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INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES**

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INDIAN SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR

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El Salvador is one of the unreformed countries in Central and South America, a nation ruled by the military and a small landed oligarchy. Three and half million inhabitants fit into a limited area (the most over populated country in Central and South America). But overpopulation is a relative term. The real problem like in the other countries is ownership of land.

In recent years, the production of crops for export has increased, while domestic food supply has failed to keep up with demand. More and more land is being given over to export crops, chiefly coffee and cotton. The result of this, is the inevitable acceleration of migration to the towns. Even if El Salvador is the most industrialized country in Central America, its towns can not absorb the rural migrants. This is one of the major problems in Central and South America, "the urban immigration".

The real power in El Salvador as well as in the other countries is with the landowners who support the army which then, is supported by U.S.A. aid, from which comes all the force of repression. In this year alone there were more than 2,000 salvadorians killed or kidnapped. The only groups which has been able to oppose it publicly is the church, but then Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, was assassinated on the 24th of March 1980. This means now even the church is considered as a communist group by the government. So, the church is presecuted. Thus, the oligarchy included the one group, previously exempted, in its campaign of terror.

Very often when people talk about the Central and South America struggle, they ignore the Indian peoples. Everybody is Latin Americans but that is not the reality. In all the countries of the Central and South American region there are Indians, whether they are a minority or majority. So, in addition to the so-called Latin American struggle there is the Indian struggle. In El Salvador, the indigenous population of 60,000 are descendants of PIPILES and NAHVAS (also in Mexico). During the 1930's, the Salvadorian Government massacred hundreds of Indian people. The government wanted to exterminate the Indian peoples but they still remain with their communities and are spread all over the country.

In 1977 when CORPI (Regional Council of Indigenous Peoples for Mexico, Central America and Panama) was formed, the indigenous leaders attended the Congress and became part of the Regional Council. Since the indigenous leaders started organizing all the Indian communities, the National Indian Organization from El Salvador (AMIS) is getting stronger. Now more than ever they are directly involved in the struggle because there is no choice for victims of brutal oppression and terrorism. There is the hope for indigenous peoples that participation in the struggle will result in the recognition of their rights to the land, their culture, traditions and the respect as a collectivity. Among the victims of the oppression are Indian peoples.