

CHILE

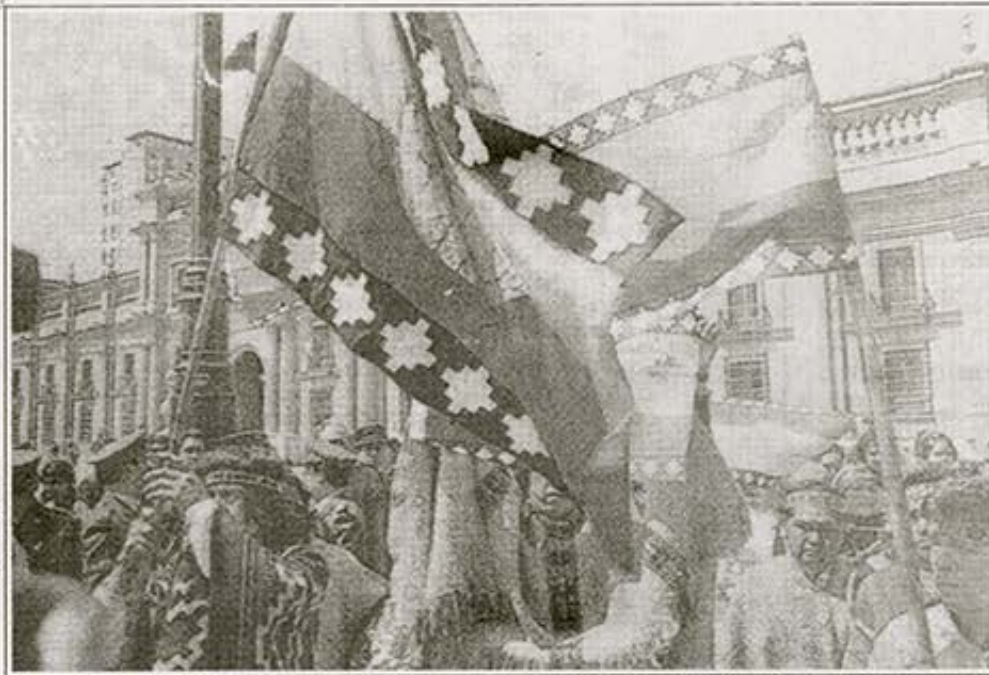


Photo Aukiñ

Hoisting the Mapuche Flag

The Mapuche Coordinating Body of Argentina Tañi Kiñe Nguetuan (To Be One Again) raising the Mapuche National Flag in the city of Nuequén. The flag was created last year during the historical reunion of the Mapuche Nation from the Argentine and Chilean sides of the border.

Mapuches Convicted for Occupying Land

The Chilean government has convicted one hundred and forty-four Mapuche people for the "illegal usurpation of land" and sentenced them to pay a fine equal to about one year's wages.

The alleged usurpation of land took place in June 1991 when the Mapuche organization Aukiñ Wallmapu Ngullam (Council of All Land) began to occupy lands in an attempt to "exercise our rights as Mapuches to this land which is in the hands of private companies and the State of Chile."

As a result of these actions the Interior Minister Enrique Krauss and the regional Governor Fernando Chuecas detained hundreds of Mapuche people and filed charges against them. The government officials claimed that the "Association was involved in the illegal take-over of the land."

Krauss insisted that "the Counsel of All Land's actions do not fit into the legal framework of Chilean society. Moreover, their efforts to establish a separate Mapuche nation, including their own flag, is an act that is in direct contradiction to Chilean national unity." The Counsel of All Land responded to the accusations on January 25, 1993 and

made the following statement through their lawyer:

"The Mapuche people have a distinct historical background in terms of social, political, and religious structure that differs from the rest of Chilean society. Not only has Chile refused to recognize these unique attributes of our culture but has systematically tried to destroy us."

On March 10, 1993, the Attorney General informed the one hundred and forty four accused Mapuches that they are each required to pay 11 months of their wages, the equivalent of \$60 a month, for their illegal occupation of the land. The other detainees were convicted of "illegal activities and alliances" and condemned to eighteen months of police surveillance and are not allowed to organize politically.

Those accused of illegal land acquisition are appealing their sentences claiming that they have not committed any crime. They are currently trying to educate the public about the injustices imposed upon them by the government. In May the Appellate Court of Temuco will decide whether uphold or overturn the convictions.

"Their efforts to establish a separate Mapuche nation, including their own flag, is an act that is in direct contradiction to Chilean national unity."

-Enrique Krauss, Chilean Minister of the Interior