly and have poor soil. Mapuches have no access to fertilizers, and they have so little land that they do not let it rest. Cattle also wear it down tremendously. Wheat, the main crop, is small and sparse. Mapuche families end up buying flour to end the year.

### Mapuche Document On New Constitution

AD-Mapu has announced that it will soon present a document stating indigenous concerns to be included in the future constitution of Chile. The document will explain the characteristics of the Mapuche and the treatment they expect from Chilean society as a whole. AD-Mapu added that the Mapuche people have a big challenge to face in the future democracy of Chile. According to José Santos Millao, president of AD-Mapu, "Chilean society can no longer ignore us or set aside our culture. This document will be written by the Mapuches, since we're the ones it will affect." This statement was made at the inauguration of summer volunteer jobs in southern Chile for over 1,000 university students.

