

# 'Indigenism' is an assault on Indians and national sovereignty

by Carlos Méndez

Using exactly the same "indigenist" arguments of the narco-terrorist Shining Path of Peru, a number of so-called indigenous groups have intensified their protests and threats of violence against the Oct. 12 celebration of the fifth centenary of Columbus's voyage to America.

So far, Shining Path poses the greatest immediate threat, but other groups, such as Colombia's Simón Bolívar Coordinating Group, and Bolivia's Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army and Tupac Katari Indian Movement (whose leader has threatened to take up arms to defend "indigenous" rights), have demonstrated that they share Shining Path's terrorist methods.

According to press reports, the Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army (EGTK), sympathizers of Shining Path, had planned to attack the Spanish and U.S. embassies in La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, on Oct. 12. Felipe Quispe, leader of the group, was arrested at the end of August.

Indigenous members of national legislatures from 17 countries of Ibero-America, the United States, and Canada met in La Paz the week of Sept. 28 for the Fourth Meeting of Indigenous Parliamentarians. Former Bolivian congressman Constantino Lima, head of the Tupac Katari Indigenous Movement, called for all indigenous peoples of the hemisphere to "rise up in arms to demand that Spain pay \$10 billion for the devastation and death Spain brought to Latin America."

In Colombia, the Simón Bolívar Coordinating Group, composed of the communist FARC and the ELN, have been intimidating peasants into joining protest actions against the Oct. 12 celebrations. The "Indigenous Summit," held in Panama the week of Sept. 21, called for a "continental indigenous strike" on Oct. 12, including blocking highways. In demonstrations in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, one person has already been killed. Santo Domingo is the focus of the celebration because Columbus first touched land on that island in 1492.

## The fraud of indigenism

This campaign against celebrating the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage is the beginning of an international offensive, backed by international organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and above all the United Nations.

For example, the *New York Times* of Aug. 24 reported

that the U.N. and the IADB were discussing the creation of an "indigenous fund" of \$40 million "to aid indigenous groups in Latin America." The U.N. is also planning to declare 1993 "the International Year of the Indigenous Peoples of the World," as contained in U.N. Resolution 45/164 of Dec. 18, 1990. The International Labor Organization (ILO, part of the U.N. system) is working to get Convention 169 on Indian Peoples and Tribes approved, and since 1982 the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) of the Human Rights Commission based in Geneva, Switzerland, has been pushing for a Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The indigenous movement is nothing but a fraud, part of Bush's "new world order"—as supported by the U.N.—to impose a world government upon sovereign nations, as well as to eliminate the indigenous peoples themselves through hunger and disease.

This reality was demonstrated by the program voted by the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples Concerning Land, Environment, and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 25-30 as the "indigenous" part of the Eco-92 Conference on the Environment. The program was contained in the so-called Kari-Oca Declaration—Kari-Oca being the indigenous name for Rio de Janeiro.

The Kari-Oca Conference, as the meeting is known, was formally organized, with U.N. support, by the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), a group dating from 1984, whose present head is the Peruvian Evaristo Nugkang, who, among other things, calls for "debt for Indian land swaps, with which resources we can restore our lands."

## Human sacrifice and ending nation-states

Among the most relevant points contained in the Kari-Oca Declaration are:

"(16) We maintain our right to our traditional way of life," which means in practice to condemn the indigenous peoples to extinction in the near term through hunger and disease. For instance, Venezuelan anthropologists have reported that the Yanomami Indians inhabiting the Venezuelan Amazon region have an average life-span of 30 years.

"(17) We maintain our right to our spiritual way of life." These and related demands are tantamount to a call for the return of the human sacrifice of the Aztecs, and to other

aberrations that form a substantial part of the cultural, religious, social, and political life of the ancient and primitive indigenous cultures.

"21) The United Nations should have a special procedure to deal with issues arising from violations of indigenous treaties. 22) Treaties signed between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples must be accepted as treaties under international law. 23) The United Nations must exercise the right to impose sanctions against governments that violate the rights of indigenous peoples."

As can be seen, the aim is supranational legislation and the supranational supervision of the U.N., which is totally in step with the Bush administration's efforts to eliminate national sovereignty, and with plans to make the U.N. into a world government.

At the beginning of July, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed that the United Nations force its members to provide troops for a permanent international army under U.N. command. Said Boutros-Ghali, "the era of absolute and exclusive sovereignty . . . has passed."

The indigenous movements are thus serving as a battering ram against governments that oppose the imposition of supranational world rule.

## Separatism

Points 31 to 42 of the declaration deal with the question of supposedly Indian lands, and amount to a call for separatism. For example, Point 34 says, "We assert our rights to demarcate our traditional territories. The definition of territory includes space (air), land and sea. . . ." And Point 36 says: "Indigenous peoples reject the assertion of non-indigenous laws onto our lands. States cannot unilaterally extend their jurisdiction over our lands and territories."

This is one of the central demands of the president of the COICA, formally organized at the Kari-Oca Conference. It is also a central demand of the World Council of Indian Peoples (CMPI), based in Canada and founded in 1975 with the support of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Unesco) and the International Center of Human Rights and Democratic Development, headquartered in Montreal. One of the CMPI's three basic tenets is called "The Bases of the New Relations," which translates, according to Mexican anthropologist Lucina Jiménez L., as, "We must change the treaties between the Indian peoples and the nation-states."

The Council of All the Lands (based in Mapuches, Chile), a participant in the Kari-Oca Conference, and the Mapuche Foreign Committee, also of Chile, are the vanguard today of the separatist indigenous movement. For some time, the Mapuche Indians have been demanding their own territory on lands now part of Chile and Argentina.

The *New York Times* featured the Mapuches' demands in a front-page article on Aug. 24, where it reported that "more than 200 representatives of the more radical Mapuches in Chile and Argentina met recently . . . to discuss how to

create a new nation and recoup large amounts of ancestral territory," adding that the Mapuche movement "is perhaps one of the best examples of a growing trend in the last five years in Latin America of Indian groups trying to assert their rights, reclaim territory, and challenge existing laws and government policies."

The *Times* article called for international protection for the Indians, stating that "their cultures, religions, and languages are under constant pressure from the westernized world," and that this began 500 years ago, with the arrival of Europeans.

The Declaration of San Cristóbal, which emerged from the International Amerindia Seminar toward the Third Millennium, which took place the second half of June 1991 in San Cristóbal Las Casas, Mexico, said that "the America of our hearts, Amerindia, has been and will continue to be indigenous in its essence, because the original peoples here constitute the nucleus of its identity." Referring to the "accelerated global change" that the world is experiencing, the declaration affirmed that "this challenge can only be confronted in the framework of the profound reform of states and of international relations," and added that among the fundamental rights of the indigenous is "the special means of conserving, recovering, and increasing the lands and territories that they have traditionally occupied."

The conference of San Cristóbal was organized by the National Commission of Justice for the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico, along with Unesco.

The former Soviet Union also promoted all of this from the standpoint of an Ibero-America reorganized around ethnic groups, a perspective that continues to be carried out by communist and liberal anthropologists such as the Brazilian Darcy Ribeiro, who has often said that "the indigenous peoples must get a response to their demands, which are: juridical rights and restitution of their lands." In an interview published by *El Día Latinoamericano* on July 8, Ribeiro stated that "what is happening with the Basques [in Spain] could happen with the Mayas of Chiapas [southern Mexico]. They could lose patience and explode. In Mexico, as in the Andean high plateau and in Guatemala, the region could be transformed into tinderbox where 'ethnic wars' begin."

## Against development

The attack on development, technology, and industry is unmistakable, and means condemning the Indians to misery and death. Point 44 of the Kari-Oca Declaration says, "Indigenous peoples should encourage their peoples to cultivate their own traditional forms of products rather than to use imported exotic crops which do not benefit local peoples." Point 66 says, "The concept of development has meant the destruction of our lands."

And to ensure no shortage of pretexts for foreign interventions, Point 87 says, "We need to have foreign observers come into our indigenous territories to oversee national state elections to prevent corruption."