

Indian Groups In Eastern Bolivia Meet

From May 19 to 22, 1986, a meeting organized by the Center for Indian Communities and People of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB) was held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to discuss Indian land. Guaraní, Chiquitano, Mojeño, Ayorode, Mataco, and other Indian people live in this area of Bolivia near the border with Brazil. Among the participants in the meeting were the Farmworkers Union and the Federation of Women Farmworkers. The topics discussed included contradictions of the colonial process, such as market dependency; capitalist appropriation of Indian land as a basis for regional development; genocide; ethnocide; slavery; and destruction of the ecosystem.

The conference concluded with a statement stressing the need to promote a multi-national state where all social groups can participate in government decisions. It also called for a strategy of alternative economic development in which Indians will retain control of natural resources such as vegetation, minerals, and petroleum.

PARAGUAY

Mbya Apytere Resist Attack On Land By Mennonite Colony

Reports from Paraguay indicate that the Sommerfeld Mennonite colony has acquired title to land long occupied by Mbya Apytere Indians in the San Juan and Jaguary communities of the Caaguazú department.

Máximo González, Amselmo Miranda, and Juan Guato, leaders of the two communities, traveled to the capital, Asunción, Saturday, July 19, 1986, to denounce the most recent acts of violence against their people. They reported that on repeated occasions and by a variety of violent means the Mennonites had tried to evict the Indian communities from their land, in total disregard for their legal rights, which are guaranteed in the Indian Communities Statute and confirmed by a ruling of the Villarrica district court issued January 10, 1984. As a consequence of his declarations to the press, Máximo González was arrested.

The violations of Indian rights include the complete deforestation of an area of woodlands totaling 40 hectares, situated within the traditional territory of the Mbya Apytere communities. The land is expressly protected by the January 10 ruling, which states, "Ordering the cessation of all threatening acts until an agreement has been reached between the Indian community, the administration authorities and the inhabitants of the Sommerfeld colony." However, neither the district police nor the Institute of Indian Affairs has made any effort to ensure that the ruling is respected.

Declarations of support for the Mbya Apytere can be sent to the following officials:

General Germán Martínez, Presidente, Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena, Avenida Don Bosco 745, casi Humaitá, Asunción, Paraguay.

Willys Enns, Cooperativa Sommerfeld, Casilla de Correo 166, Asunción, Paraguay.

