

NEWSLETTER

South and Central American Indian Information Center (SAIIC)

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Three Statements On Education

See Pages 12-13.

Amazonian Leaders Meet World Bank President

Three leaders from the Coordinating Committee of the Indian People of the Amazon Basin (La Coordinadora) met with the president of the World Bank in Washington, D.C., in December to discuss Indian objections to economic development projects financed by the bank.

Evaristo Nugkuag (Aguaruna Nation), president of La Coordinadora and of the Inter-Ethnic Development Association of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSEP); José Narciso Jami-joy (Kamsa Nation), secretary of the National Indian Organization of Colombia (ONIC); and José Uranavi (Huarayo Nation), president of the Indian Federation of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB), also met with officials of the Inter-American Development Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

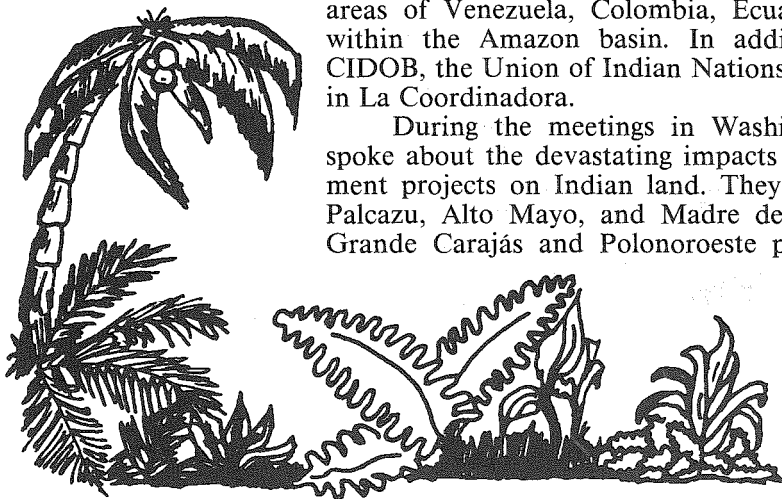
Before arriving in Washington, the group traveled to Sweden, where Evaristo was presented with the Right Livelihood Award, commonly known as the Progressive Alternative Nobel Prize. On accepting the award, Evaristo affirmed that, "This award is not just for me, but for the entire organization and for all my Indian brothers and sisters in the Amazon region."

Lobbying major institutions which finance development projects in the Amazon is part of a larger strategy by Indian people to affirm their right to land, self-determination, and life itself. Before the arrival of the first Europeans in the early 1500's, there were at least six million Indian people living in the Amazon basin. Disease, massacres, slave raiding, and the undermining of the environment on which Indian cultures depend have resulted in a drastic reduction in Indian population. In this century alone, 90 groups have disappeared, and today fewer than a million Indian people live in the region.

Evaristo said in Washington that La Coordinadora has been formed "to speak out about our situation, to get in touch with the national governments where we are located, and to keep close contact among Indian nations of the different countries in order to get to know specific problems better, and in that way to help find favorable solutions." Although many people from outside South America associate the Amazon primarily with Brazil, significant areas of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia also lie within the Amazon basin. In addition to AIDSEP, ONIC, and CIDOB, the Union of Indian Nations (UNI) of Brazil also participates in La Coordinadora.

During the meetings in Washington, the three Indian leaders spoke about the devastating impacts of large-scale economic development projects on Indian land. They specifically identified the Pichi-Palcazu, Alto Mayo, and Madre de Dios projects in Peru and the Grande Carajás and Polonoroeste projects in Brazil. Evaristo said,

"For example, there are projects financed by the World Bank or USAID in which a road is constructed. This road brings very negative consequences for Indians since we ourselves did not request it, and since we know that the



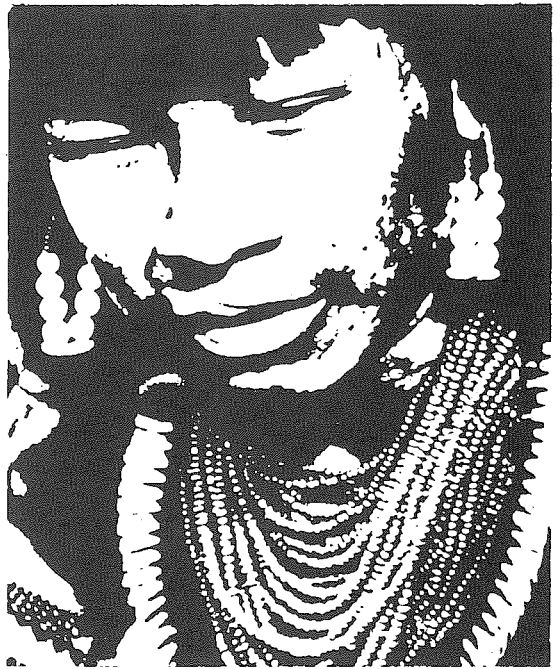
road, once constructed, gives tremendous economic benefit to those who are financing it and who have capital. We Indians are not the ones who derive benefit from this road because we have no way to exploit the natural resources or to transport them to urban centers in a way that even remotely benefits us. Those who benefit are the companies that have extensive capital to bring in industrial products via this road to the Indian communities, and, in return, take from our area the natural resources, such as timber. So as they advance into the rainforest with the road, they carry destruction with them. The companies and the individuals that are interested in exploitation only come here for a short time, taking advantage of the timber, or exploiting anything they can. When they are finished, they return to where they live, and all of us Indians are left for the rest of our lives without resources, because for us resources are the animals, the birds, the river and all the other beings that make up the natural world.

“These development projects have a profound effect on the ecological equilibrium, and the entire environment is left contaminated. For example, if they begin to drill for oil, the rivers become contaminated and the fish die, and the fish are a source of food that we Indians have always consumed. Right now the animals are scarce, and, of course, people become sick. All of this results from the construction of the road into the area. Those are the worries that we communicated to the Bank.”

The Indian leaders delivered a letter to the World Bank which requested the Bank's action of the following points:

- “That the World Bank recognize the existence of Indian communities in the areas of development projects which the Bank finances.
- “That the World Bank establish direct contact with Indian organizations through the organizations' own representatives.
- “That the World Bank consider the direct and active participation of Indians elected for that purpose by their organizations in the planning and execution of projects financed by the Bank in areas where there are Indian people.
- “That the World Bank keep us informed, through our organizations, regarding the Bank's plans for the financing of new projects and regarding the projects which are in progress in regions where there are Indian people.
- “That the World Bank clarify for us its policy regarding Indian people and provide us with a written copy of this policy. Here we refer to the Bank's publication *Tribal People and Economic Development* and also to the Bank's Operational Manual No. 2.34.”

The meetings in Washington were arranged by Oxfam America, Survival International, and the Right Livelihood Foundation.



SAIIC interviewed the three Amazon Indian leaders who visited Washington, D.C., in December to lobby the World Bank and other institutions regarding projects they fund in the Amazon basin which have serious negative consequences for Indian people in the area. Following are some of their comments.

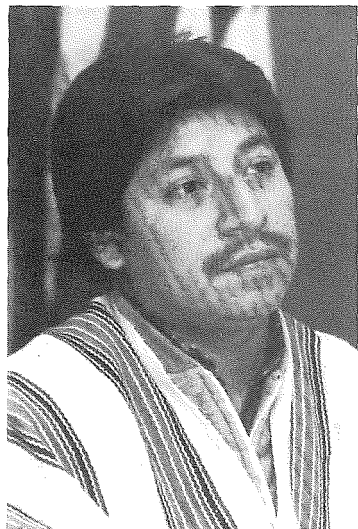


Photo: © 1986 R. Aguirre, G. Switkes/Amazonia

National Indian Organization of Colombia (ONIC) José Narciso Jamijoy

SAIIC: How was ONIC created and what are some of its objectives?

José: ONIC was created four years ago at a national Indian assembly in Bogotá. Two thousand five hundred Indians participated. In Colombia there are approximately 500,000 Indian people distributed in 150 communities all around the country and there are 70 ethnic groups which still survive. We had a second congress where 1,800 Indian people participated. The transportation to these congresses is very expensive, especially for those who live in distant and inaccessible communities. At the congresses we elected a governing committee which is composed of 14 members from different regions and different ethnic groups.

The basic objectives of ONIC are to develop unity, to maintain and regain our land, to maintain our culture, and to secure self-determination. When we say to maintain our culture, we don't mean we want to go back to the past, but rather that as the new generations develop to sustain our customs, our language, our territories, and a government that gives us our identification as Indians.

What are the differences between resguardos and reservas?

Resguardos is not an Indian concept. The Spanish used it during colonization to demarcate certain territories for Indians, restricting them so that they would not have large extensions of land. The Indians were guaranteed that they could live on that land and work that land. Based on that concept, in 1889 Indian legislation was created which provided that the land pass from generation to generation. It is collectively held. The community has the land title. It cannot be sold.

This is different from *reservas*, which are lands owned by the state. The government identifies them as *reservas*, but they are not owned by the Indian community.

What are the differences between the last government of Belisario Betancur and the new government of Virgilio Barco in relation to Indian matters?

For us they are both demagogues. The last government talked about Indians a lot but in general terms it did not deliver on its promises. The new president hasn't even mentioned us in his speeches and no one knows what his plans are. We have invited him twice to dialogue, but he hasn't answered us. So we think that they are different kinds of demagogues. Every government wants to be innovative, but each one only lasts four years. When the community is getting to know a program designed by the government, the government is already changing into a new one.

Indian Federation of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB)

José Uranavi

SAIIC: How many Indian groups are there in eastern Bolivia and how was CIDOB started?

José: In the Bolivian Amazon there are 40 Indian groups who speak different languages and have different cultures. Before 1982 there were regional ancestral organizations like the *caciques* and the *capitanías*. On the initiative of our brothers from the south, the Guarani, we held a meeting in 1982 attended by 65 delegates and formed CIDOB. That was the first time that all the Indians of eastern Bolivia, especially those from the state of Santa Cruz, got together and got to know each other.

In the past, our ancestors had rivalries, but now the moment has come to shake hands and to look at our situation together. The problems that are being imposed on us include land, education, health, and economic matters. The most pressing problem is land. In our first meeting we came to the conclusion that we should have a strategy or a path to defend ourselves and search for solutions together. The organization does not have a political color. It exists to defend our rights as Indians.



Photo: © 1986 R. Aguirre, G. Switkes/Amazonia

Inter-Ethnic Development Association of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSESP)

Evaristo Nugkuag

SAIIC: What are the objectives of AIDSESP?

There are 300,000 Indians in the Peruvian Amazon, 200,000 of whom are part of AIDSESP. As a federation, our objectives are to strengthen the regional organizations and to defend land and natural resources. Also to confront educational and health issues.

In Amazonia today land titles are an extremely urgent matter. The Peruvian government has said that in 1987 it will grant legal recognition to land titles of Indian communities. AIDSESP has worked with other regional Indian organizations towards that goal, beginning by pressuring the regional government offices and then going to Lima and pressuring the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform.

How can people in other countries help you?

I think that through our contacts here in the United States with organizations like Survival International, Cultural Survival, and SAIIC, people can get in touch with us. Sometimes the authorities in our countries think that we are all alone, that we don't have connections with other organizations. So I think that international solidarity is extremely important.



Photo: © 1986 R. Aguirre, G. Switkes/Amazonia

BRAZIL

Ava-Guarani Write President Of World Bank

Hon. Barber Conable
President of the World Bank

Dear Sir,

We are from the Ava-Guarani community in the Ocoi native area, in the municipality of São Miguel do Iguacu, state of Paraná, Brazil.

We want to tell you about our suffering and our struggle. We used to live in an area of about 3,750 acres, bounded on the west by the Paraná River, on the east by the Santa Helena/Santa Terezinha road, on the north by the Ocoi River, and on the south by the Jacutinga River. Our area was all forest. In the Ocoi-Jacutinga area we were more than 100 families numbering over 500 people, since the families were very large.

Our land was going to be flooded by the Itaipu dam. Then the Itaipu people told FUNAI [Brazil's bureau of Indian affairs] that there were Indians in the area that was to be flooded. FUNAI sent an anthropologist, but he said that there were no Indians in the area, only *mestizos* [people of mixed blood] and Paraguayans. This was not true because we were certainly there.

They made various offers of land to us. The first was 70 acres. The second proposal was 420 acres and the third was 560 acres. We did not accept any of these and we also refused the fourth and last offer, which was 625 acres.

The Itaipu people gave us a deed for 625 acres, although on the map they made on July 31, 1982, only 575 acres are shown. We discovered this map two months ago. We did not agree to the 625 acres, but then the Itaipu people began to pressure us and frighten us. They gave us three days to leave. We did not want to leave our land of 3,750 acres for an area of 625 acres.

Then the Itaipu reservoir began to fill up and there was nothing we could do but leave. We arrived on this land in 1982, after a difficult struggle to obtain our rights. Now we are 35 families consisting of 147 people. We have never forgotten our land and we are always making claims to the Itaipu people.

Our new land is slowly being washed away. The strong winds are driving the water from the new lake against the land and eroding it from below, and the trees are falling because their roots are being undermined. When we arrived in this new area, it was already being invaded by neighboring settlers. The settlers did not respect the Indians. They came in with their machines, tore down the forest and the survey markers, and took away everything that the Itaipu people had put here. The settlers said they did this because the Itaipu people had not compensated them. We are peaceful Indians who don't want to fight with our neighbors.

Along the edge of the Itaipu lake there is a lot of rotting wood which is infested with animals and insects, including mosquitos. We are not used to living on the edge of a lake. In summertime the lake becomes very warm and both adults and children in the Ocoi native area have caught malaria because of the lake. At the beginning of May, 27 adults and 16 children between the ages of nine months and 12 years old had malaria.

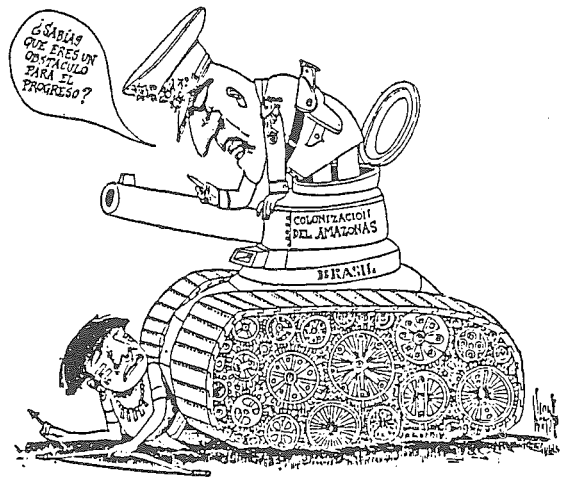
We are not used to taking water from the lake. We are only used to taking water from the rivers that the Creator put there for us to use. In this land there are now no pure rivers and our water is full of malaria and insects. All the water along the edge of the lake is full of

poison because the settlers washed a tank of insecticide in the lake. When it rains the poison that the settlers use on their plantations passes across our land and goes into the lake, and this causes a lot of illness. We can't get away from the edge of the Itaipu lake because our land is very narrow.

Next to our land are 420 acres that Itaipu owns. We want Itaipu to compensate us for the rest of the land they stole from us. We had about 3,750 acres of land, with forest, fish, and game, instead of 575 acres with poison and malaria. God put us in the world to live in peace as brothers. The whites want to kill the Indians rather than be brothers with them, but we want to live in brotherhood with everyone.

Now we have nothing and there are hardly any Indians left because in many parts of Brazil white men and foreigners have killed Indians with bombs and machine guns and have poisoned Indian areas. Can it be that you are not aware of this crime that must be resolved? You loaned money to the Itaipu people so that they could hurt us and the poor whites in the same situation as we are. Itaipu has done very great damage here, but you loaned money for this, and to FUNAI so that it could pay people to shoot the Indians, because we have enormous rights.

Signed by the chief of the Ava-Guarani community, followed by the signatures and fingerprints of 58 others.



"Are you aware you are an obstacle to progress?"



Yanomami Land Claims Recognized

The Yanomami Indian people of northern Brazil have received official recognition of their claims to land through a presidential decree which establishes the Yanomami Indian Park near Brazil's border with Venezuela. The Yanomami, who number 10,000 to 12,000 people, are the largest Indian nation in Brazil still maintaining a traditional way of life.

The decree was announced in the midst of controversy over a proposal by the Brazilian military to occupy the remote northern frontier of the Amazon region with military bases and air strips. According to the Union of Indian Nations (UNI), the project would directly affect 50,000 Indian people from 51 groups now living in the rainforest, including the Yanomami, Tukano, Baniwa, Uanano, and others. Reports indicate that the decree establishing the Yanomami Indian Park includes provisions for a strip 60 kilometers wide along the Venezuelan border which would be designated an "Area of Environmental Protection" and used to accommodate the military plan.

Critics of the plan, which the military describes as "a joint project of economic development and national security," argue that its primary motivation is exploitation of the tin, aluminum, uranium, and other mineral resources thought to be buried beneath the dense Amazonian rainforests.

COLOMBIA

Leader Killed, Community Expelled

A leader of the Indian community of San Andrés de Sotavento in Sucre was kidnapped, tortured, and killed and the entire community was expelled from its ancestral land in early November. According to Amnesty International, the community was invaded October 30, 1986 by about 20 local police led by a mestizo landowner who is making a claim on the Indian land. All community crops and houses were destroyed and 11 people were arrested. The next day Pedro Hernandez, a member of the community council, was seized by four policemen and the same mestizo landowner. His body was found with signs of burning and torture on November 2. On November 7 the entire community was evicted from its land, which was held communally.



ECUADOR

First Congress of Indian Nations Meets

The First Congress of Indian Nations, organized by the Confederation of Indian Nations of Ecuador (CONACNIE, Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador), was held November 13-16, 1986. Over 600 delegates representing the Siona, Quichua, Huaorani, Shuar, Cofan, Chachi, Tsachila, Secoya, Achuara, and Awa nations attended the congress. The opening session was held in the Senate chambers of the national legislature in Quito "in recognition by the national congress that the majority of the population of Ecuador is Indian." Later sessions were held at the Campamento Nueva Vida in Pichincha province.

The main topics discussed at the congress were Indian rights to land, self-determination, education, and a distinct culture. Manuel Imbaquingo, president of CONACNIE, stated at the opening of the event that, "This congress is being held at a historic moment when Indian people are facing anti-Indian policies by a government which neglects the most basic rights of our people, including land and life." He said, "The people of Ecuador must decide between freedom and oppression, between life and death, as a result of the dictatorial and anti-popular policies of President León Febres Cordero."

When I get old I'll die. All of us old people will die. But I want my son's child, with the Creator's help, to also make canoes like this and pull them like we are today. These trees will all be gone if this company they call Plywood comes. We can't allow that to happen. If some people sign away our rights, then we will be thrown out like others down the river, and it will be the beginning of the end. We want the right to live now like we lived before.

—Runa hunter in Ecuadorian rainforest

CONFENIAE Center Is Burned In Puyo

The newly-constructed administrative and training center of the Confederation of Indian Nations in the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE) in the province of Puyo was burned to the ground on the night of November 20, 1986. The local CONFENIAE president blamed the fire on arson. The building had been built by *mingas*, traditional community work brigades, over the preceding five years by members of the Shuar, Quichua, Huaorani, and Achuara nations. The inauguration of the center had been planned for December 15, 1986. No injuries were reported in the fire.

Cristóbal Naikiai, secretary of CONFENIAE, said that enemies of Indian people burned the center and that police detained some suspects but released them immediately. CONFENIAE has a long history of opposing government projects which encourage multinational corporations to occupy and exploit vast areas of traditional Indian land in the Amazon areas of Ecuador.

A spokesman for the Ecuadorian government stated that, "The fire was intentional and started by the Indians themselves to discredit the government."

PERU

Two Faces Of Peasant Patrols

A new system of justice is emerging in the mountains of northern Peru that is taking the place of police and judicial officials. *Rondas campesinas*, or peasant patrols, are serving a rapidly growing number of villages as both self-appointed police forces and court systems. Village men who volunteer to patrol one night a week or month apprehend wrongdoers and file charges with an elected steering committee which holds trials involving the entire community. Since their grassroots beginnings in the department of Cajamarca in 1976, *rondas campesinas* have been organized in almost every northern district, revealing the profound dissatisfaction Peruvian Indian peasants feel toward the existing justice system.

In southern Peru, where the war between government forces and Sendero Luminoso guerrillas continues, the army has introduced its own version of *rondas campesinas* in key villages. But like Guatemala's "civil defense patrols," these government-supported patrols act only against those the army identifies as criminals or subversives.

According to a report from the human rights group Americas Watch, entire communities have been moved by the military and forced to form civil defense patrols to defend territory against the guerrillas. Americas Watch has urged the government of Alan García to stop using the patrols as a counter-insurgency strategy.

—Robin Kirk, in *Latinamerica Press*, Nov. 1986.



Photo: © S. Lobo



*Members
of the
Organization
of Aymara
Women of
Kollasuyu*



BOLIVIA

Women Organizing In Urban And Rural Areas

In Bolivia, a country of over six million people, at least four million are Indian. The following article, which focuses on La Paz and surrounding high plateau communities 12,000 to 13,000 feet above sea level, resulted from a meeting of Quechua and Aymara women organized by Centro Chitakolla in January, 1986. It was published in Spanish in La Mujer en el Mundo Andino, which can be purchased by sending \$2.50 to Ediciones Chitakolla, Casilla 20214, La Paz, Bolivia.

The Organization of Aymara Women of Kollasuyu (OMAK, *Organización de Mujeres Aymaras del Kollasuyu*) was created because we saw the need for a woman's organization. In the cities there is real discrimination against women. We suffer from various forms of discrimination, as members of the Aymara nation, as women, and as economically disadvantaged people. In rural communities, the educational system, the churches, and the media create a situation where our traditional ways and the role of women are increasingly under attack. Previously in our culture, when our society was free, Aymara men and women had equal rights. Women had authority. We continue to have it in most communities, but it is being attacked by the present system, which tries to impose the idea that men are superior to women. We believe that it is necessary to rearrange each part of our community in order to restructure it in its totality. The colonialism and the social, economic, and cultural domination which we suffer have created conditions such that even in a fight for liberation only the male side gets the privileges. Our task is to give value to and to organize the female half, in order to transform our entire society.

This reality is clearer if we understand what happens in the cities, where the situation of women is dramatic. Aymara women in La Paz are in a long-suffering position. The markets are full of Aymara women who try to sell a little something every day so that their children can eat, and for this they also suffer the discrimination and insults of those who think themselves superior. In the upper class neighborhoods our mothers and sisters work as so-called servants. They work all day in the bosses' house doing domestic chores and their salary is

minimal. They are practically slaves. Women who are at the service of their exploiters 24 hours a day receive approximately \$10.00 a month. This is not work, but servitude which converts women into a form of tax paid to an invading people. There are servants who are maids from the time they are little girls without any economic compensation. There are city families who travel to rural communities to find themselves a young maid, telling her parents that they will take care of her education, when in reality they take her away to serve them virtually as a slave.

Aymara women in the city meet among themselves in the shanty towns, in cooperatives, in associations, and in unions. At the same time, the oppressors also meet in their political parties and organizations. Unfortunately, when there is contact between the two worlds, it is negative, characterized by either open oppression and exploitation or by manipulation and paternalism. So we believe that Aymara women have the right to our own experiences at organizing. The right and also the obligation, since we believe this is the only way the liberation of our people can be advanced.

OMAK is made up one hundred per cent by Aymara women. We do not have tutors or foreign coordinators. We do not believe this is reverse discrimination, but rather that it is normal and legitimate. We have organized ourselves into a group of women because we are conscious that we belong both to a definite people, the Aymara people, and to the female half of that people. To organize by ourselves does not mean antagonizing Aymara men. We believe that the nature of the attack upon our society has imposed this response. We have seen that even the most combative forms of struggle for our people have been predominantly masculine. Colonization has disturbed the traditional balance and the perspective of a united struggle. It is necessary to rebalance the feminine side.

Currently the most important part of our work is in the Aymara communities. We work in the 18 provinces of the department of La Paz, and we also work in Oruro and in certain Aymara areas of Cochabamba. We try to develop the potential of the Aymara women by strengthening traditional organization and work systems, including the *ayni*, *mink'a*, and *yanapana*, which stress exchange labor, communal labor, and reciprocity. We try to strengthen the *ayllu*, the community, because we believe that Aymaras will create more just forms of social organization and work only on the basis of our ancestors' experience. On an educational level, we have conducted short courses in various communities to try to eradicate alienation and to generate consciousness of our own values. At the same time we want to contribute to the participation of Aymara people in all cultural, social, and political aspects of the Bolivian nation to promote our survival as a self-determined people.



Photo: © S. Lobo

Education is one of the most important issues facing Indian communities everywhere in South and Central America. The young must be educated in a way which preserves the culture of their ancestors, and the whole community must learn together how to confront the challenges of non-Indian society. The following statements offer insights on a range of educational concerns in Indian communities.

“The Things That Are Important To Learn”

The things that we think are important to learn about now are addition; punctuation; the comma; the tilde; the vowels; the difference between s and c; between ja, xa, and cha; the difference between ga, ge, gi, and gua, gue, gui; the sounds of que, qui, ca, co, cu, lha, lhe, lhi, lho, lhu; the letters of the alphabet, the Portuguese language of Brazil, to communicate with others, to know what it means, to learn to read and write.

See, we already have suffered very much. We want to study in order to stop being slaves, so that whites are not always on top of Indian people. We are also people of this round fruit, breathing in this air that protects our bodies, drinking water of the river mixed with the juices of the forest. We live in the light of the day priceless before the sun. The moon comes, the stars, from 6 to number 12. $6 \times 2 = 12 \times 2 = 24$ hours. We exist before the sweet flower that gives strength to all.

We want to know what the government means, the military police. We want to know about the promises of FUNAI [the bureau of Indian affairs]. We want not only to learn, but to know how to make our school work with Indian teachers. We study to learn how to give value to our land, to know how to live on it with our people who have been massacred with rifles, with all 10 fingers. We are also children of this earth. We forgive what has been done to us. Long ago we were millions of Indians. We decreased. Now we are few. We don't want our race to end, because we are children of the Father.

To learn the hours of the clock. To know the price of merchandise in the city, to defend us from captivity in the hands of the hurricane. To study serves us to know the measure of work, to learn how to talk to you. The school can help us organize our cooperative. To teach the children and the adults to learn how to find the price of the materials, to sell our products at a normal price, to learn how to count 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, +, x, -. To make agreements with the rubber tappers, the squatters, with the Indian leaders.

To know how to use drugs from the drugstore to cure sick people, to learn how to give injections and what pills to take. To know how to sell what we produce and how to buy things from the owner of the market for our cooperative in the forest, administered by us Indians. With our school at our side, teaching the ones that are just being born, the others won't steal from us anymore. We Indians live in this world also. We have arms to hold with, legs to walk the earth. We have bellies to feed, heads to learn, eyes to see the people in this land and the light of our world, little round clarity.

—Osair Sales-Sia, Kaxinaua Indian from Acre, Brazil



“We Have An Educational System”

The educational system that Indian people had before the Spanish came still exists today. It is an education for life that is lived daily through work, through example, through responsibility, and in the sustained identity of our people.

We Indians are conscious that we have to educate the representatives of the government, especially those charged with what they call “informal education.” We also have to educate our own teachers, many of whom are Indian, but who are now alienated from their identity as Indians. We expect a difficult task of reorienting many people’s thinking. At the same time, we must systematize our own educational processes and establish guidelines. Then we have to think about modifying the existing educational system, starting from the very root, recognizing from the beginning the multinational, multilingual, and multicultural character of Peru.

It is also necessary to have a form of education that rescues the knowledge of our elders, which is unfortunately now being lost as a result of formal education. The knowledge which our elders gained through thousands of years is now going to the grave with them. We must remember that this knowledge serves all of humanity if we keep it alive.

We need to reform the educational institutions, the educational infrastructure, and the educational process. All of this is possible and necessary if we are going to thoroughly regain our form of Indian education, our identity, our personality, and to demonstrate that Western culture is not the only culture, or the best one for us. The work and the thoughts of our ancestors are an example for us all.

—Published recently in *Pueblo Indio* (Av. José de Canterac 373, Jesús María, Lima 11, Peru), Vol. 2, no. 5, 1986.



Indian Educational Priorities in Eastern Bolivia

- The need for a recognition on the part of the national government that Indian cultures are a living expression of our people.

- The need to maintain the cultural values of Indian people, recognizing that cultural identity is fundamental to the socio-economic development of peoples and communities.

- The need for bilingual and bicultural education in the schools.

- The need for training of Indian youth in technical skills in agriculture and stock raising, as veterinarians, as accountants for the consumer cooperative, as journalists, and as primary and secondary school teachers.

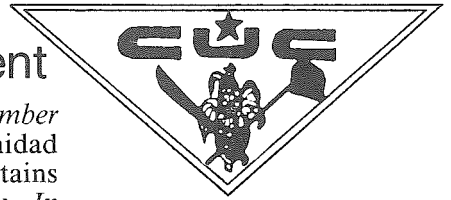
- In 1987 CIDOB will support the training of three youth in agronomy, medicine, and veterinary medicine.

- CIDOB supports the work of general education and literacy training as a means of raising consciousness, including the full participation of community members in this effort. CIDOB also recognizes the importance of strengthening traditional Indian organizations, structures, and processes.

—Issued by the Indian Federation of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB), November, 1986.

GUATEMALA

Few Gains Under New Government



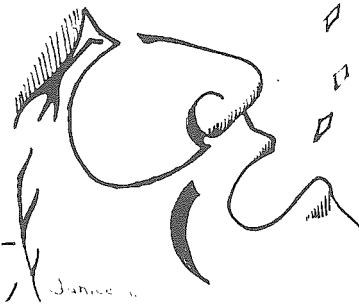
Rigoberta Menchu, Quiché from Guatemala, is a member of the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC, Comité de Unidad Campesina). She narrated the film When the Mountains Tremble and has written the book I, Rigoberta Menchu. In December, 1986, she made the following comments on SAIIC's radio program, South and Central American Indian Update, which is heard in northern California on KPFA, 94.1 FM, at 8:00 p.m. the third and fourth Fridays of each month.

After 33 years of military rule in Guatemala, we now have an elected civilian president. We had hoped before the election to bring about concrete changes for the Indian people, who in Guatemala are over 75 per cent of the population. Now, after the civilian government has been in power for nine months, the situation continues to be very complicated. The killings and the disappearances have not stopped. The numbers may not be as high, but the fact remains that there are continuing abuses of human lives. This is the principal concern.

Now Guatemala is living through more profound misery than we ever experienced in the past because of the destruction of the land and the massacres. There are now thousands of people displaced from their land who are dependent on their land for their survival. Our cultural roots as well as our material survival are based on the cultivation of corn and beans.

Up to this point, none of our demands, even the most fundamental, have received any response from the Guatemalan government. There has been no clarification of the fate of the more than 36,000 who have disappeared, nor has the government identified or punished those responsible for the disappearances. And there is tremendous frustration among the Indian

Yes, I find myself alone
everyday life confronts me with
the reality of mourning in my soul
the fibers of my being broken and torn from the injustice
the struggle that springs from the blood of innocent people
the collective martyrdom of our journey
the shadows that amass on our journey
the ringing of the bells of our being.



Yes,
I am alone
but I feel the strength
of all the widowed women of the world
protesting
for men
for women
for children
the violation of the right
to live.

—Calixta Canec, Cakchiquel Maya, refugee in California

people because hunger and misery remain unchanged.

We understand also very well the causes of the struggles of our brother and sister Indians of this country and the Indians of other continents. We have a great historic responsibility to unite so that one day our future generations will be able to live in peace. And I can tell the people of the United States that you also have a part of the responsibility in our struggle, since much of your salary goes to finance this war being carried out in our communities.

This struggle of Indian people is not just a struggle of words. It is like the way we grow our corn. First we cultivate the soil, then we find the right seeds, and then we care for the plants so that they bear fruit. Our struggle goes step by step, looking forward to making a change.

Radio Show Features Guatemalan Indians

Peggy Berryhill (Muskogee Nation) recently completed a radio documentary on the crisis facing Indians in Guatemala which will air in March on "Horizons," which is broadcast on many public radio stations. She made the following comments to SAIIC about her work.

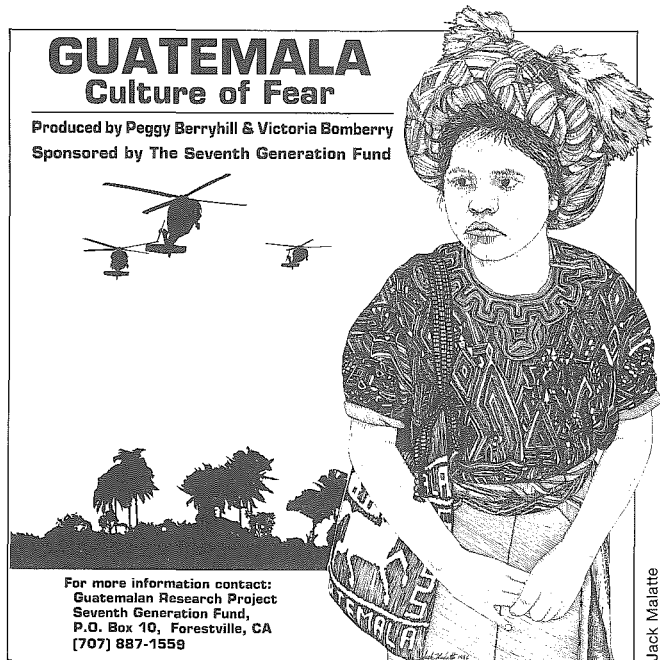
I've found that radio is a tool to help communicate new or little-known information about Indian people, especially contemporary issues. It is a way to combat stereotypes and to empower people. It is important to get Indians and non-Indians thinking beyond their isolated problems, whether in Oakland, Juneau, or in Guatemala. We have to understand that there are connections.

SAIIC: What motivated you to do a radio documentary on Guatemala?

I think Guatemala is one of the least reported stories. Nobody has been aware of what is going on there.

I had a dream. I was in a hilly community in a pickup truck with another journalist, being strafed by an army helicopter. They were trying to drive us to a safe house. Once we got to the house, the army suddenly came in and killed everyone. I woke up. My heart was beating, and I was terrified. The dream was so vivid, so frightening. Where was this army from? I didn't know then what this dream meant.

In doing the interviews with the Guatemalan refugees for the documentary, I saw where the dream had come from. During the interviews, I heard this same story. The dream was a reality in Guatemala and someone wanted that known. It was someone's dying wish to have their story told, and it came to me. To me radio is the Indian story-telling tradition, and this dream was the vehicle. And if I'm the vehicle for this dream, then the story's being told.



MEXICO

Community In Oaxaca Struggles For Land

The Zapotec community of San Juan Jaltepec in Oaxaca has appealed for international assistance to maintain their community land, which the Mexican government has given to other parties. The community, which currently numbers more than 2,000 people, has lived on the land for hundreds of years and holds a legal title through a Spanish land grant dated 1770. Several decades ago a portion of the land was set aside for the community of Santa Maria Yaveo, which now includes about 380 people. In 1975, Santa Maria Yaveo asked the Mexican government for more land, and the government surveyed San Juan Jaltepec's land with the intention of dividing it between the communities. Efforts to resist the survey led to a conflict in which three people were killed and nine wounded by government police on September 3, 1979. Since then some of the land in dispute has been obtained by ranchers from other states, and the general situation remains very tense. When members of the San Juan Jaltepec community attempt to cultivate the land, the new "owners" complain to the police, who evict them. San Juan claims the land was sold illegally through corrupt judicial proceedings and is prepared to defend the land with arms.



CARIBBEAN

Meeting Planned For August In Dominican Republic

The Inter-American Indian Institute, located in Mexico City, and the Museo del Hombre Dominicano (Museum of Dominican People), located in the Dominican Republic, are organizing the First Meeting of Caribbean Indians, to be held August 10-14, 1987, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The goal of the meeting will be to bring together Indian people, government representatives, academics, and non-governmental organizations to establish relationships among these groups and to discuss prospects for the future of Indian concerns. For more information, contact Alejandro Camino, Project Director, Inter-American Indian Institute, Insurgentes sur 1690, Mexico, D.F., Mexico.

OAS Challenged on Neglect of Indian Rights

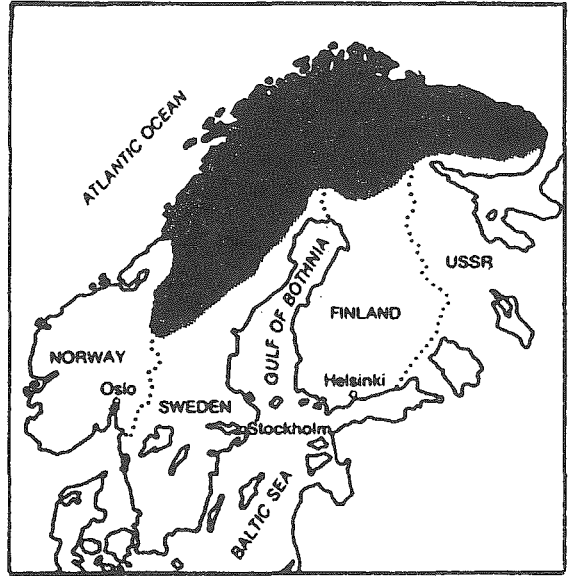
In the fall of 1985 the Inter-American Indian Institute, which functions under the auspices of the Organization of American States (OAS), held its Ninth Congress in Santa Fe, New Mexico (see *SAIIC Newsletter*, Winter, 1986, pp. 2-5). Under pressure from Indian leaders who had been invited to the Congress for the first time, the Institute agreed that all future OAS reports on human rights should include a section on Indian communities.

However, in the recently completed draft of the annual report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, there is no mention of Indian rights. SAIIC encourages Indian organizations in North, Central, and South America to write letters to the general secretary of the OAS urging the acknowledgement of Resolution 16 from the Santa Fe Conference in all statements on human rights. Letters should be sent to OAS Commission on Human Rights, 17th and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

NORDIC COUNTRIES

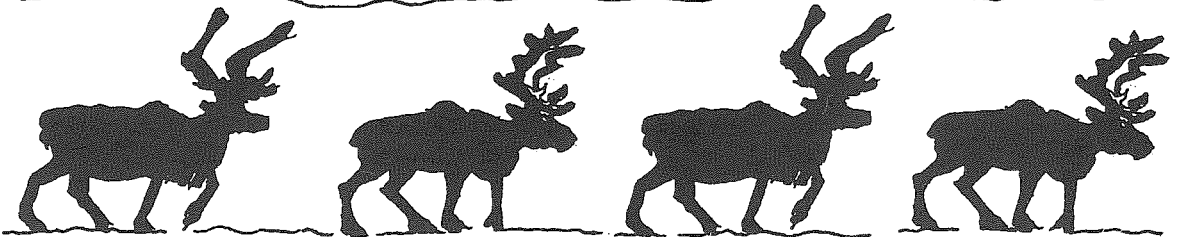
Sami Issue Statement On Nuclear Pollution

Like many Indian organizations in North, South, and Central America, the Sami are members of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Their homeland covers the northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Soviet Union. During the many centuries they have lived in this arctic climate, the Sami have developed a culture which is centered around reindeer husbandry. Among the serious consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Soviet Union last spring was the contamination of much of the Sami homeland with radioactive fallout. Especially in Norway and Sweden, the national governments declared that Sami reindeer meat was too contaminated for human consumption, which dealt a serious blow to the Sami economy. The following statement on this situation was adopted by the 13th Nordic Sami conference held at Are, Sweden, September 13-15, 1986.



"It is obvious that our existence is based on a natural milieu and any marked worsening of the milieu will immediately have the most negative consequences. In a situation which is already serious, we and our way of life are now threatened by dangers connected to atomic power. The area threatened by radioactivity is limited to the South Sami region, but the consequences represent a threat to the whole of the Sami people.

"The Sami Conference requests that the Nordic countries assume full responsibility for negative economic and other consequences resulting from radioactive fallout in Samiland for the Sami and their existence, not only for the present but for the future as well. Even though the present situation requires immediate and special economic help and planning, this assistance must not, in the long run, threaten the basis of Sami life. We further require that the Nordic countries together with Sami organizations work out a common program for the present and future. The Sami Conference requests that the governments of Finland, Norway, and Sweden support this resolution."



Dedication

This issue of the SAIIC Newsletter is dedicated to Brother Bill Wahpepah, who died January 2 in Oakland, California, at 49 years of age.

As a friend said at the time of Bill's death, "His life was a celebration of the primacy of the creator and of the traditional ceremonial Indian ways. Around the world people will carry on Bill's work with the strength and wisdom he gave everyone."

A leader of the American Indian Movement and a supporter of SAIIC, Bill was one of the people most interested in fostering brotherhood and solidarity among all Indian people of the hemisphere. The following message from Bill was tape recorded in July, 1982, and carried to Peru by a friend, where it was played to a number of Indian groups and at meetings where replies were taped and sent back to Bill.

"Greetings, my relatives. My name is Bill Wahpepah and I am Kickapoo/Sauk-Fox Indian from North America. I want to tell you that we are very concerned about all of our people in this hemisphere and we want to know from you if you would communicate with us. There are stories among our people that before the colonizers came and long before the Europeans came to us, our people had all these good things to communicate with each other. And these many different ways to pray and protect this earth and respect this earth were commonplace to us.

"We want to reach out to that commonality so that we can grow and we can make our people live. We are urging you to communicate with us, to participate in a movement to join all Red People of this hemisphere so that we can contribute to the rest of the world our philosophy of our Mother the Earth, and to bring about peace on the Earth, and to make a good future for all of our children. Now we can begin communication, and we can rediscover the family ties that we once knew so many centuries ago. I thank you for your time, and we send you greetings of solidarity and love from peoples from North America. And we look forward to visiting with you in person, and singing songs, and dancing together with you, and praying with you."



Photo courtesy International Indian Treaty Council

SAIIC promotes 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.

Nilo Cayuqueo, SAIIC Coordinator, and Susan Lobo, Publications Editor

SAIIC welcomes all contributions! The newsletter, our radio program, and other projects are financed by donations from our supporters. Your generosity is appreciated.

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NEWSLETTER

To receive the SAIIC Newsletter for one year (four issues), please send a donation of \$8 for addresses in the United States, Mexico, and Canada or \$10 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.

RADIO SHOW

The SAIIC radio program "South and Central American Indian Update" is heard the third and fourth Fridays of each month at 8:00 p.m. on KPFA FM 94.1 in northern California. One hour tapes can be purchased for \$8 each.

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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.



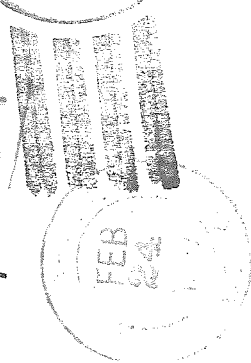
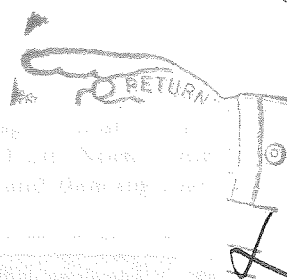
Photo: © 1986 R. Aguirre, G. Switkes/Amazonia

Three Indian leaders from the Amazon region meet with the president of the World Bank in Washington. See pages 2-5.

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