

church rights to establish a mission in the area and to function in a hazily defined role as "protector" of the Indians. The Yanesha have also been threatened by homesteaders and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, an evangelical organization. After intense effort by the Yanesha, they received title to their land in 1976. But the title was annulled in 1981 as a result of strong pressure from the Catholic church, according to the CIPA documentation. Since then tensions have increased in the area as homesteaders have attempted to invade Yanesha land. In 1982, the Comunidad Nativa Tsachopen filed a court document called an *acción de amparo* which should provide immediate judicial protection against violation of constitutional rights. But for four years technically illegal judicial tactics have blocked consideration of the petition and violations of Yanesha land rights continue.

CIPA states that it "has protested this grave situation to the Peruvian government, demanding effective intervention of judicial, administrative, and church authorities to reinstate territorial rights to these Indian people of the Amazon who have now been displaced."

Comunidad Native Tsachopen also makes an urgent call to national and international public opinion to lend support. They request that letters be sent to the following officials and that copies of the letters and any responses to the letters be sent to CIPA:

Dr. Alan García Perez, Presidente de la República, Palacio de Gobierno, Lima, Peru.

Señor Ministro de Justicia, Ministerio de Justicia, Lima, Peru.

Monseñor Luis Barbarén, Conferencia Episcopal de Acción Social, Rio de Janeiro 488, Jesús María, Lima 11, Peru.

## MEXICO

### Zapotec Weavers Discuss Origins of Designs

*Zacarías Ruiz Hernandez and Emilia Gonzales de Ruiz, Zapotec weavers from the town of Teotitlan de Valle, near Oaxaca, were in the San Francisco Bay Area for the month of July. They sold their weavings and gave demonstrations of weaving techniques. During a conversation with SAIIC, Zacarías made the following comments.*

I started to weave in 1958. My parents taught me. It is one of the jobs of parents to teach the children to weave. Already one of our sons and our daughter weave. The tradition comes to us through our ancestors.

Some designs, such as "flor de Oaxaca" have been used for many, many years. Designs like this are from the area. Also people are now interested in using the designs from the ruins at Mitla and Monti Alban. People who buy weavings are interested in these designs. Other designs I use are my own.

Now there is a rebirth of weaving using natural colors and dyes. People are asking their grandparents about the natural dyes that hadn't been used for a generation. Each family has its secrets on weaving and also

*Emilia carding wool.*



Photo: © 1986 R. Aguirre



*Zacarías working at his loom.*

preparing the colors and dyes. It is the mixture of the vegetable dyes that makes the colors, and each family has their special mixture.

About 1968 we started to use some modern designs taken from Escher and Miró in our weaving. People who wanted rugs showed us books and asked for special designs for a rug. There are others in my family and three more families who make these designs and other unique and personal designs. Almost everyone in Teotitlán weaves. It supports us fairly well. We don't have to take other jobs.

We have been using Navajo designs since 1978. We first saw these designs in a book. It was easy for us to make them because Navajo work is very straightforward, very geometric, like ours. So it was easy. At first we were not really interested in who the Navajo are. We didn't pay much attention to where the designs came from. But whatever design we use, we are conscious to do good quality weaving. We now do three Navajo designs. They sell very well. Now I see this as a kind of interchange with the Navajo. Someday I would like to go to New Mexico and live with them for a while. We should teach one another what we know best.

*Zacarías also spoke of topil.*

*Topil* is helping the community. There are five levels or *cargos* of the *topil*. One takes on more responsible *topiles* each time, depending on the conduct of each person. Maybe some day I will become president of the community. This is not for any salary. Everyone knows that we do the *cargo* in order to give our service to the people, the community. We were married for two years when they named me for a *topil*. The service is for one year. Then I rested and then they named me president of pre-school education, which I served for one year. Now I am serving again in the central committee of the church. There are two altars that I take care of. We work all day on the weekends. We leave flowers at the altar where we have our Gods, to worship our saints. We have responsibility for the whole community.

## Announcements

The National Indian Social Workers Association held its annual convention October 14-17, 1986, in Buffalo, New York. Among the topics discussed was a commission of inquiry on the status of Guatemalan children (see *SAIIC Newsletter*, Spring, 1986, p. 7). NISWA, in cooperation with Defense for Children International, USA, proposes the establishment of a three-member panel to review the status of Indian children in Guatemala. For further information, contact Angela Russell, Box 333, Lodge Grass, MT 59050.

An English-language edition of the *CISA News Bulletin*, published in Lima, Peru, by the South American Indian Council, is now available. The introductory issue includes articles on "Brazil: A Development Program of Death and Destruction," "Bolivia: Andean Community Memory, an Alternative Oral Archive," and "Chile: Mapuches in the City." A subscription for three issues costs \$7.00, which should be sent to CISA, Apartado 2054, Lima 100 Peru.