

# Foreign bankers are running the 'indigenous' people's movement

by Gretchen Small

The headquarters for the radical, terrorist-linked "indigenous" movement in Ibero-America is in Washington, D.C., at the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Dialogue. Although special working groups dedicated to fomenting "indigenous" divisions have been established at each of these institutions, the overlap of personnel among them makes clear they function as one unit. It is this interlocked Washington committee which centralizes the money, policy planning, and programs for action of the radical "indigenous" movement now assaulting the continent.

## Controlling the purse-strings

For some time, the World Bank has maintained an Advisory Committee on Indigenous Peoples and Poverty in Latin America, to coordinate funding programs in this area. But in late 1992, an Indigenous Peoples' Fund was established under the Inter-American Development Bank, initially in the IADB's Environment Protection Division, to centralize international funds for the "Indian" assault on sovereignty in the area. From the outset, the fund coordinated actively with the United Nations—its ratification documents were to be deposited with the U.N.—which has run the international network of radical, largely Marxist, Indian separatist organizations which have run the "indigenous people's movement" since the 1970s.

The stated purpose of the fund is to foment race-based separatist movements. Fund literature claims that "old patterns of . . . assimilation" of peoples of different ethnic backgrounds into national unity are being "cast off" in Ibero-America, in favor of the creation of "autonomous" units, with "legal recognition" of separate "land and territories," languages, cultures, etc. Thus the Guiding Principles assert that: 1) "Indigenous peoples exist as 'peoples within the National States,' and as such are entitled to rights as original inhabitants, including the preservation and defense of their lands as the basis of their physical and cultural existence"; and that: 2) "indigenous peoples have the right to control and manage their resources, institutions, identities and ways of life."

The fund's objective is to serve as a "clearinghouse" for—that is, to centralize—private and public monies being channeled into the "indigenous peoples" organizations and

projects, provided those projects meet the political criteria established by the IADB. According to the *New York Times* of Aug. 24, 1992, fund backers projected that it would pour some \$40 million behind "Latin American indigenous groups." With that kind of money, it is clear how the fund serves, as its literature claims, as the centralizing forum for "dialogue and coordination among indigenous peoples, governments within and outside the region, and international and non-governmental agencies."

Setting up the operation originally was a team of U.N., IADB, and International Labor Organization "experts" (anthropologists, economists, lawyers), coordinating with various radical "indigenous" groups, the "representative organizations" which the fund has set out to "strengthen."

One such group, which has played a leading role in the fund from the beginning, is the Lima, Peru-based COICA (Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indigenas de la Cuenca Amazonica), founded by radical "indigenous" organizations of the five Amazon countries (Peru's Aidesep, Ecuador's Confenaie, Bolivia's CIDOB, Colombia's ONIC, and Brazil's UNI).

COICA has played a leading role internationally in seeking to end the existence of the nation-state. In 1989, COICA issued a statement called "The Indigenous Peoples' Perspective on Autonomous Development," which declared: "We do not legitimize any government at all, past, present or future, in any of the Amazonian countries, as long as they do not recognize that we are the original peoples in this land, and that justice demands a recomposition of our territories."

COICA also ran the organizing committee for the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment, and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from May 25-30, 1992, as a preparatory meeting to the Eco '92 summit. At its conclusion, that summit issued the so-called Kari-Oca Declaration and Indigenous Peoples Earth Charter, a violently anti-development tract which demanded that the United Nations be granted legal powers to impose sanctions against, send military missions into, and try in a special World Court the officials of any government which these groups accuse of violating "indigenous peoples' rights." Designated as "crimes" against "indigenous collective rights" are such measures as "assimilation and integration" into national life of citizens of Indian heritage, use of resources or enforce-

ment of national laws within areas delimited as Indian territories, and even the building of roads, electricity, and telephone service in "their" lands, because "the effects of such industrialization destroy the lands."

### Issuing the marching orders

In February 1993, the Inter-American Dialogue, the private Washington-based group of Western Hemisphere bankers, policymakers, and politicians which has increasingly dominated U.S. policy toward Ibero-America over the past ten years, set up a special project entitled "Ethnic Divisions and the Consolidation of Democracy in the Americas." Heading the project is staff member Donna Lee Van Cott, a specialist in "ethnic conflict" who also serves on the World Bank's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Peoples. Van Cott, who has a background in Mayan anthropology (including doing field work in Yucatán, Mexico), wrote her master's thesis for Columbia University on Peruvian racial conflicts.

Making up the advisory committee to the Ethnic Divisions project, are leaders of several "indigenous peoples" groups, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the U.S. government-funded Inter-American Foundation, and the Organization of American States. Included in those ranks are Ann de Ruyettere, the anthropologist who coordinates the Indigenous Peoples Fund at the IADB, and Diego Iturralde, who runs the fund's operations in La Paz, Bolivia. The IADB fund and the Ethnic Divisions project coordinate their operations closely, as shown again in their cooperation in sponsoring the visit to Washington, D.C. in December 1993 of Bolivian "indigenous" leader and vice president, Víctor Hugo Cárdenas.

In its literature, the Dialogue claims that the goal of its Ethnic Divisions project is "to stimulate a debate among the peoples of the hemisphere on the relationship between governments and indigenous peoples," and that it plans to issue a report of "practical policy recommendations" on ethnic conflict at a later date.

The true goal of the project, however, extends far beyond "stimulating a debate." On Nov. 4, 1992, the *Christian Science Monitor* published an article by project director Van Cott which championed the so-called indigenous movement as a means to splinter the nation-states of Ibero-America and eradicate "the very concept of national identity and national culture." The article was dedicated to Guatemalan terrorist spokesperson Rigoberta Menchú, and attacked the Guatemalan military for carrying out counterinsurgency operations intended to separate the small terrorist forces from "the Mayas' larger political resistance."

Van Cott wrote: "In virtually every country in Latin America, indigenous cultures are challenging the legitimacy of nation-states that exercise dominion over their ancestral territory. They challenge not just the state's disposition of their lands, languages, resources, and heritage, but the very concept of national identity and national culture. . . . In



Rigoberta Menchú at IADB event in Washington, October 1993.

Bolivia and Ecuador, federations of Indian peoples have challenged the legitimacy of the Hispanicized state, demanding that their governments acknowledge the local autonomy and cultural separateness of the indigenous peoples. As these nations and others in Latin America struggle to consolidate recent democratic gains, they must also address the indigenous groups' assertion of a variety of nationalisms, an assertion that requires a more tolerant and pluralistic model of democracy."

In a *Houston Chronicle* article of July 4, 1993, Van Cott again hailed Menchú and the Campesino Unity Committee (CUC), which is a front for the terrorist Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (UNRG), urging that Menchú and the CUC "expand the foothold they gained" in running Guatemalan politics during the June 1993 overthrow of President Jorge Serrano. Menchú's role, and the election of Víctor Cárdenas as vice president of Bolivia under President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, are signs of "the emergence of Indian power" in the hemisphere, she wrote.

Van Cott captured the cynicism of this crew toward the actual interests of Ibero-America's citizens of Indian descent, when she noted that without the support of "indigenist" activist Víctor Cárdenas, the "white, millionaire mining baron" Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada never would have been elected President of Bolivia. She neglected to report that Sánchez de Lozada is a member of the Inter-American Dialogue.