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NEWSLETTER

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## **South and Central American Indian Information Center (SAIIC)**

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### **Voices and Images of Indigenous Women of the Americas**

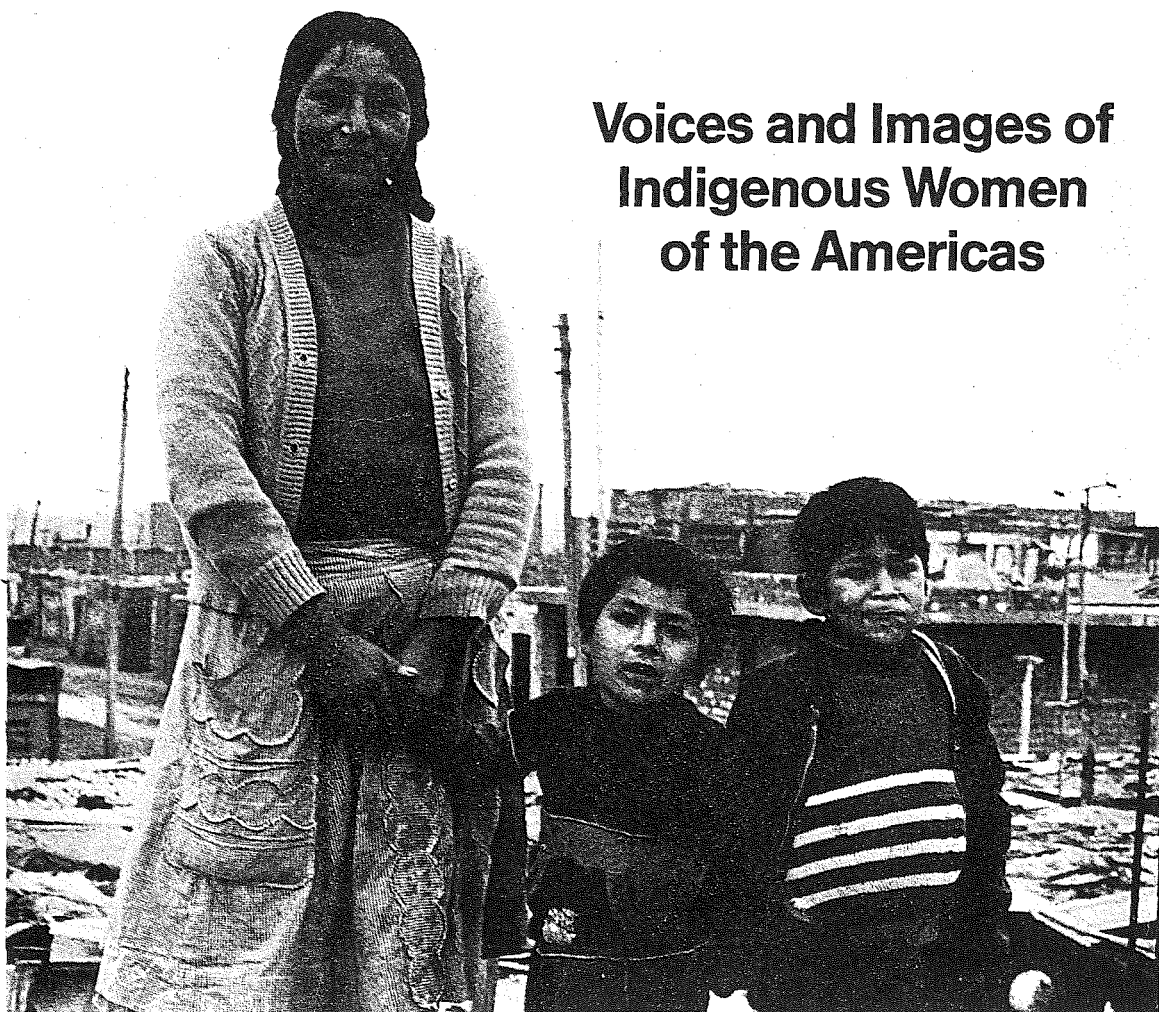


Photo: S. Lobo

# Dedication

This issue of the SAIIC Newsletter is dedicated to Juana Aliaga (cover) and her Sisters of this hemisphere.

"When I was a girl, we came to Lima from my community in the sierras near Huancayo. Since then I have always worked for my children and my family, selling potatoes, yuccas and other vegetables in the market. We live in this community, a *barriada* here in the city, in houses we have built through our efforts, with our own hands, working together and helping one another with all the strength in our hearts. Sometimes I dream of my homeland, *mi tierra*."



## Ester Hernandez

"I am a Xicana, ex-farmworker of Yaqui-Mexican heritage. As an artist, I believe that we all have an obligation to offer our love and energy to the good of our people and all our relations from the four directions. Much of my work deals with recognizing and honoring the native people of the Americas, as I feel it is very important to share our visions and struggles . . . for in unity there is strength and understanding."

Ester Hernandez, who worked with SAIIC in creating our logo, has shared her art in this Newsletter. For more information about her work, call (415) 531-8302.

Left: "Libertad" etching. © 1976 Ester Hernandez



## GUATEMALA

# A Journey To The South

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

"In one village the women dressed me in their native costume, an honor I will never forget. Their smiles told me that I looked like them except I was taller. The language barrier kept me from communicating what my heart felt. It was great knowing that we both lived. Those that we had the privilege of meeting, we renewed our relation to one another. It was like meeting a relative that we haven't seen in a long time. Miles separate us but our thoughts and prayers will keep us together. . . .

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

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

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



*"Woman with Fire" etching. © 1975 Ester Hernandez*

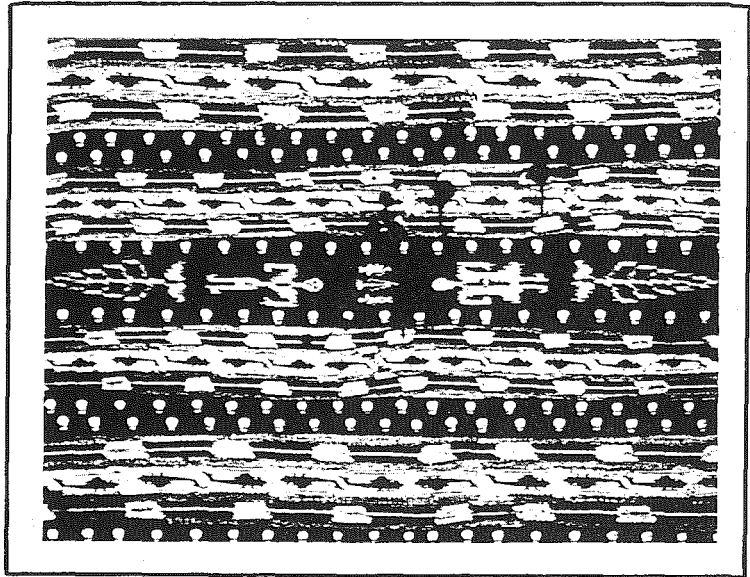
America. We are united with them in the Spirit of Life."

In spirit with my Brothers and Sisters,

K'uu yaa Tsa-wa

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

*"Tejido de los Desaparecidos"*  
silkscreen. © 1984 Ester  
Hernandez



## Inauguration Day In Guatemala

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

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

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

During the next several days about 18 similar invasions took place around Guatemala City. The landowners, banks, and newspapers called for the protection of private property. Eventually, the new president ordered the police to evict all the squatters. The press hailed the peacefulness of the evictions as a new chapter in the relationship between the government and the people in Guatemala, but a few days later at least one paper reported that 15 people who had participated in the invasions had disappeared without a trace.

Just beyond the tract of land being invaded by squatters was the refugee settlement. There were many hundreds of small, poorly-constructed shacks set out in orderly rows along a ridge and atop a wide plateau. José pointed out the different Indians in the encampment who had come here from many parts of the country. Most of the people were wearing very little of their traditional garments. During the preceding 5 years, the most intense period of the army's anti-guerrilla campaigns across rural Guatemala, it had become dangerous to be identified as an Indian. People left their traditional clothes behind when they abandoned their villages. Now, too, it is a lot cheaper to buy western, polyester shirts made in Taiwan and Korea than to purchase thread and weave *traje*.

We didn't stay long in the camp. José was worried that an informer would spot us and take down the license number of the car. On our way back to the city we stopped to visit another household which José helps to maintain. Here, eight Indian orphan children were living. We approached cautiously, parking around the corner and entering separately. There was a bedroom with three beds constructed of boards laid over cement blocks. The kitchen was used for storage because they didn't have a stove or refrigerator. The children were sent out to families in the neighborhood to eat.

The largest room contained three old sewing machines, a bundle of material and some newly-finished shirts and bags. José introduced me to an eight-year-old girl whose parents had been killed only a few months earlier. She called José father now. The women were widows. Their husbands had also been killed. Now they support themselves, what is left of their families, and these orphans by making clothes. These children are being raised in accordance with their culture. Many thousands of Mayan orphans have been placed by the government with Ladino families who tend to use them as servants.

José talked often about the great number of Indian families, and especially the children, who are fast losing their cultural and spiritual identity. I asked him how many Mayans he thought still practice in the old religious ways. He said maybe 30 or 40 percent. Under the military governments, Indians were forbidden to visit their sacred places or to publicly practice their religious ceremonies. Some nearby volcanos are considered sacred and people sometimes travel to them in secret, but if they are found out, they might be accused of being guerrillas. To worship at home is also dangerous. You might be denounced by an evangelical for practicing witchcraft if the odor of incense is detected in your house.



## NICARAGUA

# Homeland

*Angela Russell (Crow from Billings, Montana) traveled to Central America with a group of North American Indians in the spring of 1985 on a trip sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. Following are some of her thoughts on her experience.*

It was suddenly dark. The night swallowed the beautiful warm cloudless day. Our 16-foot motorboat was puttering along a maze of ribbon-like rivers, rivers separated by bushy tropical growth, more swamp than land. We came to a huge lagoon, now loaded with five-inch sprimp because it had not been fished for three years. Everyone had been forced to go to a refugee center further south or flee north to Honduras.

Our Miskitu brothers expertly moved the boat along pathways they knew as well as we know the streets and roads of our home communities. We had no lights. That is a luxury in these parts, as well as a risk. By moonlight we traveled.

Again, more rivers to choose from, all looking the same to me. We were heading east to the sea, to the Atlantic, there on the coast of Nicaragua just a few kilometers south of the Honduran border. We were now at the bay. Just a short distance now was our ship, a Sandinista medical ship that brought us here fewer than twelve hours earlier.

Suddenly, there was gunfire. Three shots rang out. We all crouched down toward the floor of the boat. Two more shots. We were in total silence except for the puttering of our boat as it edged along the southern tip of the bay. It was like time suspended—slow motion.

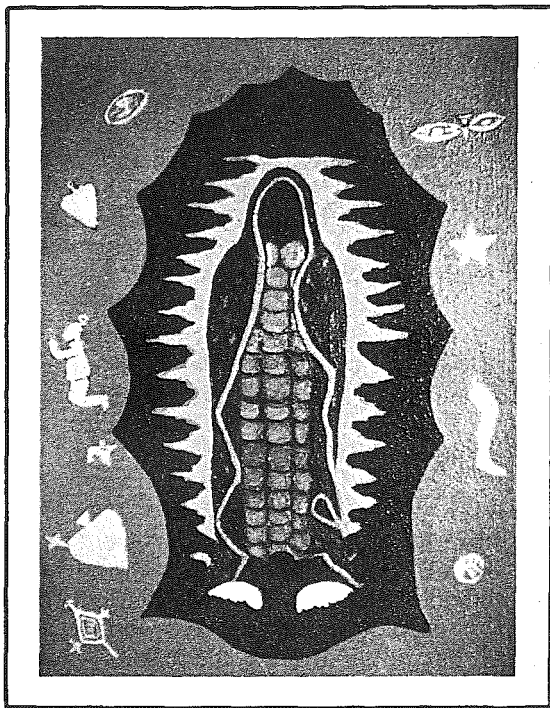
What was I thinking? What were we all thinking?

My thoughts were immediately of home, my special part of the world that I love so much and is part of me. I prayed, if I am to die let me die in my own homeland.

It's been nine months since that incident on the river. Looking back, perhaps a better, well-developed perspective has finally come to birth.

Why did I go? What motivates us to do the things we sometimes do? Adventure. Boredom. A new experience. A belief. A cause.

For me, as a Native person of this country, entrenched in the survival spirit of our people to exist as a people, there are linkages or bonds to other Native peoples of this continent. They are brothers and sisters—be they Miskitu, Sumo, or Rama. What happened to us just a century ago is happening to our Miskitu, Sumo, and Rama brothers and sisters today. Many of the



"Corn Mother" acrylic. © 1973 Ester Hernandez



reasons are the same—expansionism, dominance of one group over another, land, natural resources, greed.

And, our country, the United States, is not an innocent bystander. It was no doubt U.S. bullets that fired that night on the river for that area is full of anti-Sandinista rebels, often all lumped together under the name “contras.” The war in Nicaragua is complex. It is not simple like our country would like us to believe. It’s not good guys versus bad guys.

That night on the river when my foremost thoughts were of my homeland, that identity is not dissimilar to that of the Miskitus, Sumos, and Ramas of the Atlantic Coast. They are fighting for their homeland—their identity.

*Since returning from Central America, Angela, who is a social worker, has looked for ways to lend support to Indians in Central America. She writes, “In October, 1985, the National Indian Social Workers meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, passed a resolution condemning the genocidal policies against the Indian peoples in Guatemala and calling for a forum to discuss the situation in an effort to seek ways to end this oppression, and to raise the issue in the United States.” For more information on the Guatemalan forum, contact Angela Russell, Box 333, Lodge Grass, MT 59050.*



## COLOMBIA

# Indians Caught Up In Climate Of War

In Colombia, with a population of 28 million people, there are 1.2 million Indians who speak more than 130 different languages. In the 1970s, as was occurring in many indigenous areas in South America, an organization was founded in the Cauca Valley called the Cauca Regional Indian Council (CRIC). CRIC was born out of the need for indigenous people to confront the continuous repression placed on them by large landowners who take indigenous lands and force Indian people to pay rent.

Inspired by Manuel Quintin Lame, an Indian leader who was killed at the turn of the century for defending Indian land, CRIC began to take back land and stop paying rent. This was very successful, but the large landowners responded by employing mercenaries (called *pájaros* or birds) who have killed over 100 Indians. At the same time, with anti-government guerrilla activities increasing in Colombia, especially in the Cauca area, which is mountainous, the Colombian army has become very repressive toward Indian people. Many have been jailed, some for as long as one year, as they await trial. Usually there is no case against them and, under international pressure, most are eventually set free.



(Reproduced from *Como Nos Organizamos*, published by CRIC, Nov. 1983.)





At the end of the 1970's, President Turbay Ayala tried to do away with collective ownership of Indian communities by proclaiming the Indian Statute, which dissolved the *cabildos*, the traditional Indian community organizations. All the communities rejected this decree and decided to hold the First National Indian Gathering in October, 1980. During this meeting the National Indigenous Coordinator was founded with the goal of planning the first national Indian congress. This congress was held in Bogota in February of 1982. There were over 2,000 Indian delegates present who represented 20 regional councils from all around the country. During the congress the National Indian Organization of Colombia (ONIC) was founded with headquarters in Bogota.

ONIC's program is:

1. The defense of Indian autonomy and history.
2. The defense of culture and Indian traditions.
3. Bilingual/bicultural education under direct control of Indian organizations.
4. Promotion of health and traditional medicine.
5. Support of community economic organizations and return of Indian lands that have been seized.

At present in Colombia there is a climate of war between the government and guerrilla forces. The army has occupied the Cauca region and the air force is continuously bombing. Animals have been killed, crops have been destroyed, and numerous Indians have fled to the cities, where they are homeless.

Various guerrilla groups control different areas of Colombia and force Indians to join them. Javier Delgado, one of the ex-chiefs of the guerrilla group Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, ordered the death of dozens of indigenous small farmers in the Cauca region during the first week of February, 1986. He accused them of collaborating with the government armed forces. The killings were witnessed by reporters from French television who had

been invited by Delegado. The French cameramen refused to film and returned to Bogota to denounce the massacre.



(Reproduced from *Como Nos Organizamos*, published by CRIC, Nov., 1983.)

### ONIC Publication Celebrates Tenth Anniversary

The second ONIC congress in February of this year coincided with the tenth anniversary of the magazine *Unidad Indígena* (Indian Unity), the official publication of ONIC and CRIC. In its anniversary issue, *Unidad Indígena* states, "We see the need to have our own paper because often articles and books appear about us, but it is not our voice that speaks. In our paper, we see ourselves as we really are, men, women, and children with our own dignity, our own languages, and our own beliefs."



ECUADOR

# African Palm And Indian Ethnocide

*SAIIC recently received the following press releases from the Confederation of Indian Nations in the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE).*

CONFENIAE is a regional organization that unites the Shuar, Quichua, Cofan, Secoya, Siona, and Huaorani Indian nations. We use the term nations because it encompasses territory, culture, history, and self-government.

CONFENIAE began in 1980 to answer our needs and aspirations. The different federations carry out programs and projects in bi-lingual education, health, agriculture, land tenancy, and similar concerns. The main objectives of CONFENIAE are to defend Indian land, cultural values, the right to self-determination, and the right to organize freely.

At present, Indian peoples of Ecuador and especially of the Amazon region, are facing very hard times. The policies of past and present governments are accelerating the destruction of natural resources and the indiscriminate and violent occupation of Amazon lands. They ignore the existence of Indian peoples who for centuries have held the land as our only and true historical heritage. The land is the guarantee of our survival.

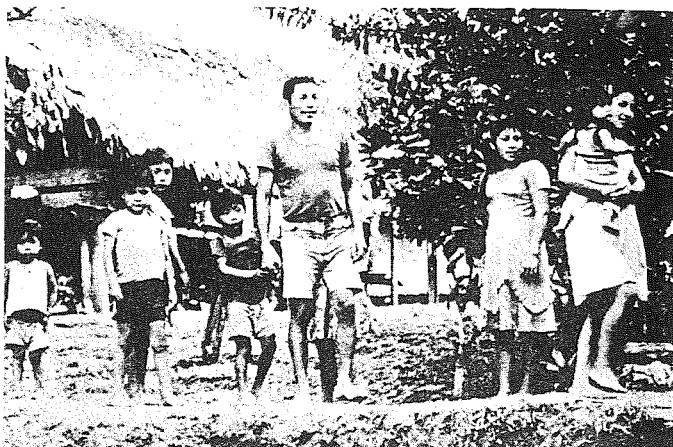
The policies of the current government include giving priority to the process of colonization, halting Indian access to land adjacent to Indian communities, and opening the land to foreign investment. Lack of control of transnational corporations, such as lumber, mining, agribusiness, and oil companies, results in ethnocide of Indian peoples. . . .

The cultivation of African palms, which produce oil that is sold at a high price in the international market, is a good example of the assault on our people. Large areas of land are being given to palm-growing companies, ignoring the traditional and historical rights of Indian peoples of the Amazon region.

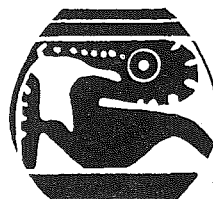
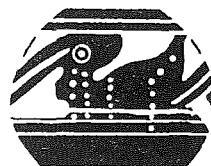
The transnational companies have complete control of the cultivation of the palm and all proceeds are sent outside the country. . . .

We want the situation faced by Indian peoples of the Amazon to be known at a national and international level and seek solidarity with our struggle for unity, land, justice, and freedom.

Cristóbal Tapuy P.  
President of CONFENIAE



(Reproduced from *Palma Africana y Etnocidio*, CEDIS, Quito, Sept., 1985.)



(Reproduced from *Indian Designs from Ancient Ecuador*, Dover, N.Y. 1979.)

## Ecuador Allows Use Of Pesticides Banned In Most Of The World

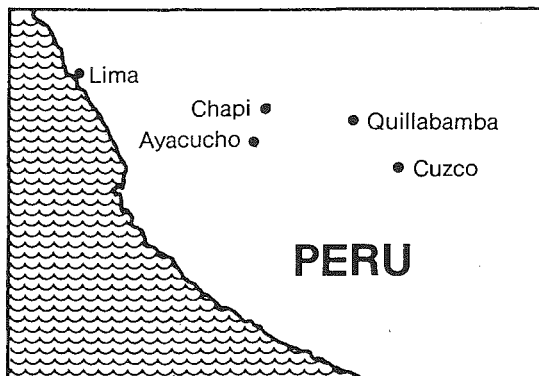
According to a bulletin called *Veneno para el desayuno (Poison for Breakfast)* from the coordinator of community health teams and Abya-yala Editions of Quito, Ecuador uses 23 pesticides, including ten that are banned in most of the world.

Almost all of these products are imported from the United States and West Germany with the Ecuadorian government's consent. Many *campesinos* have died from eating fish contaminated by pesticide used for the cultivation of rice. There are more and more people with liver and lung cancer who die after long suffering. Also, cases of blindness, deafness, paralysis, rheumatism, and severe headaches have increased. The number of children born paralyzed, deaf, mute, or with bone malformations which keep them from walking is increasing.

The bulletin adds that faced by all these facts, the government only increases vaccination teams, as if shots could save people who are victims of pesticides. These pesticides have also killed millions of microorganisms from the soil which are friends of plants and people.

## PERU

### Report Of Indian Massacre In Ayacucho



CISA, the South American Indian Council whose office is in Lima, has sent SAIIC news of allegations of a massacre involving an Indian community of 3,000 people in a remote area of northern Ayacucho province. The massacre is said to have occurred in June and July of 1984 but is just now coming to light, according to reports in the Lima daily newspaper *La República*.

Survivors have testified that the community of Chapi was virtually wiped from the face of the earth during repeated attacks by helicopters whose description corresponds to government military aircraft that are fighting the Sendero Luminoso guerrilla movement in Peru. The survivors, who have taken refuge in Quillabamba, capital of the neighboring province of La Concepción, said that the massacre can be verified by the damage inflicted on buildings and the unburied bodies which still lie scattered in the area.

Members of the national congress of Peru in the ruling APRA party, which came to power after the massacre is alleged to have occurred, have announced that a delegation will travel to Chapi to personally investigate the charges.



(Reproduced from *Peru Briefing*, Amnesty International, 304 West 58th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10019, Jan. 1985.)

## 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.



## BRAZIL

# Tukanos Confront Mining Interests in Upper Rio Negro

For the past few months a tense situation has existed in the Upper Rio Negro region of the Amazon, with increasingly violent confrontations between Tukano Indians and gold prospectors on Indian land. Several deaths have resulted. In January, the Brazilian press reported that 60 Tukanos had been killed, but these reports are still unconfirmed.

Mining companies have requested permission from the government to mine within the Indian area. Exploration efforts by mining companies on the boundaries of the area have pushed gold prospectors into Indian territory. The situation is even more critical because the Brazilian government is considering the demarcation of the region, which would guarantee stronger, legal protection for the lands of the Tukano, Baniwa, Maku, and at least 13 other groups. Fifteen thousand indigenous people live in the area, which covers 35,000 square miles.

Brazil's National Department of Mineral Production (NDPM) has argued that the mineral-rich Traira Mountains be excluded from the area of demarcation.

According to a leader from the community of Pari-Cachoeira, the Traira is sacred land: "On top of the mountains, the monster cobra, Traira, makes the connections between all of the houses, the *malocas*. The elders warn of the consequences of destroying that hill from which they get the force of their wisdom, the sacred stones."

Documents obtained by SAIIC from Brazil suggest that mining companies are exerting greater pressure in Brasilia to obtain permission to mine on Indian lands. CONAGE, an association of Brazilian geologists, and Brazil's Ecumenical Center for Documentation and Information recently denounced the issuance of 120 permits for mining on Indian lands in the states of Para and Amapa, in the northeast Amazon. Indian leaders had previously denounced exploration permits issued to 19 companies in the Upper Rio Negro.

These permits can not be put into force without disregarding or changing Brazil's Indian Statute, which specifically states that all resources on Indian land are for the exclusive benefit of Indian people. Despite this fact, variances have been extended to several companies, and the boundary of the Waimiri-Atuari reserve was redrawn several years ago by presidential decree to allow tin mining to proceed.



*Tukano Indian from Brazil*

(Photo: Casimiro Beksta; reproduced from *Povos Indígenas no Brasil* 83, Centro Ecumênico de Documentação e Informação, São Paulo.)

## New Tribes Mission Levels Accusations Against Brazilian Indian Leader

Biraci Brasil, Yawanawá and representative of Brazil's Union of Indigenous Nations (UNI), returned to his village following last November's Inter-American Indian Congress

meeting in Santa Fe (see photo and story in SAIIC Newsletter, Winter, 1986) to find he was victim of a smear campaign by fundamentalist missionaries. Members of the New Tribes Mission branded Biraci a communist and ordered him to leave his own village. He refused. According to Biraci, the state police intervened and "want to take away my right to be an Indian." He feels that the goal of the missionaries is to discredit him as a representative of UNI in the eyes of his own people.

The New Tribes Mission, whose headquarters is in Sanford, Florida, operates seven centers in the Acre region, with the stated purpose of converting Indians to Christianity. As widely reported in the media, in 1985 the New Tribes and its sister organization, the Mission Aviation Fellowship, were implicated in a plot to smuggle precious stones to the United States.

According to Biraci, UNI in its five years of existence has taken "a strong commitment to the Indian cause." UNI has also opposed fundamentalist groups working in Indian communities. According to *Porantim*, the monthly newspaper which covers Indian issues, The New Tribes was temporarily expelled from Colombia and Venezuela for trafficking in precious stones. They have strong political connections in Brasilia, as evidenced by the fact that a former minister of justice was also involved in the smuggling incident.

## Changes in FUNAI—But for the Better?

Following a threat by FUNAI President Apoena Meirelles to resign if structural changes in the agency responsible for the welfare of Brazilian Indians were not made, Minister of Interior Ronaldo Costa Couto announced in February a major decentralization of the agency.

One concrete change will be the dispersal of FUNAI's bureaucracy in Brasilia into six regional superintendencies, maintaining only a skeleton administrative staff of 50 in the capital. Another change still not finalized will be the transformation of the agency into a special secretariat directly under the President of Brazil or under the National Security Council.

Neither change is likely to achieve significant gains in the level of Indian participation in decisions affecting their own survival. Decentralization of FUNAI may play into the hands of state and local politicians such as Governors Gilberto Mestrinho of Amazonas state, Angelo Angelim of Rondônia, and Getúlio Cruz of Roraima, who have said they will not recognize new demarcations of Indian lands in their states and have attacked the "huge" areas being allotted to Indian reserves.



## SAIIC to Coordinate Visit of Brazilian Indian Leader

SAIIC is pleased to announce that its plans to help bring a coordinator of the Union of Indian Nations (UNI) to the United States are closer to becoming a reality. The trip might take place as early as May, when the UNI representative may testify in Congress regarding the impact of multinational development bank projects on indigenous people in Brazil.

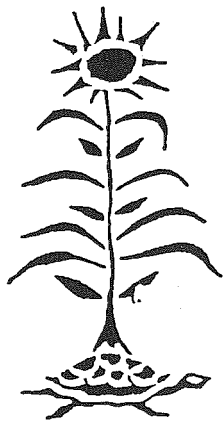
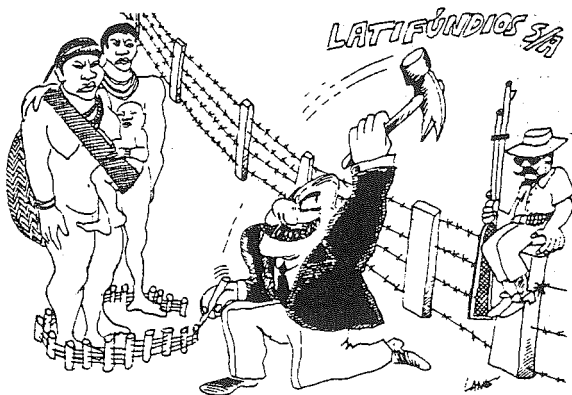
SAIIC hopes to assist UNI in meeting with North American Indian communities to strengthen communication among Indian organizations and individuals. We also hope to raise the awareness of the public in the United States regarding the critical situation confronting indigenous people in Brazil.

We would like to invite organizations and concerned citizens to contact SAIIC for more details on the plans for this historic visit. Suggestions for specific events at which the UNI representative could speak and other ideas which would contribute to a successful visit would be appreciated.

## Update: Amazonia Film Project

AMAZONIA: VOICES FROM THE RAINFOREST is a film-in-progress about the struggle for land, resources and survival, where the people of the Amazon suggest solutions for the social and environmental crisis of the rainforest. The film looks at indigenous land use as a model for life in the rainforest and as a focus of conflict on the expanding frontier.

The producers of AMAZONIA, Monti Aguirre and Glenn Switkes, have prepared a slideshow on this subject. For more information, contact them through the SAIIC office.



Floyd Westerman spoke recently on the SAIIC radio program, "South and Central American Indian Update."

"What we are beginning to find out as we work more closely with other groups of Indian nations from Central and South America is that we have a very common destiny as we find ourselves emerging out the the twentieth century. We have a common understanding in relation to Mother Earth, and we have a common understanding of how we want to live. I think we can show the world this way, if we come together at this time to make our understandings known."

For more news reports, interviews, and music from Indian communities in South and Central America, listen in the first Friday of each month at 8:00 p.m. on KPFA FM 94.1 in northern California.



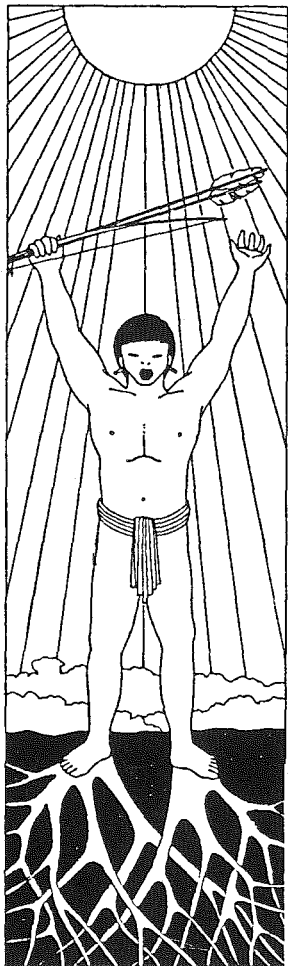
# Santa Fe Congress Resolutions

The resolutions adopted by representatives of indigenous people of the Americas at the Ninth Inter-American Indian Congress, held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in November, 1985, have now been published. This meeting began with representatives of government agencies speaking of the Indian "problem" in their countries, but Indian people invited as observers quickly denounced that premise and met in a parallel "Open Forum" to discuss issues of mutual concern (see SAIIC Newsletter, Winter, 1986 ).

Testimony on human rights violations was presented by Indian people, including evidence of systematic violations by governments of the laws and treaties which protect Indian people. National governments have attempted to suppress or destroy the independence of the Indian movement through manipulation, confusing the issues, hindering its organization, and otherwise blocking its genuine expression.

Among the resolutions adopted by Indian leaders at the meeting were:

- to request the formation of an Indian human rights commission, with participation of Indian organizations, as a permanent body of the Inter-American Indian Institute.
- to promote a review of the concepts of genocide inherent in the upcoming celebration of "the Fifth Centennial of oppression of Indian peoples" in order to fully express the historical feeling of Indian people on this matter.
- to demand that governments commit themselves to recognize the collective ownership by Indian peoples of their territories and the restitution of those lands that were taken away from Indian peoples, together with the natural resources of the soil and subsoil.
- to press for a peaceful solution to the conflict in El Salvador, where more than 35,000 Indian people were massacred in 1932 and where murder and violence continue today.
- to request the U.S. government to grant legal resident status to Maya-Kanjobales refugees from the war in Guatemala.

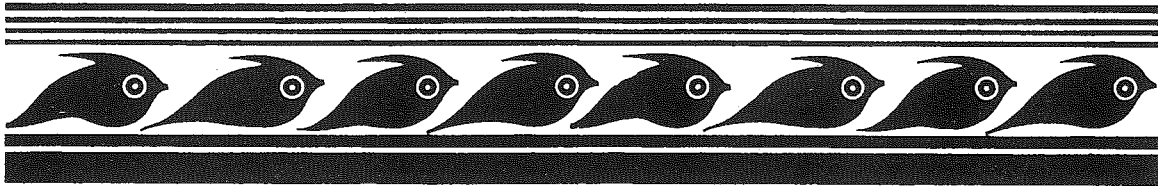


## CISA Conference Scheduled for Chile in November

The Third Conference of Indian Nations and Organizations of South America will be held in Temuco, Chile, in November, 1986. It will be sponsored by the South American Indian Council (CISA). The announcement was made by the Centros Culturales Mapuches, who stated that Indian organizations from South, Central, and North America will be invited. Also, indigenous people from Australia, the Pacific, and Scandinavia and solidarity organizations will be welcomed as fraternal delegates.

- to accommodate indigenous participation in the Organization of American States.
- to apply international human rights instruments to national policies.
- to develop a critique of the work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- to recognize and support the struggles of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, including the Kollas, Chiriguano, and Wichi people of Argentina; the Mbya and Maskoy of Paraguay; the communities of eastern Bolivia; the Yanomami in Brazil and Venezuela; the Indian people of the Amazon region of Ecuador; the Quechua people of Ayacucho, Peru; the Indian people suffering from the militarization of the Cauca, Choco, Cordoba, and Tolima regions of Colombia; the Miskitu, Sumo, and Rama people of Nicaragua; the Hopi and Navajo people suffering from forced relocation in the Joint Use Area of Arizona; and the Indian nations of British Columbia, Canada, to name only a few.

If you would like to receive a copy of the complete statement by Indian people attending the Santa Fe conference, please send \$3.00 to SAIIC to cover photocopying and mailing costs.



## Native Hawaiian Cites Ruin Of Ocean

*SAIIC recently spoke with a visitor from Hawaii, Ho'oipo DeCambria.*

"I'd like to share one of the more current concerns of Pacific Island people at this time in 1986. That is the United States effort to build an incinerator on what is called Johnson Island, previously known as Kalama Island when it was under the reign of King Kamehameha. Johnson Island is an atoll in the Pacific that now stores toxic wastes. It is a very small atoll. The Environmental Protection Agency has granted a permit for the U.S. army to build an incinerator to burn these toxic chemicals. This EPA permit was granted without any Pacific Island consultation. No Pacific Island people knew about this hearing. The only people who gave testimony were a few of us in Hawaii. This incinerator is already under construction, and it is life-threatening, we believe, to Pacific Island way of life.

"According to studies that have been done, we believe that emissions will fall into the sea and pollute the food chain further than it already has been by the bombings in the 50's of Eموita and Bikini Islands. We see that the United States sees us as being an expendable population of 90,000 people. We may live on small atolls and small islands, but the ocean is also our territory. The Western mindset does not see the ocean as part of the life cycle of indigenous Pacific Island people, so it chooses to use it and commodify it in different ways that really are going to destroy our future. . . .

"And I think Hawaii is seen too many times as a part of the West. I think people need to look at Hawaii as a part of the Pacific Islands. That concept has to be deepened and reinforced over and over again. And I think even though we have Congressional delegates in the United States, I think even they have to see themselves as representatives of Pacific Island people and not representing people who belong to the West, because we are in the ocean, and we are thousands of miles from the United States, and we are indigenous."

# ACom Links Indigenous People Via Computers



During the past few years, Jose Barreiro and others have worked to establish an indigenous peoples' computer network service called ACom. ACom makes possible instant communication among its subscribers and gives access to the Indigenous Press Network, an international, indigenous-based information network. SAIIC recently spoke to Jose, who said, "Now for the first time, indigenous groups are reaching out over long distances. We now have more access to phones and typewriters, and computers are the next step. With computers we can transfer information from remote areas. It used to take six weeks to get information to us, for example from a city in South America. Now we can cut it down to six minutes. Indigenous people need to break from isolation in terms of human rights. Now an Indian massacre in South or Central America doesn't have to go unreported for six months."

Jose also discussed the idea that indigenous people have a depth of knowledge and understanding of the natural world, and that through the use of computers this understanding can be shared among people for the protection and appropriate use of land and resources. "Often the first outside contact has been with those who wish to exploit resources. We need to go around that. We need to break the isolation between indigenous people and be able to communicate with one another. For example, the Aborigines are dealing with Alcoa and other multinationals, and the Amazonian Indians are dealing with the same threatening entity. Now

the Aboriginal people and the Amazonian people have the potential to communicate directly with one another about any particular multinational and how to deal with it. Fourth World communication is what we are talking about. There is a close relationship among indigenous people with the natural world. We can go from that and access computers. Let's skip tanks and rocketships."

For more information about ACom, contact Jose Barreiro at P.O. Box 71, Highland, Maryland 20777.



## Announcements

The International Indian Treaty Council will hold its 11th Annual Conference at Big Mountain, Arizona, from June 2 to 8, 1986. People are invited to attend and present issues relating to land, water, religion and treaty violations. All documentation is condensed and submitted to United Nations forums as human rights violations.

A Brother who is incarcerated would like to write to an "Indian Sister for friendship and exchange of thoughts concerning our Indian People." Contact Edmundo Sanchez, P.O. Box C-19618, Represa, CA 95671.

SAIIC works to promote exchange and unity among all Indians of the Americas by making information available and by making increased direct communication possible. SAIIC also makes South and Central American Indian issues and culture known to the general English-speaking public. The Newsletter, one of SAIIC's projects, reflects indigenous perspectives of the Americas.

SAIIC welcomes the energy and ideas of volunteers. All donations are tax deductible. If you can help, please call us at (415) 452-1235 or write us. Thanks.

Special thanks for production assistance to *Porantim* for graphics and to the American Friends Service Committee, Intertribal Friendship House, Peoples Translation Service, Leanna Wolf, Wes Huss, Bobsey Draper, Judy Kussoy and the SAIIC Committee: Monti Aguirre, Pete Hammer (who co-edited this issue), Peggy Lowry, Rayen Cayuqueo, Anna Lugo Stephenson, Maria Massolo, James Muneta, Glenn Switkes, and Jo Tucker.

Nilo Cayuqueo, SAIIC Coordinator  
Susan Lobo, Publications Editor

## NEWSLETTER

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

## PUBLICATIONS

*Working Commission Reports: Second Conference of Indian Nations and Organizations of South America. Tiwanaku, Bolivia*, published by SAIIC, 1984, \$3.

*Journey to the South*, K'uu yaa Tsa-wa, published by SAIIC, 1986, \$1.

## TAPES OF RADIO SHOW

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

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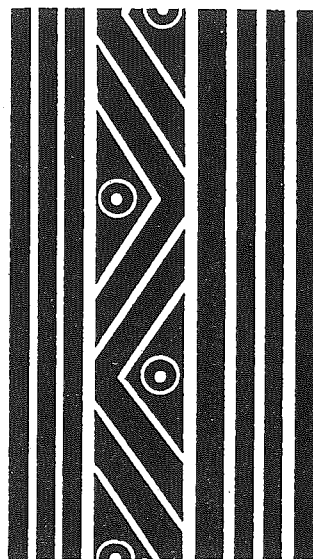
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Please make out all checks, which are tax deductible, to American Friends Service Committee/SAIIC, and mail to South and Central American Indian Information Center, P.O. Box 7550, Berkeley, CA 94707 USA.

Photo: S. Lobo



*Juana Aliaga and her child looking over their community in Lima, Peru. See Page 2.*

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