

CLÉMENT CHARTIER

# WITNESS TO RESISTANCE:

Under Fire in Nicaragua

CLÉMENT CHARTIER

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# **Foreword**

### S. James Anaya

Regents and James J. Lenoir Professor of Human Rights Law and Policy, The University of Arizona College of Law United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In September 12, 2007, an overwhelming majority of the countries of the world voted at the United Nations to adopt a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, promising to roll back the legacies of invasion of Indigenous peoples' territories and the human suffering that accompanied it on a massive scale. "Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals," proclaims the Declaration in one of its numerous articles elaborating on that point, in what might seem a redundancy given the now entrenched understanding of basic human equality. The Declaration exists, however, precisely because effective equality has been denied Indigenous peoples historically and through the present, with discrimination manifesting itself in the taking of Indigenous peoples' lives, lands and resources, and the suppression of the cultures and ways of life of the Indigenous nations, tribes and communities that survived. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also exists because Indigenous peoples have demanded that it does, as part of a worldwide social movement that extends from a multitude of local struggles for equality and self-determination.

In this book Clem Chartier provides unique insight into one of these struggles. The story of the Miskito and other Indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua built into what is undoubtedly one of the most dramatic chapters in the modern Indigenous rights movement. The success in 1979 of the Sandinista led revolution, which overthrew an oppressive autocracy that dominated Nicaragua for decades, had brought hope of a better future for the Indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast. Young Indigenous leaders partnered with the Sandinistas in an experiment of liberation that soon soured for the Indigenous communities, as the aspirations of Indigenous self-determination and cultural integrity came to clash with Sandinista designs—inspired by Marxist thought—for hegemony over the political and economic life of the region.

Tensions spiraled into violence, amid the Sandinistas' reaction to the onset of United States efforts to destabilize the Soviet-leaning regime in what was one of the final gasps of the Cold War. Parallel to the U.S.-backed Contra aggression, the Miskito and other Indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast found themselves taking up arms to defend against the Sandinista crackdown that spread in the region. The world looked on, as armed Indigenous men and women fought while making the same demands for the survival of their peoples that were being echoed by Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Rising above the complexities of covert and military operations and the political maneuvering that embroiled the Indigenous leaders of the Atlantic Coast, their demands for respect for Indigenous rights resonated with consistency, and the weight of international opinion eventually tipped toward recognizing the legitimacy of those demands. That legitimacy was underscored by the alliances of solidarity the armed Indigenous leaders formed with Indigenous peoples and organizations in many other parts of the world. And with those alliances the struggle of the Indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast became a symbol of the challenges being posed by the worldwide Indigenous movement. Helping to forge one of the most important of these alliances was Clem Chartier, a Métis leader from Canada who served as the president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples.

Chartier provides a rare first hand account of the negotiations that eventually ensued in fits and starts around the Sandinista-Indigenous conflict, along with his journal of compelling narrative and photographs of his journey in 1986 into the embattled Atlantic Coast region at a time when negotiations were stalled.

As one of the advisors to MISURASATA, the Atlantic Coast Indigenous organization that engaged in the negotiations, I had helped to arrange that journey, which would be joined by other Indigenous leaders of North America. When I met them at the Colombian Island of San Andres upon their escape from aerial attacks and pursuit by Sandinista ground forces, I heard gripping accounts of what they witnessed. Chartier showed me the tattered pages of his journal, which I knew to be an historic document. The words of that journal now appear in this volume to take the reader into a journey that is significant beyond the adventure it entails.

#### John Weinstein

Author of Quiet Revolution West: The Rebirth of Métis Nationalism

he Indigenous peoples' movement in the Americas has been a growing geo-political force during the past three decades. At its heart lies the desire and determination of peoples to overcome centuries of dispossession and marginalization and to assert themselves as distinct self-determining nations. The struggle has played out in international bodies such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States which are slowly coming to terms with this reality and the impact it will have on the political unity and territorial integrity of their member states.

In Canada, the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation have been gradually but steadily redrawing the political map of the country. The assertion of their presence in the constitution and courts is paving the way for their distinct participation in the political and economic life of the country. Starting with George Manuel, their leaders have also played a critical role in projecting the aspirations and interests of Indigenous peoples onto the international stage.

Among these leaders, the most controversial was, without a doubt, Clément Chartier. I met Clément in the early 1980s when we were both involved in a revitalized nationalist movement of the Métis people who had been struggling for official recognition and a land base since their military defeat by Canada and the execution of their charismatic leader, Louis Riel, in the late nineteenth century. It was a period of intense political activity as the Métis gained recognition as one of the three Aboriginal peoples in Canada in the newly patriated constitution in 1982 and entered into a series of conferences with the federal and provincial governments to negotiate constitutional rights of the Aboriginal peoples.

The constitutional question acted as a catalyst which induced a major and sometimes fractious political realignment of the Métis movement. A new national governance structure was quickly assembled to articulate and pursue nationalist principles and policies. Clément quickly emerged as a leader of the Métis Nation at the constitutional conference table as well as in the fiery debates surrounding the formation of the Métis National Council. Quiet Revolution West: The Rebirth of Métis Nationalism, a book I authored a few years ago, chronicles this political history.

What was less known to most observers at this time was Clément's emerging leadership of the international Indigenous peoples' movement. I was familiar with his involvement in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and the initial work of the United Nations on what would become the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I knew his was an interest driven by passion and intellect; having shaken off the horrors of a Church-run Métis residential school, Clément had gone on to university and law school where he had equipped himself with the tools of international law. But for the Aboriginal organizations preoccupied with the constitutional talks, Clément's election to the presidency of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1984 went largely unnoticed.

All that changed with the electrifying news that the Métis leader was the subject of a manhunt by the Nicaraguan military in the jungles of the Miskitu coast. That the lethal pursuit was being conducted by the revolutionary Sandinista government confronted many Canadians with the realities of one of the last battlegrounds of the Cold War. It also confounded many in Canada who supported the cause of both the Sandinistas and Indigenous peoples.

Witness to Resistance: Under Fire in Nicaragua is Clément Chartier's personal account of his harrowing journey into the remote Atlantic coast region of Nicaragua to uncover the truth of Indigenous peoples under Sandinista rule. It is a narrative both gripping and precise, its realism magnified by its source: Clément's journal capturing literally the most compelling events of the journey. Having served as an advisor to the Métis during the constitutional talks, I am still struck by the fact that while Aboriginal leaders were becoming a high profile part of Canada's political establishment, Clément was putting his life on the line for a far-off Indigenous people the world had chosen to forget.

In November 2009, close to a quarter century following the events depicted in this book, Clément Chartier, President of the Métis National Council led a delegation to Juno Beach on the coast of Normandy, France, the site of the Canadian military's D-Day landing during the Second World War. The purpose of the trip was to unveil a permanent commemoration of the service and sacrifices of Canadian Métis war veterans. Clément told me how overwhelmed he felt addressing the Métis veterans who made the journey, men revered as heroes in the Métis community, still standing tall after all these years. He added, somewhat ironically, that after growing up in admiration for these men, he was finally able to identify with what they had gone through. He was, after all, a Métis veteran of a foreign war himself.

Witness to Resistance is the story of that war and the remarkable personality who lived to tell it.

# Acknowledgements

thank the many persons who were instrumental in making this book possible. In particular I dedicate this book to the Indian community of Walpasiksa which made our escape from Nicaragua in February 1986 possible.

While I cannot mention all those many persons individually, I do wish to mention several who provided support and encouragement. Firstly, I thank Marilyn Kane and Mary Ellen Turpel of the Native Women's Association of Canada which typed my hand written journal and transcribed the 1986/87 interviews of Brooklyn Rivera and printed a number of copies for distribution in January 1987. Janice Acoose in 1989 kindly arranged to have the audio tapes of the community interviews transcribed and edited for accuracy.

John Weinstein, in addition to contributing to the foreword, throughout the work on the manuscript gave valuable advice and reviewed the drafts as I proceeded in finalizing the document. Cindy Gaudet in 2009 provided valuable encouragement, advice and review of preliminary drafts. Professor Brad Morse gave valuable advice which led to Parts One and Three providing a context to my 1986 journal, the publication of which as a stand alone product was my initial objective. To Lori Nixon who took the various pieces and photos and laid out the manuscript and the cover, I am grateful. A special thanks to Hank Adams and Bob Martin who took the photos of me.

In particular, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the Métis National Council which provided support to this project, along with undertaking a public health education project with AMICA, an Indian women's organization on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, which further inspired this initiative. I also thank the Métis Legal Research and Education Foundation for undertaking this project.

To Jim Anaya, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, thank you for providing the quote on the back cover and to contributing to the foreword and most of all, for the invaluable assistance and dedicated support to the Indian struggle for rights and justice in Nicaragua.

# **Editorial Note**

This publication is composed of a book (journal) within a book.

The main component is a hand written journal which I penned during a trip to a number of Indian villages on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua in January and February 1986, into which in 1987 I added editorial notes and for the purposes of this book incorporated photos taken on that trip along with excerpts of taped testimony also taken on that trip.

The verbatim transcript was recorded by me at various meetings and in interviews and represents only the English portions of the taping, either from the original source or through an interpreter (I), primarily being Brooklyn Rivera, unless otherwise indicated.

This hand written journal, coupled with editorial commentary was initially distributed in January 1987 as a cerlox bound document. The journal is preceded and followed by segments (Parts One and Three) providing the reader with the context of the larger political environment in which these events unfolded.

For ease of reading and understanding, in Part Two, the journal, the hand written notes appear as black text on a white background. The excerpts of the taped testimony appear as black text on a grey background. The editorial notes made to the journal in 1987 appear in italics.

The journal has its own cover page and its own introduction and conclusion.

The main objective was to publish the events of January and February 1986.

This I believe has been accomplished.

# **PART ONE:**

# The Conflict in Nicaragua

### A Métis from Saskatchewan in the International Indigenous Peoples' Movement

I am a Métis, born in the Métis village of Ile a la Crosse and raised in the nearby Métis village of Buffalo Narrows, both located in northwest Saskatchewan, Canada. At the age of 5, I was placed in the boarding school at Ile a la Crosse which I attended for the next 10 years. I spent Christmas and summer holidays at home.

At the boarding school run by the Missionary Oblates and which held over two hundred boys and girls, many of us suffered psychological, physical and sexual abuse. The boys' three story building was located on 2 acres of land enclosed by a three strand barbed wire fence within which we spent our leisure time, except for attending classes, meals and the occasional supervised outing. During my last year at the boarding school, I ran away several times, the last time staying in the bush for three days.

After finishing grade nine at Ile a la Crosse, I, along with several other Métis students, attended high school in The Pas, Manitoba, living in another residence run by the Missionary Oblates. There I remained for my grade ten and the beginning of grade eleven, until the priests put me on a freight train and shipped me back home. The reason for my expulsion was my challenging of authority and disobeying the rules. It is also during this time that I witnessed racism; for example, Native people could only sit in a certain section of the movie theater. While I now realize that racism existed in my home community as well, it was not as obvious as in The Pas since the Métis were the majority population in Buffalo Narrows and Ile a la Crosse.

During my first year at The Pas, I received the tragic news that my mother had died. When I arrived home for the funeral, I found out that she had been viciously violated and brutally beaten to death. I was devastated, angry and saddened by the loss and sometimes still am. I was angry at the injustice as the two men who were accused of my mother's murder were later acquitted. This early trauma in my life led me to question the legitimacy of the police work and the justice system. I felt that they viewed her as just "another drunken Indian squaw" killed by her own people. I often speculated whether the outcome would have been different had she been a white woman.

After finishing grade eleven in Buffalo Narrows, the local priest was able to get me into Notre Dame College in Wilcox, Saskatchewan, an educational facility run by Père Athol Murray. Racism pervaded the attitude of a lot of the white students and teachers. One of the dark moments that stands out in my memory was the Mother Superior in French class telling me that I should "take my axe and go back to the reserve". But the College was also a place I could relate to as I was free to party and travel to Regina thirty miles away. I remained at the College for four years and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree at age twenty-one.

When I returned home for holidays while I was at Notre Dame, it became more and more apparent that racist attitudes were entrenched in my home community. The white establishment - teachers, nurses, police, government employees - lived in the same village as the Métis but in a segregated area, their own little community. I joined their establishment for close to a year in 1968, the year following my graduation. Their attitudes and voiced opinions about the Métis and Indians certainly were not flattering. Many treated the local Aboriginal people with disdain and less than a year after working for the provincial government, I lashed out at this racist reality by taking the government car and driving it into the Hudson's Bay Company store, literally attacking two symbols of the establishment. Needless to say, that was the end of my career in government.



▲ Children at Waunta, Nicaragua, 1986

The reaction of the white establishment was to brand me "Métis Society", something akin to calling one a "communist". At this time, there was a resurgence of Métis political organizing, which was viewed by the white establishment as an assault on their control over our people. I became fully involved with this movement, as it provided a vehicle to confront what I believed to be wrong and a viable opportunity to seek justice for our people. This certainly gave me something to believe in. I thought that as the Métis movement (Métis Society of Saskatchewan) was criticized and attacked by the white establishment, including the church, then it had to be doing something of value for our people.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, as I was going through this phase in my life, I also read a number of books about popular figures such as Malcolm X, Emiliano Zapata, Che Guevara, and of course Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. I was certainly influenced to some degree by what I read.

After working for a few years as a commercial fisherman, laborer and taxi driver, I successfully competed for the position of Executive Director of the Native Youth Association of Canada (NYAC) in Ottawa, Canada. The President at the time was Arthur Manuel, son of George Manuel who was the President of the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), now the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). I held the position of Executive Director from January 1973 to August 1973, a short lived period of funding for the NYAC cut off by the federal government after we occupied the Department of Indian Affairs and shut down its operations for a full day.

During my time in Ottawa, I was exposed to international issues, and influenced by George Manuel and his position with respect to Indigenous peoples' rights, and in particular his participation in international issues. I witnessed Manuel's meeting with Martinez Cobo, a Special Rapporteur with the United Nations (UN), who was visiting Canada in connection with his study on behalf of the United Nations with respect to minorities and Indigenous peoples. This piqued my interest in international issues and the potential for turning to the international community, particularly the United Nations, with respect to advancing the rights of the Native peoples within Canada.

In September 1973, I returned to my home village of Buffalo Narrows where I continued to organize the Métis youth and community. In 1975, I enrolled in law school.

After completing my first year, I was able to undertake research on Métis rights at the national archives in Ottawa. This time in Ottawa gave me more opportunity to learn about emerging developments in Indigenous peoples' rights in the world community through discussions with President George Manuel who was still head of the NIB and now also held the position of President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) which was founded at Port Alberni, B.C., Canada in 1975.

During that same summer of 1976, I attended, as a delegate of the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS), the UN Habitat Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. This was my first opportunity to listen to Indigenous leaders from the Americas, including a major speech by George Manuel in one of the side events. I met a number of Indian leaders from South and Central America and was able to listen to their speeches through interpretation services. I was not able, however, to converse with them outside of the meeting setting because of language issues. I heard enough to become interested in their situation. In addition I saw the opportunity for our own Métis issues to be raised internationally.

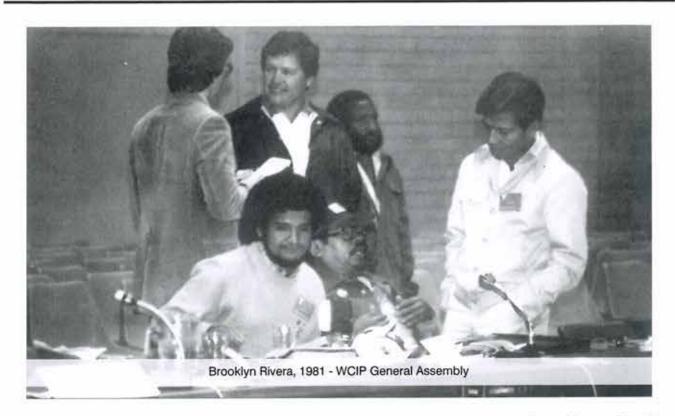
In early summer 1977 I heard of a major meeting scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland on Indigenous peoples. At that summer's joint meeting of the Canadian Indian Lawyers A George Manuel at Habitat Conference Association and Native Law Students Association



of Canada, I was successful in convincing those organizations to send two representatives to attend. Unfortunately for me, I wasn't selected as part of the delegation but nevertheless was encouraged that we would have representation at that conference.

After graduating from law school in 1978, I provided volunteer service to the WCIP and was able to participate in international events both within Canada and abroad as opportunities arose. In the summer of 1979, I represented the WCIP at a conference in Vancouver. At this event, I found out about the Fourth Russell Tribunal which was to be held in Rotterdam, The Netherlands in November of that year. The subject matters selected for this tribunal were the violations perpetrated against Indigenous peoples.

Having saved enough money, I was able to travel to and participate at the Tribunal. I was also given an opportunity to make an intervention on the situation of the Métis within Canada. Personally, the most compelling and heartrending evidence heard was the horrendous suffering and violence inflicted upon the Indian peoples and communities in Guatemala by the government of that country. These and many other related horrific incidents convinced me that I must continue working within the international community, while continuing with our own Métis struggle within Canada.



In the spring of 1981, as a volunteer travelling at my own expense, I attended the General Assembly of the WCIP in Canberra, Australia. Unfortunately, George Manuel for health reasons was not able to attend. Jose Carlos Morales Morales of Costa Rica was elected President of the WCIP. At this Assembly I met a young delegate from Nicaragua. His name was Brooklyn Rivera.

Mr. Rivera was a delegate of MISURASATA, an organization representing the Indian communities in the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua. MISURASATA had replaced ALPROMISO, a founding member of the WCIP which had operated when the country was ruled by a right wing military dictatorship headed by Anastasio Somoza. This regime, supported by the United States of America, was overthrown by a popular revolutionary movement led by the Sandinistas on July 19, 1979.

With the successful conclusion of the Sandinista revolution against Somoza, President Ortega travelled to the Atlantic Coast and declared that the Indian peoples there were liberated and therefore, no longer Indians. The elders, leaders and people responded, stating that they were Indians and had their own identity as such and that being incorporated into the new State as ordinary Nicaraguan citizens was not the answer. After a full discussion, Ortega appeared to understand the Indian position and agreed to work cooperatively with them. Out of this meeting emerged MISURASATA (Miskitu, Sumu, Rama, Sandinista Asla ta Tanka or Miskitu, Sumu, Rama, Sandinista Working Together), signaling a new partnership between the government of Nicaragua and the Indian peoples.

In September 1981 as a member of the AMNSIS delegation, I attended a conference on Indian Peoples and the Land held at the United Nations (UN) in Geneva, Switzerland. Here, I made further contact with Indian leaders from South and Central America and interacted with the new leaders of the WCIP whom I had met in Australia earlier in the year.

In December 1981, I, along with several other delegates from the WCIP including its Executive, attended a UN sponsored seminar on racial discrimination in Managua, Nicaragua. During this seminar the WCIP delegation heard of incidents of violence against Indian communities and leaders which were occurring along the Rio Coco River, part of the border between Nicaragua and Honduras, on the Atlantic Coast. These allegations, at the time not verifiable, pointed to the Nicaraguan government as the perpetrator. Even though the Sandinsta government was the host of the seminar, the WCIP was nevertheless concerned by what it was hearing. During the seminar a local Miskitu elder from the Atlantic Coast, Mildred Levy, met in confidence with the WCIP leadership and confirmed that the Sandinista government was currently taking military action against the Indian leadership, rounding them up and jailing them.

In the summer of 1982 I represented the WCIP at the first sitting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, a working group set up under the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities under the UN Human Rights Commission. The working group was established in response to Martinez Cobo's report and recommendations, and the interventions of Indigenous peoples. (The deliberations of the working group would lead eventually to the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007.)

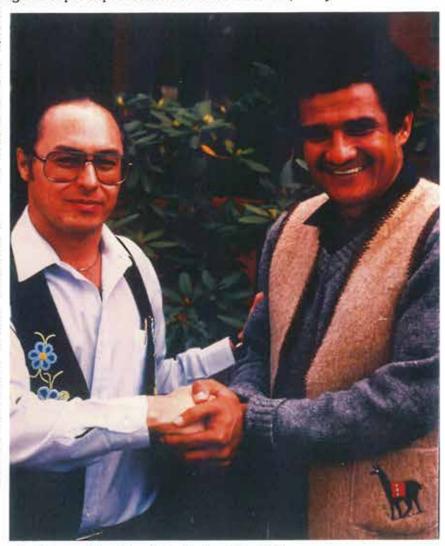
In September 1984 in Panama City, Panama I was elected President of the WCIP. At this meeting, there was a four person observer delegation from MISURASATA. They were no longer part of the WCIP because they were in armed conflict with the Sandinista government, thereby not meeting the criteria for membership in the WCIP according to its Constitution. A government created organization, MISATAN, was present in the WCIP General Assembly purporting to represent the Indian peoples in Nicaragua.



The MISURASATA delegates sought a meeting with me which I agreed to immediately. They told me that, with the change in WCIP leadership, MISURASATA leader Brooklyn Rivera felt that MISURASATA would benefit from WCIP participation in the movement towards peace in Nicaragua (peace talks were about to take place between MISURASATA and the government of Nicaragua and several countries, including Canada, had already agreed to participate as international observers). They informed me that

a meeting with Mr. Rivera could take place within days at the Washington, DC office of the Indian Law Resource Centre, an advocacy body for Indian rights that had taken up the cause of the Indian peoples in Nicaragua and was hosting Armstrong Wiggins, one of the Miskitu leaders displaced by the Sandinista aggression.

My meeting with Mr. Rivera took place a few days later. As new leader of the WCIP and with the support of the other Executive members, I agreed that we would join the international government observers to assist in whatever way we could to help move the peace process forward. In time, this decision would prove to be of profound political and personal consequence for me and my leadership of the international Indigenous peoples' movement.



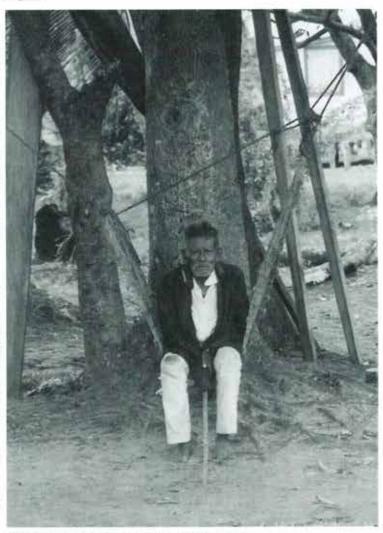
▲ Clem and Brooklyn, Washington DC, 1984

### Mission: MISURASATA

In the autumn of 1984, MISURASATA initiated an international campaign with the objective of achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict between the Indian nations of Yapti Tasba (Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua) and the Sandinista government based on the recognition and respect of their Indian rights. Through the efforts of Senator Edward Kennedy of the United States, a secret meeting had been arranged in a New York Hotel between Brooklyn Rivera and Daniel Ortega, President of Nicaragua. At this meeting, they agreed on the need for joint efforts to resolve the Sandinista/Indian conflict including a visit by Rivera to the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua.

Mr. Rivera established some preconditions which were agreed to in principle by Ortega. These included an agreement to initiate peace talks based on Indian rights, guarantees of personal security, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, and the presence of international observers to ensure Mr. Rivera's safety. These conditions were later confirmed, paving the way for an October 1984 trip by Rivera to the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and peace talks which began in Colombia several weeks later.

The MISURASATA delegation was composed of Brooklyn Rivera, Peresilano Mercado, a Miskitu Indian elder, Walter Ortiz, a Rama Indian leader, and Marcos Hoppington. The delegation was accompanied by advisor and Indian Law Resource Centre staff attorney, Steven Tullberg along with Jim Anaya. The delegation arrived in Nicaragua on October 20th and spent 12 days in the country. (Mr. Tullberg provided the information on the visit; otherwise the rest of the events are based on my personal observations).



Villager at Waunta, Nicaragua, 1986

The first order of business was a 90 minute meeting between Mr. Rivera and President Daniel Ortega in Managua. Although no agreements were concluded in terms of specific recognition of rights, there was agreement to pursue the possibility of a peaceful solution through negotiations. Mr. Rivera reiterated that the government must recognize Indian land rights and allow the Indian peoples to govern themselves within the sovereignty of the Nicaraguan State.

Following this, Mr. Rivera embarked on visits to traditional villages and relocation camps on the Atlantic Coast to both consult his people and brief them on recent developments and the potential for a peaceful solution to the conflict. All travel arrangements, including security, was provided by the Nicaraguan government. At the major community in Yapti Tasba, Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi) Mr. Rivera was greeted by approximately 2,000 people at the baseball stadium.

The audience was very receptive and stayed for four hours, even during a torrential downpour. The crowd also reacted by chanting MISURASATA's presence. After Rivera's presentation, some members of the audience got up on the flat bed truck and related what happened to themselves and their families, while expressing hope for the success of the peace talks. This openness caused a Miskitu interpreter to express to Tullberg surprise that people would risk arrest by speaking so freely.

Mr. Rivera experienced the same kind of reception in the traditional villages but at the relocation camps to which many Indian villagers from the Rio Coco had been forcibly moved, the atmosphere was much more sombre, with the presence of armed security personnel. At two relocation camps in Yapti Tasba, Columbus and Sumubila, armed security men, members of MISATAN, continually harassed Mr. Rivera to the point where there was fear of violence against the MISURASATA delegation and people who came out to meet with them. After leaving Columbus, Mr. Rivera addressed 750 people in Sumubila and when the 🛦 Children at Kuamwatla, Nicaragua, 1986



audience started responding, Fornes Rabonais, head of MISATAN started to speak against MISURASATA and Rivera, causing the audience to leave.

Rivera and the delegation were also allowed to visit two coffee labor camps, San Antonio de Upa and La Isla de Upa, in an area outside of Yapti Tasba in "Matagalpa province".

The Miskitus there had been relocated from the Rio Coco and were living under deplorable conditions in an isolated and dangerous area subject to Contra attacks (counter-revolutionaries based in Honduras and sponsored by the United States seeking the overthrow of the Sandinista government).

During the visit to the Atlantic Coast, Mr. Rivera was called back to Managua to meet with President Ortega. The result of this meeting was an agreement to exchange prisoners being held by the Sandinistas and MISURASATA. On October 30th MISURASATA turned over three prisoners to the government in Zalaya South and on October 31st in Managua the government turned over three MISURASATA warriors to Rivera. Before Rivera left Nicaragua, he and Ortega had agreed that formal peace talks would commence within two months and that there could be observers/guarantors present.



▲ Children at Kuamwatla, Nicaragua, 1986

### Mission: Sandinista

President Betancur of Colombia hosted the first formal round of talks in Bogota on Dec. 8 and 9, 1984. The governments of Colombia, Canada, France, Holland, Mexico and Sweden, along with the WCIP, were involved as observer/guarantors by invitation of MISURASATA to ensure a form of international supervision. In addition, several Indian organizations from North and South America were present as informal observers to help ensure Indigenous international support.

While this first round of talks did not produce any tangible results, it did serve to gauge the respective positions held by the two parties to the negotiations. It was particularly helpful in exposing the Nicaraguan government's view of Indian rights or at least, the right of Indians to identify and exist as a people.

In this connection, the government had difficulty in accepting the term "Indian" as Indigenous peoples, preferring to refer to the Indian nations as "ethnic groups". Mr. Rivera took the position that at the very least, the government should recognize their existence as Indian peoples and adopt the use of that term, otherwise he could not see any possibility of the government recognizing their rights as Indians.

The MISURASATA delegation led by Rivera went into the session with a detailed proposal based on the recognition of Indian rights to land and autonomy, the cessation of all institutionalized repression, the demilitarization of the Indian communities, freedom for all political prisoners, freedom of movement from the relocation camps back to the villages, and freedom of movement so that people could continue their traditions of hunting, fishing and cultivation, coupled with a formal ceasefire. It was also proposed that these and other rights be formalized by a treaty and a form of autonomy, which would both be protected and enforceable under Nicaragua's constitution.

The government responded by tabling its own document which expressed the view that ethnic groups must enjoy special rights and that the Indian peoples, including MISURASATA, must be involved in the elaboration of an autonomy document which would set out the involvement of the ethnic groups within that autonomous coastal government. This, the government maintained, could only proceed within the framework of a ceasefire between the two parties.

The government delegation head, Commandante Luis Carrion, also confirmed the issuance of a press statement through which President Ortega had just announced the creation of a five person National Autonomy Commission. The government obviously was reacting to the successful trip of Brooklyn Rivera to the Atlantic Coast and was trying to keep tight control of future developments with respect to autonomy. The MISURASATA leadership refused to be drawn into this form of government control, dismissing Ortega's bid to control the process as a publicity ploy. It did, however, agree to continue the talks with the Nicaraguan government delegation on January 19-20, 1985. The agreement was contained in a signed joint communiqué witnessed by the observer/guarantors. In the communiqué the government agreed to the use of the term "indigenous" although in a narrow sense.

The January 1985 talks did not take place. The government's military forces engaged in new offensives in early January through aerial bombardment of several Indian villages. Rivera who had returned into the Indian region was injured in one of the village attacks. MISURASATA refused to attend the January talks until the government ceased it attacks and withdrew its forces.

Through the intervention of President Betancur, both parties agreed to meet again in Colombia. At this meeting on March 26 and 27, MISURASATA expected the government, which had been given three months to analyze MISURASATA's proposal, to give a comprehensive written response. The government did present a written proposal which offered MISURASATA a place on the National Autonomy Commission through which they could present their position with respect to land and autonomy. The document also contained a provision which would see the 1983 amnesty extended. The Sandinistas also wanted a ceasefire and a declaration that the issue was an internal one, and that it would be resolved by Nicaraguans without external interference, thereby excluding the government and WCIP observers as part of the process.

MISURASATA responded by maintaining the necessity of the government's clear recognition and guarantee of substantive Indian rights. In this connection MISURASATA agreed to present on the second day, a more concise statement of their December position. This new proposal gave a summarized inventory of the political, military, economic and social aspects of the previous document.

Politically, MISURASATA called upon the government of Nicaragua to recognize the right of the Indigenous people to exercise autonomy consistent with the right to freely determine their own political, economic, social and cultural development according to their historical and traditional values and customs. That MISURASATA would be able to re-establish itself in Nicaragua as the legitimate Indian organization and its leaders would be free to function throughout all of Nicaragua. MISURASATA also recommended that a government commission and a MISURASATA commission on autonomy would conduct work over a two month period and would then try to come to a common position.

With respect to military aspects, MISURASATA proposed a three month ceasefire coupled with a withdrawal of government soldiers from Indigenous areas. MISURASATA would take responsibility for the defence of the Indian villages.

In the economic and social areas, MISURASATA called upon the government to recognize the rights of the Indian peoples to the lands and waters traditionally occupied (rivers, lakes, sea, subsoil, and resources) within the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nicaraguan State. MISURASATA also undertook to raise financing from external sources to help fulfill their economic needs. Coupled with this, MISURASATA called on the government to jointly undertake an international campaign to assist their people with respect to humanitarian needs and reconstruction of their villages. MISURASATA further called on the government to facilitate the resettlement of the internally displaced people along with the repatriation of refugees from other countries.

In terms of the negotiations themselves, MISURASATA proposed that both parties make a commitment to continue the talks with the objective of promoting bilateral agreements with respect to establishing Indigenous territorial limits, the autonomy proposal and its implementation, the exploitation and benefit of natural resources, defense and other matters. MISURASATA also proposed the creation of a Tripartite Commission composed of the Nicaraguan government, MISURASATA and the observer-guarantors for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of agreements and to arbitrate differences as they may arise.

The government responded with another document that dealt solely with military matters. It called for a ceasefire and the registration of armed fighters, along with all their armaments. MISURASATA viewed the response as a mechanism to pave the way for practical control by the Nicaraguan State over the resistance movement and rejected it outright.



Bomb crater (foreground, water-filled) at Layasiksa

The parties decided that the next talks would take place in Mexico City on April 20-21, 1985, with informal discussions on the evening of the 20th at the Nicaraguan embassy. It was also agreed that the government would provide MISURASATA with a point-by-point response to their proposal five days prior to meeting.

MISURASATA received the government's written response three days before the Mexico talks began. The document was basically a government counter-proposal and did not reflect the original commitment of a point-by-point response to the MISURASATA proposal. It did, however, go a bit further than proposals tabled at the previous talks.

In its proposal the government addressed the land issue by stating that legal title would be given to Indian communities, but did not address the issue of the total territorial integrity of the Indian nations. It also characterized the use of the land to which legal title would be given as a usufruct (use of the land, but not ownership). In terms of autonomy, the government proposed that

management of issues of local interest should be delegated to the residents of the zone. It also reiterated that the issue was an internal one and that agreements reached by MISURASATA and the government, once MISURASATA was re-established in Nicaragua, would be incorporated into the statute being drafted by the National Autonomy Commission. Again, the government focused in large measure on a ceasefire and demilitarization by the Indian resistance.

Despite the continuing divergent positions, after two-and-one-half days of talks both parties agreed to an expression of good faith to help nurture the talks. This resulted in a joint communiqué setting out an agreement by which the government agreed to provide medical aid and allow the re-establishment of subsistence activities in the areas affected by the conflict. Provision was also made for the suspension of armed offensives which would make the humanitarian initiatives possible. The government also agreed to release all MISURASATA or MISURA (a breakaway group which dropped reference to the Sandinistas) prisoners within seven days of the signing of the document, several of whom I witnessed released several days later in Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi). It was also agreed that the talks would continue in Colombia, May 25-26, 1985. Although both parties did not characterize this as a ceasefire at the time, the fact that this Mexico agreement took place gave guarded hope that further progress could be made during the continuation of the negotiations on Indian rights.



A Prisoners released at Bilwi, 1985

This hope was dashed when it became clear that the Nicaraguan government would try to re-interpret what had been achieved in Mexico to its own advantage, all the while offering the prospect of tabling a document which would recognize Indian rights at the upcoming talks in Colombia. Shortly before the May talks in Colombia, it released to the government/WCIP observers a document accusing MISURASATA of breaching the Mexico agreement which it was treating as a formal ceasefire. The government outlined a number of military incidents and insisted that MISURASATA account for those it was responsible for, otherwise the government refused to discuss substantive issues. MISURASATA responded with its own document accusing the government of provoking the three incidents involving MISURASATA and undermining the goodwill from the Mexican talks by building and consolidating its position militarily in the Indian region.

The government delegation then proposed a mechanism to ensure adherence to the Mexico agreement and to facilitate further agreements. It proposed the establishment of direct communication between Managua and MISURASATA in San Jose, Costa Rica, coupled with a mechanism of direct military coordination between Sandinista forces and MISURASATA field commanders. Additionally, they proposed an internal commission to monitor the implementation of the agreements.

MISURASATA agreed to direct political communication but refused the proposed military mechanism. It opposed any development which could be used to interpret the Mexico agreement as a ceasefire on the grounds that a general ceasefire required progress in resolving fundamental Indian rights at the root of the Indian-Sandinista conflict. MISURASATA also held to its position that any commission to oversee implementation must involve an international presence.

The government delegation found this unacceptable and insisted on a military mechanism before it would move to discuss substantive rights. MISURASATA then proposed mediation which was rejected by the government delegation. The impasse prompted the government to state it had nothing more to say. Afterward, it explained to the WCIP delegation that it was determined to reach an internal solution through its Autonomy Project and direct talks with Indian commanders within Nicaragua. (It had taken advantage of the Mexico agreement to conclude a one month ceasefire with one Indian command, Kisan Por la Paz, aligned with MISURA).

Upon request by MISURASATA and as President of the WCIP, I continued efforts to convince the government to come back to the negotiating table. In June, I, along with other WCIP representatives met with President Ortega and delivered a proposal from MISURASATA. We then met with Commandante Borge who had just been appointed to replace the former government negotiator, Luis Carrion. Commandante Borge was also placed in control of the Autonomy Project process for the Atlantic Coast as well as all policies and developments dealing with the Atlantic Coast. Commandante Borge was also Minister of the Interior, responsible for national security and the war against the Indians in the Atlantic Coast.



During the months of July and August 1985, Mr. Rivera and I, as WCIP President, conducted a speaking tour in Canada and Europe to brief governments and NGO's on the breakdown of the negotiations and to seek their support in lobbying the Nicaraguan government to re-open the negotiations. At the session of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, which fell within the tour, international and national Indigenous and non-Indigenous NGOs, except for the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), endorsed a resolution calling on the Nicaraguan government to re-open the talks and arrive at a peaceful solution based on the recognition of legitimate Indian rights to land and autonomy.

The IITC had a relationship with the Sandinista movement prior to the July 1979 successful overthrow of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. Their position, as explained to me a few years earlier by one of their leaders on a speaking tour in Saskatchewan, was that they felt obliged to support the Sandinista government while the Reagan-backed Contras were waging war against them. However, if the Sandinista government actions against the Indian peoples continued after the Contra threat was over, then the IITC would take a position and speak out against the government actions against the Indian peoples on the Atlantic Coast. Russell Means, one of the founders of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and subsequently the IITC, rejected this approach and supported MISURASATA and the Indian resistance, attending the first round of talks in December 1984 and proclaiming his support at a press conference held by MISURASATA.

Six further meetings were held by the WCIP with Commandante Borge in 1985, the last on December 19. By that date, MISURASATA had agreed to negotiate within Nicaragua on the basis of several preconditions, including an agreed upon agenda. Commandante Borge explicitly stated to the WCIP that he would never agree to an agenda which included "Indian" lands and "Indian" autonomy.

In the end, MISURASATA agreed to an officials' level meeting in a neutral country which would set the agenda and agree upon the role of the WCIP as a witness of good faith and the presence of international observers. MISURASATA, however, insisted that the government's delegation consist of government officials with the capacity for making decisions. The government would not budge from its decision to send low level officials from the Atlantic Coast and MISURASATA characterized this as a lack of good faith on the part of the government and an attempt to regionalize the conflict as one among the Indian peoples themselves and not one between the Indian peoples and the State as represented by the Frente Sandinista Liberacion Nacional (FSLN). The government thus effectively continued taking courses of conduct which were not favorable to breaking the impasse.

### Manhunt in the Jungle

In early January 1986, Brooklyn Rivera returned to Yapti Tasba to inform his people of recent developments and consult them on political initiatives. He was accompanied by four people from North America: Hank Adams, Executive Director of the Survival of American Indians Association; Russell Means of the American Indian Movement; Robert (Bob) Martin, a journalist; and myself. I had joined the group in order to conduct a fact-finding mission as a previous attempt to do so through the government of Nicaragua had just ended in failure.

The Sandinistas had invited me to visit the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua to see for myself that what I was hearing was false, however, when I was there from December 20 to December 30, 1985, I had been denied access outside of the main village of Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi). Upon my return to San Jose, Costa Rica, on December 31st, I and WCIP Vice-President Donald Rojas met with Mr. Rivera who invited me to accompany him back into Yapti Tasba in order "to see what the government did not want me to see".

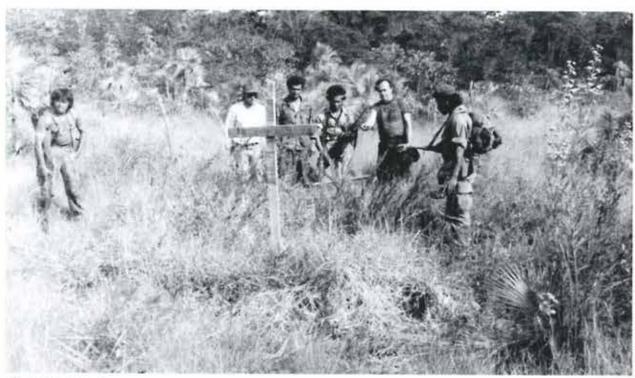
During our visits to several Indian villages from January 8 to 21, numerous accounts of violations were described during public assemblies. These included massacres, disappearances, missing persons, torture, execution, rape, bombings, theft and destruction of personal property, destruction of crops and fruit trees, slaughter of livestock and the denial of medical or humanitarian aid, all designed to break the peoples' will to resist. Witnesses also testified that at numerous times and places, the villagers would have to flee and hide in the jungle, anywhere from one month to one and one-half years.

Many accounts of massacres were related to us by survivors, including one on July 8, 1982 when thirteen Indian leaders from Yulu and surrounding communities were machine-gunned to death by the Sandinistas and then buried in a mass grave. Throughout the testimony, we learned that in the communities occupied by the Sandinistas, people would be rounded up and made to lie down in the

local Moravian church with their hands tied behind their backs. Young men would be taken to separate buildings, tortured and in some cases executed. In all cases no one was allowed to move, talk or eat. While this was happening the soldiers would be destroying communities including their agricultural products and livestock. In some cases, rapes would also occur. In one village a woman testified that she was raising five grandchildren as her daughter had been starved to death in one of those church atrocities.

In addition to the village invasions, torture was widespread in the jail at Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi). Here it is said that Indian people were hanged by the neck and, when close to death, would be drowned. One of the village leaders testified that he was taken from jail and made to dig his own grave and then threatened to be killed and buried there if he didn't provide information about the "Contras". After pleading ignorance he was struck by rifle butts, then taken back to jail. He was later transferred to a Managua jail and had been released under the 1983 amnesty decree. A Moravian pastor testified that he saw a fellow pastor executed upon arrest and later saw another one executed at the jail in Puerto Cabezas.

In two of the villages visited, bomb craters caused by five hundred pound bombs were starkly evident. In one such bombing at Kukulaya a family of ten was killed. Bombings would continue to occur in various locations in Yapti Tasba until the cessation of fighting at the end of the decade.



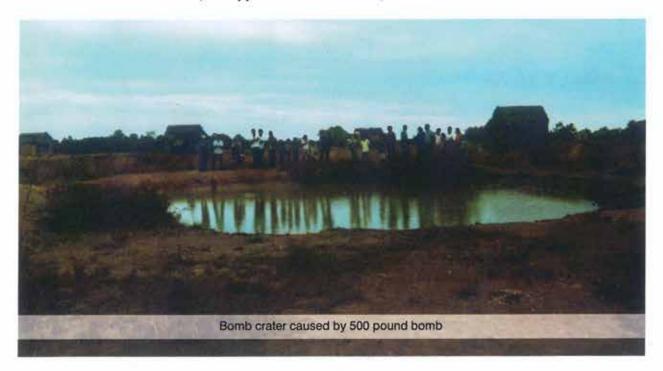
At mass grave

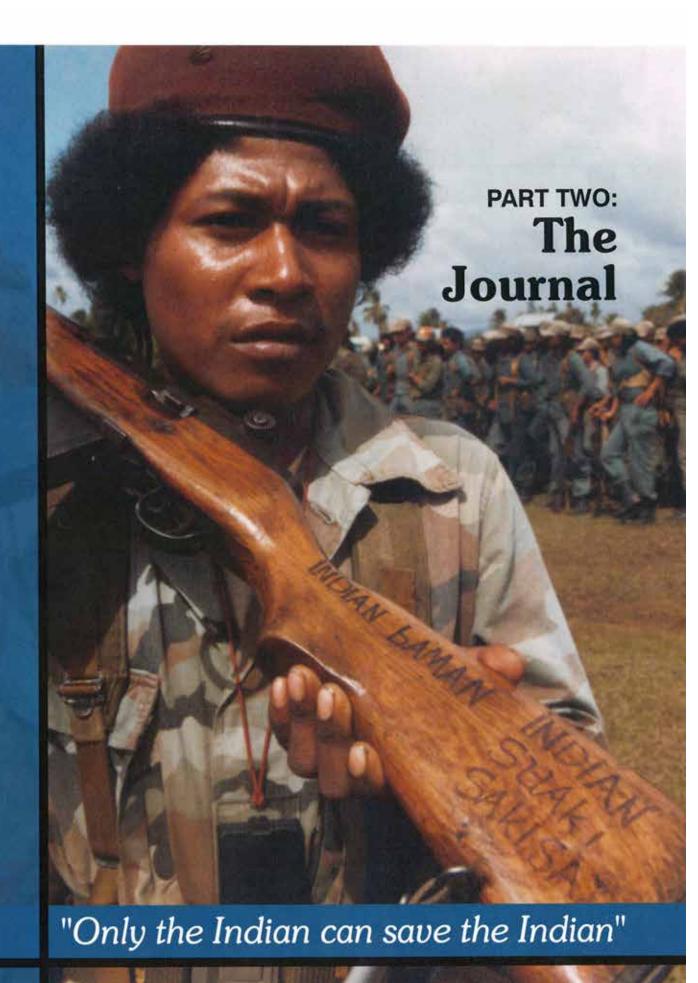
Toward the end of our tour, the government became aware of our presence and before we had a chance to leave Yapti Tasba, Sandinista ground troops blocked our exit to the sea and three planes from the Sandinista Air Force attacked us in the village of Layasiksa. This attack occurred on January 21, 1986 and left at least two villagers wounded. Two hours later, as about 18 of us were crossing the lagoon to seek refuge in a jungle river, the planes returned and attacked us as we jumped out of the boat and tried swimming to the nearby shore. This attack resulted in three deaths and five wounded.

For sixteen days, the Sandinistas pursued us through the jungle, bombing villages we had visited or which were rumoured to be helping us, and tried to intimidate the total population. The government also tried bribing the people to turn in their leader by promising to immediately transport food and medicine to the cooperating communities.

The manhunt ended in failure as we were secreted past a Sandinista military blockade of the bar in a river where it emptied into the ocean at the Indian village of Walpasiksa.

This trip and the testimony received, gave a clear indication that the people were resolved in their struggle to achieve the recognition of their legitimate rights. They were also very clear in the support of the resistance and their leader, Brooklyn Rivera. There was also unequivocal denunciation of the government's autonomy project as being nothing more than another government ploy to retain its international support. Much of this is documented in the following journal circulated in January 1987 without the transcribed testimony and photos but which was accompanied by an interview of Brooklyn Rivera conducted in 1986/87 (See Appendix A for interview).





# Introduction

Since my election as President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) September 30, 1984, the WCIP became actively involved in the Nicaraguan / Indian conflict. My election coincided with a private meeting between Mr. Brooklyn Rivera, leader of the Indian resistance movement MISURASATA and President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua held on October 2, 1984.

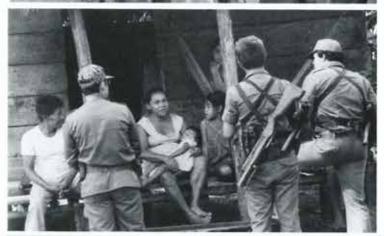
That meeting lead to a willingness on the part of the SANDINISTA government to enter into peace talks with the Indian resistance in order to restore peace to the Atlantic Coast based on the recognition of the historical Indian rights to land and autonomy (self-government).



▲ Sandinista troops in the village of Krukira, December 1985







Krukira, December 1985
Top: Sandinista transportation.
Middle: Mirna Cunningham (middle right) with Elesio Teofilo.
Bottom: Sandinista troops talking to villagers, including Ronilda
Colman (woman, seated with child).

These talks were held in Bogota, Colombia and Mexico City, Mexico. The first round of talks was in December, 1984 and the fourth and last talks took place in May, 1985.

During the period between June, 1985 and December, 1985, the WCIP (and MISURASATA through the WCIP) met with the SANDINISTA government on seven occasions to try to convince them to re-open the talks. Although the WCIP and the resistance movement came close to getting agreement on this from the Nicaraguan government, the talks were not re-opened.

During July and August, 1985, I had an opportunity to travel throughout Canada and parts of Europe with MISURASATA leader, Mr. Brooklyn Rivera, on a speaking tour and heard of numerous incidents of repression committed by the SANDINISTAS against the Indian Nations of the Atlantic Coast.

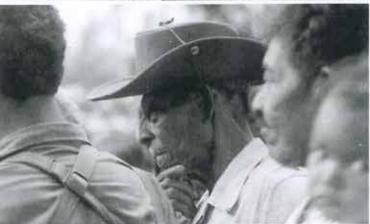
Bearing that in mind, I accepted an offer by the SANDINISTA government for a visit to the Atlantic Coast for the purpose of visiting the Indian villages, particularly those along the Rio Coco River (Wangki) which had borne the brunt of the conflict. The conflict had been described to us by various witnesses who testified to a WCIP Commission of which I was a member. However, because we had not personally verified these accusations from other sources, we did not include these atrocities related to us in our Interim Report on Nicaragua released in July 1985.

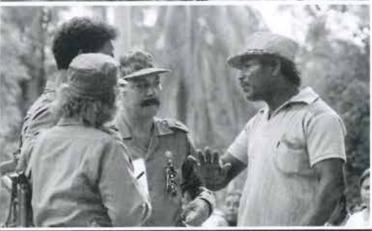
By invitation of the government, during December 20 - 30, 1985, I was in Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi) the main Indian village on the Atlantic Coast, which also serves as the government administrative and military headquarters. After I arrived there, I was soon informed that I would not be allowed to leave the community, except for one day where I accompanied three government officials in the company of 200 soldiers to two nearby Indian villages (Krukira and Kamla) for meetings with the villagers.

The reason I was given for this process was that, as a guest of the government, they were responsible for my safety and because I was alone, they could not justify assigning 100 soldiers to accompany me to the Indian villages. This, of course, is not what I wanted, as the presence of soldiers is not conducive to open dialogue with the community people. This was made clear to me at the Indian village of Krukira when the elders after the meeting wouldn't talk to me, finally saying to me "we don't know what you have in your heart".

I also felt a lot of tension in the main Indian village of Puerto Cabezas where the Indian people expressed the view that the Ladinos (those of European ancestry) should go back to the Pacific side and leave them alone. The impression I had was that the community was under a military occupation which was rejected by the people.







Krukira, December 1985
Top: Sandinista troops scattered throughout village.
Middle: Village Elder Batay Lopez listening to propaganda from Sandinista delegation.
Bottom: Sandinista Colonel Ernesto Saza speaking to village leaders including Centino Romal on right.

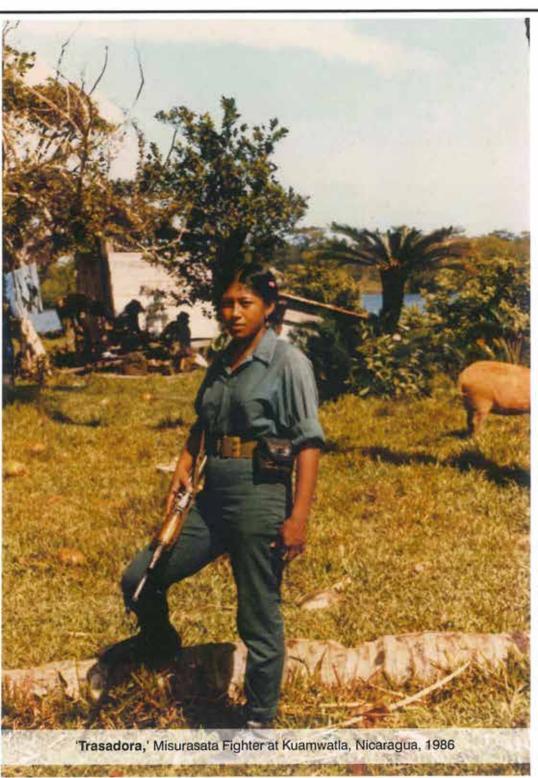
Upon my return to Costa Rica on December 31, 1985, in a meeting with the WCIP Vice-President for South and Central America, Mr. Donald Rojas, and Mr. Rivera of MISURASATA, I related my frustrations with respect to my so-called invitation by the government to visit the Indian villages on the Atlantic Coast, along with the discussions I had with various elders and community members in Puerto Cabezas.

During the meeting Mr. Rivera mentioned that he was about to leave for the Atlantic Coast for the purpose of visiting some Indian communities and that I was welcome to travel with him in order to see that which the government did not want me to see.

A few hours after this discussion, I accepted that invitation as I felt I had an obligation to seek the truth of what really did happen and what was continuing to happen in Indian country within Nicaragua.



Left to right: Rodrigo Contreras, WCIP, Clément Chartier, WCIP, Commandante Borge, FSLN, Donald Rojas, WCIP, Mirna Cunningham, FSLN, Hazel Law, FSLN At meeting in Managua, June 1985.



# January 7 - 9, 1986

# Kuamwatla

This journal was not started until January 12, 1986 as prior testimony and relevant discussions were taped. Pictures had also been taken at the meetings. However, sitting in the meeting on the 12th I felt that a written account should also accompany the photos and taped information.

eft San Jose on January 2nd and made first attempt on Sunday January 5th, but one motor broken, finally after a lot of hassle, we were able to make necessary financial transactions and purchased a motor; then successful launch on the 7th of January.

Left on trip, 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 7, 1986. After 16 hours at sea, arrived at a cay (island) 12 miles out from mainland (4 a.m.) and left at 1 p.m., arriving at beach and river mouth at 5 p.m. on second day of trip (Jan. 8). Greeted by about 90 MISURASATA fighters and two hours later, left up river to Kuamwatla, arriving about one to one and one-half hours later. Whole village out to greet us. Very emotional and warm feeling, village people and fighters very happy to see Brooklyn. Food, laundry and accommodation provided at Moravian mission.







Kuamwatla, January 1986

Top: Villagers come out to greet Brooklyn and our delegation

Middle: Villagers showing the emotion of the reunion.

Bottom: Meeting with village at Moravian church.

Following day (Jan. 9) met with MISURASATA field commanders, followed by their own internal meeting. Later in the afternoon, meeting with village at Moravian church, followed by meeting with the fighters, behind and to the side of the church.

# Kuamwatla, January 9th, 1986

# Alfonso Smith: (I)

I am glad to meet you, this morning, our brothers, in this village. This is a great chance that you may understand the struggle of our people. We work with the villages, as you can see, with our organization, Misurasata. I can say many things but maybe that will be not now. I hope that you will be traveling the whole region, then you can learn by yourselves the real situation of our people and their struggle. I hope then, in the future, you will be witnesses internationally, about the reality of this situation of our people, in your countries.

I am in charge to lead the internal resistance in the

"Ulak", Alfonso Smith, military commander/leader of Misurasata

entire region here in the country. My name is Alfonso Smith Warman. My war name is Ulak, which means giant. I come from the Indian village called Lamlaya. It's just three miles from Puerto Cabezas. Thank you.

### Gavilan:

He is from Awastara, which is the northern part of Puerto Cabezas, the same village from which Marcos Hoppington comes. And he is enjoying also your presence here this morning, because he strongly believes that you will learn a lot about the real nature of our struggle.

His nickname is Gavilan, which means eagle. And he thinks that this meeting is quite important, because, since we are struggling from many years to be free, to have our land, and to liberate our people from the submission to government. And you may understand this and help to spread the word to the world, what's really going on among our people.

## Humberto Thompson: (I) vi



Humberto Thompson

village, the same village as Ulak, Lamlaya and he is really thankful with you since you had lots of difficulty in arriving here to visit our people, which we really appreciate. We consider that this visit is quite important because there is a lot of misinformation internationally about our struggle and our situation. So, since you have the chance to learn from this trip you will help the people to understand and to be convinced that there is an Indian struggle going on for liberation.

We want to ask you to do what ever you can to support our struggle because our people are really suffering under this Sandinista government and it is necessary that our other Indian people, leaders and organizations, will join our struggle for liberation. So, thank you again for your visit.

### Clem Chartier:

Naksa (hello). As Brooklyn has said, my name is Clem Chartier. I live in a country called Canada, but I fully understand and appreciate that the Indigenous struggle, the Indian struggle, is the same everywhere, that is, our rights are being denied. I know as well that in some countries the struggle is even greater and this is one country, your country, where I know you are suffering greatly.

I thank you for the welcome that you are expressing for my being here, for our being here, for that I am happy. I am also especially happy because my brother Brooklyn is very happy to be back. Thank you.

## Mauricio: (I)

He is Mauricio, his war name is Aguila which means eagle. He is Miskitu from the Honduras side (of Miskitu territory). He said, "we are struggling with our own Indian ideology for freedom and to liberate our land and our people, and I am very pleased to be with my Indian brothers this morning".

# Ramon Bobb: (I)



Ramon Bobb

I want to greet each one of you because you are our Indian brothers, all of you, and I feel very pleased with your presence here this morning. Whatever you can, do to support the struggle of our people. Because this is a struggle of a people, not a struggle of a group of persons, but the whole Indian nation is struggling. So you will learn from the same field what is really happening. I hope in the future you will do whatever you feel is possible to support our struggle.

Thank you very much again for your presence and I hope that you will have a pleasant travel during all your visit here, while you are staying in our land, among our people. His war name is Mihta Pauni (Red Hand). He is a military commander of one region. He is from the Sisin village, which is about twenty miles from Puerto Cabezas, in the western area.



Marlo Williams in blue shirt, playing guitar. To his left, seated, is Hilario Zelaya (Hilani)

# Ramon Fenly: (I)



Ramon Fenly

His name is Ramon Fenly. His war name is Miskut, the same as one of our great Chief of the past, Miskut, from where we descend, all the Miskitu people. He is from the Coco River (Wanki - Rio Coco) and he is expressing his gratefulness to you, because this is the first time that Indian leaders and Indian people are visiting our warriors and people directly in the field. Some others came, but through Managua with the government, the Sandinistas. The government took them and showed them what they wanted them to see and they never saw the reality about our struggle. We are proud of you because you have suffered a lot in the sea and during the whole trip, but you are now here among us. We consider that it is very important, your presence, and we are sure that you will learn a lot about the struggle of our people. So we express many thanks to you.

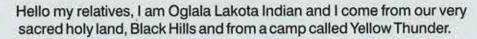
## Edwin Zuniga: (I)



Edwin Zuniga

He is Condor. He is from Elia, Honduras, the next side of the (Wangi/Rio Coco) river where the rest of the Miskitu people live. I am sure you read and heard lots about our situation and struggle while you were in your country. But now, since you came to visit our people and our land, you will learn the reality of the nature of the struggle. We really appreciate your visit because we know that you are our Indian brothers and you are concerned about our struggle. I greet you in the name of our organization, Misurasata.

### Russell Means: (R.M.)



Do you want me to go on now?



Russell Means

Brooklyn Rivera (B.R.): Yes, now, if you want to.

### R.M.:

The camp known as Yellow Thunder, my home, we just won a victory from the United States of America. We liberated that land almost five years ago. First we went in, in a sacred humble way, then the United States threatened to militarily remove us so we got our warriors and our arms and then the United States government backed down. They sued us in their federal court and after four years of being on trial, we just won last month. We won the victory, we now own the eighteen acres of land that we repossessed from the federal government of the United States.

It is a custom among my people, to first tell you what we have done, or what I have done. So that the words that I have to say to you - you can consider it with that kind of knowledge and give it whatever worth you think it deserves.



Brooklyn Rivera at the village meeting in the Moravian church.

I have lived in every area of life that the whiteman in the United States lives, from the gutter to his penthouse. I have been in his jails and I have been in his universities. I have found that the whiteman has nothing to offer the Indians, absolutely nothing.

It is for that reason that I am in the organization of the New American Indian Movement. We have fought the United States government with guns, in the courts and in the international community at the United Nations. I myself have been wounded five times and have been sent to prison because of my fight and belief in Indian people.

I know of and respect the sacred heart and the sacred thoughts of Indian people. But what I have already learned from Misurasata and what I have taken back to my people and already begun to teach them, is that there are no politics, there are no whiteman organizations that are important. But I have learned once again what my ancestors knew and what Misurasta knows, is that the struggle is for the land and the people and that is all.

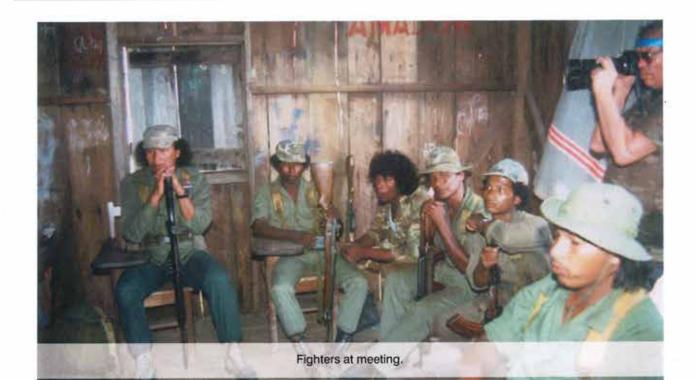
I have much more to say, it's in my heart, but I think I will wait until we meet with the community to share everything that is in my heart. I do want to say this though, that in the United States, we, meaning Hank Adams and myself, and our organizations and our friends, just Indian people, we have hundreds of warriors wanting to come down here to join you.

We also have over three and a half tons, over three tons of clothes, and a half ton of medicine to bring here. We now have the task of raising about one quarter of a million American dollars to get these warriors and supplies down here to you people. And I ask this question - and the answer will determine how easy it is for us to help you and the people and I want to know - are you fighting for an independent Indian nation or are you fighting for autonomy?

Thank you, we are all related.

Indian...

Clem Chartier (C.C.): Just to express a bit of the feelings that I have for the struggle that you have been in and my experience with it. Just so you have a little bit of background. As a member of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, as a volunteer worker originally, I am aware of the Miskitu, Sumu, Rama people, more about the Miskitu than about the other



# END OF TAPE ONE SIDE TWO START OF TAPE TWO SIDE ONE



Hank Adams

Hank Adams (H.A.): ...about a century ago, and most people believe that the Indian wars are all over. Because of that belief, Indian people from the Arctic circle to the tips of South America in Chile are living under death sentences. Death sentences to our persons, our families, our tribes, our ways of life, our nations. Because too many people think that the fights are over. And so when I come to say that I am here to help you, I really want to come to say that I want to thank you for the help that you are giving us Indian people, throughout these two continents, North and South America, Central America, to lift that death sentence, to make life possible for all Indian people throughout the range of our Aboriginal territories, throughout the extent of our existing and our new nations, our reborn nations.

> In recent months or over nearly the last year, we have been providing some support to Misurasata. But when we came down here and with each activity and labour that we see, like building the canoe or the dugout in the woods, we see how little that money and how little that support has been. Whether it be hundreds or thousands of dollars.

And now it's less important what we tried to do to help in the past, than the help that we can try to do tomorrow and the next day and over the coming period.

And recognizing how massive and great your needs for assistance are, we will do what we can to help. And doing that, knowing that whatever help we may give is only a small measure of the help that you are giving Indian people everywhere by your struggle, your fight and your resistance here in Nicaragua. And so to you, I wish all success but more importantly I want to thank you for what you are doing.

B.R.:

You can have just time to walk all around the village, the community, to see some of the things. I will be here, you know, talking to them for awhile. After one, we will meet with the village people, after the lunch. Thank you.

Afternoon meeting with the community at Moravian Church. Meeting begins with an opening prayer and singing in Miskitu.

B.R.:

Opening comments in Miskitu and introduction of guests.



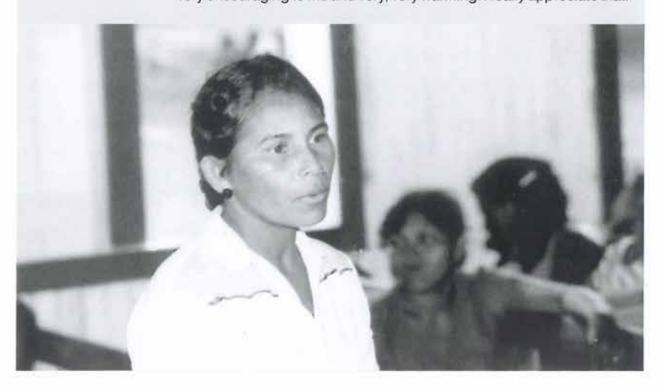
Woman with child, Kuamwatla, Nicaragua, 1986

### C.C.:

Naksa. I am pleased to be here, my first real visit to an Indian community in this country, in this part of the world. It makes me happy to be able to finally be here with you, in a nice setting.

Why I say that is, I had a chance to be in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas) from December 20 to 30, last year. I spent Christmas there but there is a military setting, a military feeling - the army is there all over the place and you don't have that feeling of freedom. In fact, the second day I was there they pulled me off the street to check my papers because I had not registered when I got there. That feeling of freedom that I find here does not exist in Bilwi. I also had a chance to go to Krukira and Kamla with Mirna Cunningham, the representative of the government. However, we also had to have two hundred soldiers to go to a meeting and it wasn't a very free setting. In fact, I tried to talk to some of your people, our people after the meeting but they said "we can't say nothing, we don't know what you have in your heart", so they didn't tell me anything, because I was with the government.

So the reception that we got last night and the attention we had today - getting our laundry done, getting our food, all the friendly people - its very encouraging to me and very, very warming. I really appreciate that.



With respect to the problems, the repression that you are facing, I have had a chance to speak with Brooklyn about twenty-five times now over the past, almost year and a half, and he has explained to me all the problems that you are facing. We, at the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, are trying to help in ways that we can and we will continue doing that. This trip will help me understand better, personally, the situation that you are facing and hopefully from this experience, in talking with Brooklyn and Misurasata leadership, we can find ways to help out more, or better. So with that, all I can say is that I hope that we can work together, Indigenous people around the world to help come to a resolution or to come to a point where you are free to do what you want, to live in your own country the way you want and at that time I certainly, if not before, would like to return to your country, to your village and visit some more and have some good times. Thank you.

### Hank Adams:

I am very pleased to be in your village and among the Indian people who live right here. I began coming to Nicaragua a little over a year and half ago. I first came to Puerto Cabezas and then the relocation center at Sangnilaya. A year ago, in January or February, I sent representatives from my organization to the refugee populations along the Rio Coco in Honduras. And then about three months ago I came with Russell Means and several other Indian associates and myself to come into this part of Nicaragua, however we were unable to make it here at that time.

The thing I recall from my first visit to Nicaragua, particularity at Sangnilaya relocation center, with the many hundreds of mostly Indian women and children, some fewer numbers of men, saying that they wanted to return to the villages. They said that there, their children were always sick. They neither had the food they needed, no useable water and no health services. I am reminded of that, partly with the experience today here that our friend Bob had in visiting some of the people with medical problems or illness for lack of doctors. And I am reminded that, because for over a year and half now I have been hearing the Sandinista government give excuses to me or tell me, inform me, why the people can't have food in a place...

END OF TAPE TWO SIDE ONE START OF TAPE TWO SIDE TWO

### Russell Means:

Hello my relatives, I am an Oglala Lakota from a camp in a very sacred holy land, the Yellow Thunder camp, what is now called the Black Hills, our holy land.

It is a custom among my people that I explain a little bit about myself so that what I have to say, you can judge for yourself - whether it is worthy to consider. I come from an Indian nation in the United States of America that defeated that government, militarily, about over one hundred years ago. The United States of America asked us for peace-so we gave it to them and we signed a document called a Treaty.

And of course it wasn't six years later they began to break the laws that they agreed to. They have been lying to Indian people ever since. I have been and lived in every part of the whiteman's world, from his gutter to his penthouses - his palaces. And I have found that the whiteman has nothing to offer Indian people, us - nothing. Like my elders say - where do whiteman get all his money? He got it from our land - so he is trying to buy us with our own money. He must think we are crazy.

About seventeen years ago I joined an Indian organization called the American Indian Movement. As Indian people, we were concerned about all the Indian people in the whole western hemisphere. But especially the Indian people in the United States. And we began knocking on every door of the United States government. But we were Indians and if we didn't have a stamp of government approval they slam the door in our faces. So we began to struggle against the United States government and all of its forces. We went around the country to different Indian lands. And we had over thirty military confrontations with the United States government. We never lost. However, there are many other Indian people in the United States that are also working for Indian rights. So while we were confronting the government authorities they turned to these other Indians who were not confronting them.

And by us Indians, through spiritual direction, working this kind of a strategy, we won many concessions from the United States government. As Brooklyn has said, every government is anti-Indian. What I have learned from you and your experience, already, is that the United States of America is so anti-Indian it is more anti-Indian against you in Nicaragua than they are anti-communist. Hank Adams has



Fighters at meeting.

documentation from government files that state this fact. So as we, Indian people, we have very few friends in the world, if any.

I want to say thank you for this experience of beauty and spiritual uplifting that I am experiencing. You see, I have been around Indian people from the entire hemisphere, but mostly in the United States and Canada. And these Indian people are very dependent on their governments. So the government has them in this situation, at my home, on my own reservation or relocation camp you might call it. And they just give us just a little bit, just enough to keep us from starving. We can't fish, we can't hunt, we can't plant, we can't use our land, and they give us just enough to keep us from begging, just so that we won't fight.

And because of that situation, in the entire United States, they are getting super rich off of our lands. And my people are just standing around with their hands up. I have learned from Indian people in the United States, in the Northwest Territories of Canada and here in Nicaragua that people who are self-sufficient like you - no government can mess with them. So many people both Indian and white in the United States ask why I come all the way down here to be with Indian people when we have plenty of our own problems in the United States.

I go to Indian people who are strong, because strong people do not need strong leaders. And your example to the world, your example of self-sufficiency, your example of resistance give us Indian people, everywhere, hope.

There are many people who are becoming educated, through your struggle, in the United States. And because they know of our spiritual prophecies and teachings among our people they want to come here to assist in your resistance. Hundreds of young warriors want to come to Miskitu, Sumu, and Rama land to fight for our rights.

We too want to see an Indian nation, but first I want to tell you about this prophecy. In 1978, when I was in prison, one of our eldest leaders of my nation came to visit me. He was over ninety years old. He told me this. He said, "when the beginning of the end starts, a small fire will begin in the south". It wasn't until last April when I was at Hank Adams' home that I heard from another elder that lives one thousand miles away from us, from another Indian nation, finish that prophecy. He was addressing a bunch of white people who are fighting the government against relocating some of us. But here is another elder from another Indian nation who spoke a different language than I, he told the same prophecy, except he finished it. He said - "in the beginning of the end a small fire will begin in the south" - and he said "it will spread to the north and then it will consume the south". If you look at Indian country, I had already made a commitment in Bogota at the peace talks in March to bring one hundred warriors to the resistance. And I already knew that every major Indian organization in the entire western hemisphere, North America, Central America, and South America support Misurasata. And so I knew this prophecy was coming true because it was already spreading in my country and I could only be a small part of that. But then I looked to the south of Nicaragua where there are estimated to be eighty to one hundred million Indian people. So you see, in my teachings, and in the teachings of Indian people of the United States, we know that you, you people are the leaders in changing our lives - our children's lives - and the lives of our unborn generations.

So I am humbled in your presence because you are still a people that my great nation once was. I knew when we came in, in broad daylight yesterday into your country, that this was Indian country, this was free Indian country and that we were in among people, who are a very strong people. We didn't sneak in like thieves in the night - we came like proud Indians. Thank you.

# Roy Hanel Gomez: (I)

First of all, I want to say a few words in the name of all the people gathered here. We want to express our thanks for your presence here. We are very thankful since we understand that you are coming so far, we don't know the country that you mentioned but we understand that it is quite far but you show your love to our people and we hope that the Great Spirit will continue leading in your way and in your country. I hear that one of you said that when you visited Bilwi you have learned how the Sandinista government oppresses our people and our people is suffering by the hands of this government.

Until now in 1986, we have learned that there is no hope from the Sandinista government that our people will have some freedom. When we're talking to them they keep just lying to us and just trying to have our people in their hands and to control according to their interests and not to recognize our rights. But we always tell them we do not want to be controlled by the government. We want our rights and our freedom. That's why our children, our youngsters and all our people are in this resistance - fighting for their own rights.

That's the reason I want to ask you by the name of all our people who lives in this entire region of the Atlantic Coast, that whatever you said, please do whatever you can for our people - and please don't forget us. Thank you - that's all I have to say.

## END OF TAPE TWO SIDE TWO START OF TAPE THREE SIDE ONE

Unidentified Miskitu Women:
(I) in our la

Women: I am very pleased because you came to visit our people, in our land. We see that our problems are continuing by the time and getting worse and we feel the Sandinista government is oppressing our people and they have a promise which is to wipe out, or to exterminate our nation. We know that they are thinking to continue using their military power to exterminate our people but I can testify in saying, until all our people will be killed, all our youngsters are eliminated, until then they can wipe out our people and they can use our land, otherwise we are convinced that we will overcome our struggle.

Our resistance began in Prinzapolka community and our warriors are suffering a lot but they are happy because they are fighting for their rights and we believe that we will overcome, because our cause is just.

I can see that our warriors in the bush are facing many difficulties and problems continuing their resistance, but I have the hope that the Great Spirit will continue helping our people how to finally conquest our rights and our liberation.

Of course, our people are facing many limitations and difficulties. We are lacking housing, clothing, food, but our people are convinced that these are not much important. The most important is our resistance, our rights, that is the reason we are continuing in this struggle.

At the beginning, we were prohibited even to go to that area of Prinzapolka because they were asking for I.D. card, but since the resistance began, the situation have been changed. Of course we now are in lack of doctors and medicines and we have lots of illness, people with different kinds of ills. But this is our struggle and our situation. And we are still facing this situation and we hope that our struggle will continue because this is the most important task for the future of our people.

Also I want to say as my brother said, that when you return to your home, please don't forget us. But, as you said, try to get together all the Indian people and do whatever you can for our people and their task. And I want to express my thank you to my leader, Brooklyn, since he provided the means so you could come and visit our land. Thank You.

### Meeting with fighters outside the church

C.C.:

We had a chance to speak to your commanders, commandantes, this morning, your leaders and your maximum leader, Brooklyn, who I know quite well now. As I mentioned this morning, it is important for me as one of the representatives of the Indigenous peoples in thirty-one countries that make up the World Council of Indigenous Peoples to be able to be here, not in government controlled environment, but in liberated zones to talk to the people who can express themselves freely. I find it's very important for me and the experience that I have had since arriving last night has been a very good one for me.

I have, as I said, traveled with Brooklyn in June, July, and August, for about nine weeks we traveled together, lived together, so I have, and through other meetings, I have had a chance to have explained to me the real feel of the people that are involved in the liberation struggle.

So, as a representative of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples we have been involved, I personally have been involved, in meetings with the government of Nicaragua to try to bring forward that they should respect Indian rights to land and self-government and that they should not use repressive measures and of course we will continue doing this at all times. But, I don't discuss anything with the government of Nicaragua until after I have discussed it fully with your leadership, with Brooklyn and we have analyzed it, then we decide what is the best arguments or route to take. So, whenever I meet with the government it's always at the direction, taking the direction of Misurasata. I don't do anything on my own.

So, again I just want to say that it pleases me greatly to be here because I know, although I say, and I have been acting in support for Misurasata - I know when you see the actual conditions it means a lot more and I think in my own heart when I leave after the next few days, or how many days we will be here, I will have a greater conviction and I believe that I will be able to give more emotion and more work into the work that is necessary - the work that is ahead of us.



# Medical Observations at Kuamwatla

uring this day, Bob Martin, the T.V. journalist, treated about 14 people who had very serious illnesses. Bob happened to have some training as a volunteer medic (Emergency Medical Technician, licensed in New Mexico). He'll provide me with a copy of his notes. Also, it was my first real understanding of the oppression/repression faced by the Indian peoples of this area. Information is on tape. However, this village also experienced invasion and destruction of property and production and slaughter of livestock. Since its liberation by MISURASATA fighters in 1983, the community has been able to rebuild some of its livestock; cows, horses, chickens, pigs, etc. Village also slaughtered a cow to feed us and the fighters, unsolicited: a great sacrifice.





Two of the patients assessed by Robert Martin, EMT, at Kuamwatla.

### MEDICAL OBSERVATIONS

The following documentation of the medical conditions of individuals residing in the Miskito indian villages of east central Nicaragua was prepared by Robert P. Martin. A freelance journalist, Martin is also a nationally certified Emergency Medical Technician with a volunteer fire and Pescue service near Albuquerque, NM, and was asked by members of the Nicaraguan expedition to provide patient assessments while inside the indian region.

### Background

The indian region of Eastern Nicaragua, also known as Zelaya, or Misquitia is inhabited by about 135,000 members of the Miskito, Sumu and Rama indian tribes. The people live in small communities scattered throughout the jungles and savannah land. Communities are often resting on rivers or streams or bays which permit access by boat. Almost all travel is by small dugout canoes, or on foot. There are only a few medical facilities in the region...most prominently at Puerto Cabezas (north coast), Bluefields (south coast) and Rosita (Interior). To reach one of these facilities, residents of the interior and central coast must often make cance or foot trips of several days.tx All villages visited reported that they never are visited by medical teams and only seldom receive minimal medical supplies. Those supplies are often just a few bandages and fever pills distributed by the Sandinista army. Villagers testified to the International team members that the Sandinista army often uses the promise of Medical supplies and food to coerce villagers into certain actions. During the teams' visit, it was also reported that if residents helped locate or turn in the Rivera team, medical supplies and food would be immediately helicoptered in. Officials of the government memoned that as long as the indian resistance continues, it is too hazardous to bring in medical teams...and if medical supplies are brought in in any quantity, they would be given to resistance fighters.

KUAMWATLA, NICARAGUA - January 9, 1986

PAULINA GOMEZ - Age 56. Has been bedridden for approximately one year following an attempt to see a physician in Puerto Cabezas. Was turned away without examination and subsequently suffered an attack of some kind after returning home. After the attack, patient was unable to speak and was paralyzed. Condition has improved without any medical aid in the interim period. Patient presently has a paralyzed left arm crooked into a 45 degree angle. 3 days ago patient suffered "big pain in the area of the heart" and now complains of continuing pain in the area of the heart and radiating throughout abdomen.

Pulse: 76 Bloodpressure: 138/60 Respirations: 24 Recommendation: Attempt to see physician at earliest opportunity. Probability of achieving care: Complete 2-3 day cance trip to Puerto Cabezas.

EVRON HELENA - Patient does not know her age, guesses approximately 20 to 25 years. 2 years ago had a fetus die before birth. Has no other history of childbirth or miscarriages, etc. Now approximately 4 months pregnant and complaining of continuing fever. Patient exhibits ragged sporadic cough, masal congestion.

Temp: 38.0 C Pulse: 122

Recommendation: See physician at earliest opportunity.

TASIE DAVIES - Age 4. Severe abdominal swelling. Parents suspect

Recommendation: See physician at earliest opportunity.

JOANNA DAVIES - Age 5. Complaining of fever. Exhibits productive cough with only white flem produced...no pink or dark colored. Stethoscope auscultation of upper lungs reveals wheezing.

Recommendation: See physician at earliest convenience.

BERTILLO DAVIES - 37 years old. Nother of 14 chiliren, now nursing the latest child, age 1 month. Patient completensof having a "hard time breathing" while working hard. Husband says patient had same problem 2 years ago...was taken to doctor and issued pills. Datient recovered until 6 months ago. Says the doctor told them she had weak blood, in the incident 2 years ago.

Patient exhibits clear lung sounds. Pulse: 72 Bloodpressure: 156/108 Recommendation: Eat better, making an extra effort to supplement the diet of rice with some more meat and other stables. See doctor at earliest ability.

RAYMOND THOMPSON - Age 55. Sometimes short of breath. Pain in upper chest often radiates as tingling, stinging sensation.

Recommendation: See physician.

PLORENCE CORNELIA - age 25. Complains of constant pain in the upper right chest area. Pain radiates to left arm. Saw doctor 6 months ago. He issued 2 pills. Patient also has evidence of abcess lower left jaw. Says it swelled up and broke out through the skin. Wound healed up and now reduced to scar tissue and a small lump. All teeth are badly deteriorated and in need of professional dental care.

Relating to primary complaint, pulse is strong and regular 68. Recommendation: See physician at earliest chance.

CAPMEN NARCISSO - Age 27. Has 5 children. Last one was born one year ago. Complains that for the past year has suffered severe abdominal pains 3 to 4 times a month...accompanied by swelling the the lower right quarter of the abdomen.

Recommendation: See Physician.

ARGE DAVIES - Age, approximately 17. Patient complains of stick broken off in ear. Examination reveals inflamed tisse in inner ear and stub of broken impaled object, securely impaled.

Recommendation: See Physician.

BECKTORIA DOGLAS - Age 42. Patient complains of 7 months of severe back pain and menustration 3 to 4 times a month. Extreme point tenderness exhibited in lower back. Says a doctor at Puerto Cabezas told her 7 months

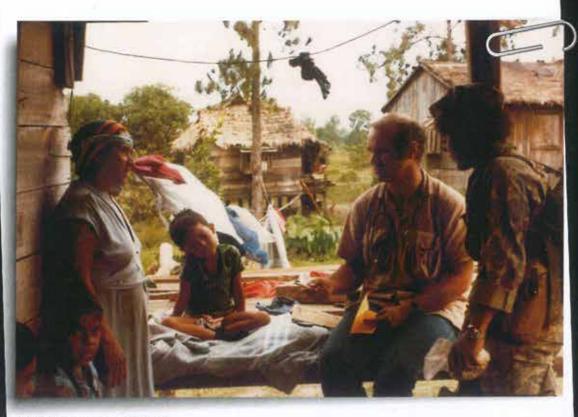
ago that she had an abominal tumor and needs surgery. However, patient is afraid of the Sandinista doctors, saying that several of her friends who have gone into surgery have died or been severly impaired.

Respiration: 24 Pulse: Strong and Regular 80 Recommendation: See physician again and follow advice.

MATILDA HONNEL - Age 74. 3 weeks ago, pain began in head and radiated to both legs. Pupils are equal and reactive, but patient complainsof severe cranial pain. Severe pain in posterior neck, rear of c-spine. Patient states no traumatic events associated with onset. Last saw doctor 9 years ago for a kidney problem.

Pulse: Strong and regular 80 Blood pressure: 165/88 Respir ation: 24 Agonal (minor)
Temp: 37.5 C

Recommendation: See physician



Bob Martin treating villagers

ELERENA MIRANDA - Age 65. Patient complainsof recurring malaria. Often unable to urinate. Difficult to eat, recurring loss of appetite. Wheezing noted in upper right lung. Minor agonal expiration. Productive cough producing only white flem. Pupils equal and reactive. Pulse: 104 Temp: 39.5 C

LOMIZ CASANOVA - 40 years. Patient complainsof recurring states of "drunken feeling" approximately twice a month. Patient often throws up bile like fluid. States of mental deficiency often cause patient to fall down. Onset is always sudden. Last saw physician 5 years ago. Doctor reportedly diagnosed abdominal tumor, issued pills.

ANNA RCSA FLOREZ - Age 63. Bedridden for 14 days complaining of severe cranial pain radiating through neck to abdomen. Agonal breathing. No predent medicines. Rails noted in both lower lungs. Patient has never seen a physician...ever. Left leg is painful and lower left abdominal quarter. Palpate a large hard mass in area of pain. Patient reports normal urination and defication when accomplished...but sometimes unable to go to the restroom for three days.



JUNIE PLOREZ - Age 5. Weak and unable to est. Arms and legs emaciated. Cheeks swollen. Pupils equal and reactive. Swollen belly, distended. Pulse: 64 irregular Temp: 38.5 C Resp: 56 Shallow Neurologic: Weak but equal bilateral hand grip. Some irregulatity in urination...2 to 3 time a night. Only wants to est meat or fish, not rice or beans. Has never been examined by a physician.

Recommendation: See a physician

JULIA WILLIS - Age 38. 9 children, the last one 9 years ago. Has been bedridden for one month complaining of pain around heart and abdomen. EXIGN Palpate small mass in center of abdomen. Pain also reported in joints making it impossible to stand. Operation to abdomen 18 years ago. Last taken to physician 3 months ago, with no diagnosis provided. Doctor issued 2 pills. 5 days ago severe pain in chest radiated to right arm and leg. Neurologic: Weak right grip, strong left.

Pulse: 80 Strong and regular BP: 126/80 Temp: Normal Pupils: Equal-React Recommendation: See physician.







SUPPLEMENTAL ASSESSMENTS/TREATMENTS: Combetants (Miskito Warriors)

- COMBATANT UNKNOWN Pt approximately 15 years old. Gunshot wound pierces foot, one inch medial to toes, center of foot. Wound removed approximately 2 square inches of skin and tissum on top and bottom of foot. Wound occurred 15 days ago and is inflamed. Treat with Betadyne solution, irrigated the entire route of the bullet's travel. Application of teramycin paste and bandages. Issue one penicillin pill.
- COMBATANT UNKNOWN Piercing machete wound to foot. Irrigation and cleansing with Betadyne solution. Application of Teramycin paste, bandage.
- COMBATANT UNKNOWN Entire mouth severely decayed teeth. Only six remain somewhat inact, but all are decayed to the roots and causing extreme pain. Unable to treat.
- 4. Edwin Zuniga Age approximately 27. Decayed/absessed wisdom tooth. Patient has in possession 50 ampules of something labeled:
  Alphacaine HCL, Epinephrine 1:100,000 18cc EXP: 1/87.
  Says they were secured in Costa Rica for his pain. Wents me to use as anesthetic to pull tooth. Declinate pull tooth but agree to execute injections to reduce pain at his insistance.

  Execute six injections of less than 1/2 cc total, in a pattern surrounding the bad tooth.

# Kuamwatla to Ariswatla

uring this day (Jan. 10th), our second full day in Kuamwatla, did some interviewing on tape. We then left in the evening for Waunta, with a proposed stop at Prinsapolka. We went by Big Town, where we were joined by fighters, then continued on to Ariswatla.

Interviews with fighter	rs	3
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C.C.:

Good morning.

Trasadora (T.):

Good morning

C.C.:

We're in the community of Kuamwatla?

T.:

Yes sir.

C.C.:

You're one of the fighters?

T.:

Yes sir, I'm willing and everything.

C.C.:

Do you have a war name, a name you go by?

T.:

Sure.

C.C.:

And what's your name?

T.:

Trasadora.

C.C.:

And you?

Answer:

Declata (D)

C.C.:

How long have you both been involved in the armed struggle, in the

fight?

D.:

Four years now.

C.C.:

You've been fighting for four years?

D.:

And one half.

C.C.:

And yourself?

T.:

I got ten months.

C.C.:

Ten months. What part of the Atlantic Coast are you from?

T.:

I'm from Tasbapauni.

C.C.:

I see. And yourself?



Ambeda Gonzalez (Decatla) on left and Komelia Naine (Trasadora).

D.: Karawala, Rio Grande

C.C.: What do you see as the most..., what is the biggest reason for being in

the armed struggle?

T.: Well, I think there is plenty reason to join them, because we see that our

country is not good. The fact that education, we need plenty of that kind

in our country. And different things them, in food line and also traffic.

C.C.: Yourself, what have you seen the government, or the Sandinistas, that

made you decide to fight? Have you seen them do anything to the

communities, to the village? To the people?

T.: She can talk in Miskitu?

C.C.: Yes.

D: Talks in Miskitu (no translation).



Left to right, Brooklyn Rivera, Humberto Thompson (Imyula), and Alfonso Smith (Ulak).

C.C.:

Is she finished?

T.:

Yes.

C.C.:

How long do you expect to continue in the struggle?

T.:

Well, as far as I could go.

C.C.:

Is there anything you want to say? Any personal feelings that you have?

T.:

I am glad to see you all here between us, and I glad to have you all between us and am willing to help in everything they ask me for.

C.C.:

Thank you.

C.C.:

Your name is?

Answer:

Komelia Naine (K.N.).

C.C.:

What do you see, has caused you to fight?

K.N.:

Well, I fight in this lucha (fight) because what the Sandinistas them doing is not right. Then, we don't want we to be slave unto them. Well, that can't happen, that is why I am fighting in this fight. Fighting for let everybody free and a new cause and everybody could live in unity.

C.C.:

I see. Have you seen any of the Sandanista's actions in the communities against the people?

K.N.:

Yes.

C.C.:

What? Can you describe something you have seen?

K.N.:

Yes.

C.C.:

Have you witnessed the government coming into the villages before

and killing livestock, destroying plants, things like that?

K.N.: Well yeah, them coming to the coast and doing up, well the Indian them

in the coast, maltreating them and destroying what they have. Went in the house killing the infants them, innocently people them. Running them out the place. Well, and doing things that they don't have

business what to do. Well, things like that.

C.C.: How long do you expect that you will continue in the armed struggle?

K.N.: Well. I expect to fight in this war until, well, everything's all done and

well, I expect to fight until, if I do that, I go until the last gun is fired.

Interview with unidentified Miskitu women, Manco interpreting: She said that the first
(I) Manco time when the Sandinista them come in here, here they got plenty

cows and chicken like that and they killed them out. So that's why today, plenty the town getting bushy. Well today them, they them suffering through the Sandinista them. Well, them got a hopes one of

these days we will throw out this government.

C.C.: Could you ask her what the town feels about the Indian warriors?

Manco: She says that the town got that hopes and believes that we will throw

out the government.



C.C.:

So they support Misurasta and Brooklyn Rivera?

Manco:

Yes. She said, they all.

C.C.:

Okay, thank you.

Manco:

Well, my opinion, is, is to, we fighting you know, to still got the freedom. Like Indian, I fight for all my Indian them, the younger, the older. The few might dead, but them must get the freedom one of these days. And well, I am ready for fight from today to maybe fifty years more and I got the believe that we will throw out this government. And I say to the world that must help we, because we are a poor Indian, everybody know that.

So that is all.

C.C.:

Have you yourself witnessed any of the actions that the Sandinistas

have taken against the community people?



Left to right, Mauricio "Dicau", Helmsley Chow, and Ramon Bobb, Commander of Group. Far right, Leopoldo Peralta.



Edopiseo Mayorga Sevilla at far left (behind tree branch)

### Manco:



Manco

Yes, yes many things I see it with my own eyes. Them just go because they civil peoples them, carry them to jail. Sometimes they kill them - them take out the eye first - cut them fingers - cut them toe. And just so, them kill them, not with a gun.

C.C.: You mentioned to me yesterday that you're from the Rio Coco. You

have hopes sometime to be able to return there and live there in the Rio

Coco?

Manco: Yes, my father was a Moravian minister and him is in Honduras right

now, my family. I'm the only one in Nicaragua from the family.

C.C.: You also mentioned yesterday in our talks, about the desire or hope of

the young people, some of the warriors to get an education so they can

contribute to your government when you get it established.

Manco: Right, we got that hopes, we beginning, well was help we to take out

some of we from here to study out from Nicaragua. That for we, prepare

for the future.

C.C.: What sort of areas would you be interested in?

Manco: My interest is in medicine, doctor, because we need it right now, we

need it bad.

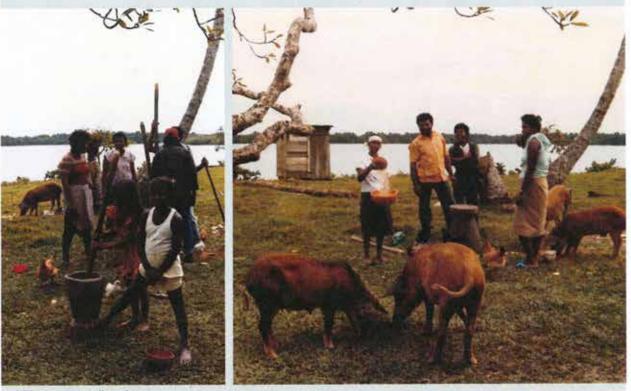
C.C.: What name do you go by in the war?

Manco: In the war: Manco. You know what that means? Manco, that is a man

with one hand.

C.C.: Thank you.

Manco: My name is Samuel Kinsman Frank.



Villagers pounding rice

Clem Chartier (C.C.): January 10th, the following is an interview with Roy Hanel Gomez. Yesterday, Roy you told us of some of the things that have happened in the community, at the Moravian church. Could you maybe give us some more information or tell me what you feel is important to you?

Roy:

Yes sir, I would like to tell you about the problems in Nicaragua and coast Atlantic, the Indian communities. Right now, in 1986, the Sandinista government they don't want to have a, like a provision line to us, that's the main thing. The second is medicine. Right now for instance, like a bad sick people. Right now, we have here a sick woman, she is very sick and we had to carry her to the doctor. They give her one, two pills that is all, hardly gave her any attention. Right now you see plenty, plenty Indian people...the problem...they don't have no clothes, they don't have no bars, the mosquito bar, and many, many things we need over and over and these things the Sandinista government they never, never, never going to make a satisfy with the Indian people. They never. They might now. They have a talking in Port (Bilwi/ Puerto Cabezas), say going to have a autonomia, say when to live in klauna (autonomy). Saying all that, making your own self, right in this country here, right in Port, right in Managua but not with our big man in the outside like you all, like the Brooklyn, not with them, them just do right here. So all that we threaten, all that you never think, except good, never this thing is going on good. The next thing, we know good this people that planning the next thing. 1981, 1982 around there you know so many man that carried to the jail they have it in Managua, me the one of them too.

So many man they killing, they losing their lives, just grab. They want a civil man, just grab and say he's contra. From here about five to six man he lose the life. We lose, that no going to come back, he gone forever. So might I think this going happen to that again to we. That I sure, that going to happen to we again.

So while that we threaten and threaten, I don't know, sir, that's what we are asking to you all, that, what you promise, we want it. We want it, because you know why we say we want that, we had a plenty many young boy yet and young girl them I see that they willing, willing to help for our country. They willing to want the right, they talking, they want the right but sometimes they need like shoes and clothes, and arms and bullets and them things, you see. Them say klauna, autonomia they not going to make that. Just with the tongue they are fooling. So that all that

we planning. I like to tell you that, but you can do and what you all can go outside and do and talk for us, well that's what I had to tell you, I don't know if my next, what I had to tell you.

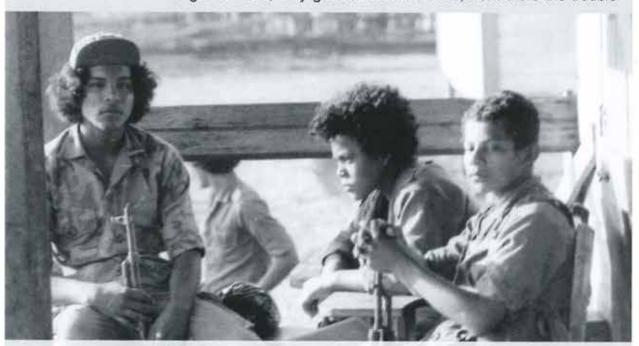
C.C:

Just one more question, were you in the village when the Sandinista's arrived and did damage to the community, to the livestock, could you maybe say something about that?

Roy:

That I can tell you, all the country them did do that. All the country, like all the coast Atlantic, coast is one people. Right here, this revolution is start from Prinzapolka. Right here another little village over other side they call Prinzapolka. They gone in right to the church house, they started revolution, this, and, see the fella right there, Ariel Zuniga, him is the man that could tell you everything, from where it coming out.

So that we gone into the church, the Sandinistas got the surround to the church and some of them put it in inside, them got arms, Indian people no had arms, not a one that time, no arms we did had. We waited, we don't think that Sandinista planning that to do us. But when we get to know, they gone in with the arms, from there the trouble



Left to right, Hempsley Francis, and Seperino Macope (Pichi)

picked up. Indian is a people too, supposed to change the mind, have to be look something to do until the last moment the trouble and this. You go to Prinzapolka, you can find so many man they killed. You come to Kuamwatla, right here, we can tell you how many boys that get killed, that are killed. See the man standing up there? Walpasiksa, Waunta, Haulover, Wawa. All where, over that side you go, you can hear about the man them killed, innocent, because that time we no have no arms. We can defend with nothing, only them got arms. Them say only them is man. Well, right now I see plenty, plenty, plenty, young boy that we have, Indian how he can defend himself. Yes sir, I don't know what. In my mind, I had to tell you, something to tell you.

Another villager (unidentified): See that, how this, my palero (close friend) talking. Always an Indian people, you know and we all know that how this problem going now, you see. That's why I glad to see you and I glad to give you in this kind of way. You see, these people them, them have a plan, to want to finish our town. You understand me? Them planning to finish we our town. So you all that coming here, and you all are checking up, you see how we is. We is a poor people you see. But them planning to kill we, kill we out, all this town people, with plane, you know. These people them, him tell me, is personal, him tell me, that he



say, "If any little thing in this 1986, him going to, them planning to, he going to, finish the town people them." So, well I tell him about it, what we all are doing. We no doing nothing. So all that one was saying, he say, "we have the fighter". How about, no, is we crying to all you know, we want the right. Is this Nicaragua land for we, for we Indian people you see? I giving you a word, like me is a Creole, but not, I is a Indian. If you want to hear, if you want, well I could speak in Miskitu language. The headman too, him can understand and afterwards him can pass you. So in 1982 this Sandinista, them come in, he make a one invasion in this place. He come in through that bar and he meet him there with a couple of young boys from here. Them gone go catch fish and they catch it there and he lost it - he killed 'em, all them, you understand. Them killed it. Then he say - now when he catching like that - he say. "them have a word", he say, "you is Contra". But when we all that like so, we have the machete and a little axe and fishing line, them grab you and he killing you right there. It's sure that this palero, that what him telling you, is the right. So that's why we all that talking, for our rights too. We want we land. We not planning to broke, how we call that, Managua too, well the gobierno (government), we no trying to, with them there. But we want we our place, for be clear. That's why this headman, Mr. Brooklyn, him look in the right, for our right, you understand me and we agree to help these fellows, that's those Miskitu people them, how he traveling in the bush. You see we no got nothing. we can't go out food, we can't go out Bluefields, we can't get nothing, vou see.

So, well this man that helping with a fishing line, we just catching like that. So you see now, we no got, how these fellows, we no got no bar, we got no blanket, we no got no shoes, you see with this, we all that walking with an old chenella (sandals), we find it from here, from the beach, and how we can be like that? And this man, them say, he we make, "klauna", and he helping, all kind of things he is doing, but it is pure lies. Them no helping with a nothing sir. I not tell you lie but you see, I saying everything because we seen with the eye, you understand me. So, well we crying about our right now. So, well in that way, I sorry for everything. We can't move no way. If we go some place, when he catch you, they want kill you. You see.

Now them planning to, in this 1986, them planning to, them going to come in, to fight with this boys them, to our boys them. So then, them planning to, if them going to come and fight with them, it going to finish

the town. So that the thing I want to find out, what we all are doing. We have the rights, so that's why these people are troubling, understand me. And all we too, we have the right, we want our land, you know. We want it, so be clear! So, well that's why Mr. Brooklyn that him look the right for all we. Thank you very much.

Another unidentified villager in the group: The Sandinista people do this. For instance, like, you see, they do it by, they got arms, right? And Sandinista got arms, right? Suppose, now, man and man can say who got arms and who got arms, with him, you can say, "I am, is a man and you is a man", but who don't got no arms, him is not a man for a man who got arms, right? So, well right now, for instance, maybe they going to back over to one place, they fighting, they fighting, gun and gun. Town people have to we run, all with the baby, them with sick people, with old people, we run out to the, Indians in the bush. When we coming out?

On top of that, they bring in planes and all kind of helicopters and push push and push and pull. They bombing the town, bombing the town and damaging all the houses. Damage you, the Haulover way, you that goes the Sharon way. They damage all in church house, they no care. They no care to damage the people, the killing or do what.

We can't coming out, we afraid to coming out. For instance, the boys them, maybe they go out from the country. When we coming out?

We no got no arms, we no got nothing to fight with them. But with who got arms, them got right, but they innocent people they want to kill. When we come into here maybe the Sandinista people they stay here, when we coming out from the bush, they want catch we, carry to the jail. Sometimes they're lost, sometimes they disappear, they kill them. They say, you like talk with contra, they say you do work with contra for underneath. But we got we right to talk with them. Is that not so? We got we right to talk with these boys them. Because Indian and Indian, we have the right to talk with them.

But they no want that. They no want that. We can't run from them because we right in the country, you see. Right now they are right by side of we, but they can't come, but we go out from here, they right away... if you hear something, they are ready to grab we. So all that, we don't see the Sandinista government, never planning to do something good to our Indian people, never, never. They are never going to do good to us. Thank you.

### END OF TAPE FOUR SIDE ONE START OF SIDE TWO TAPE FOUR

### Interview with unidentified Miskitu man from Little Sandy Bay.

C.C.:

Have the Sandinista's jailed a lot of civil people?

Answer (A):

Yes.

C.C.:

And the reason they say is because you are helping the Contras?

A .:

Mmm hmm, that we are working with Contras. So kill, catch and killing them. Throw away motor. Kill, throw to the bush, the jungle, many of our

people them, old people them.

C.C.:

What's that?

A.:

Throw away the motor, tied to the neck, with the rope, and killing all

them people.

C.C.:

That happened in your community?

A.:

Yes, my place, in the Rio Grande.

C.C.:

How many people do you think have died?

A.:

Well, that trip, killing about ten of them.

C.C.:

The Sandinista's killed about ten of your people?

A .:

Around ten. Picaniny (children), women and man.

C.C.:

What's that!

A .:

Women, picaniny and man.

C.C.:

Civilians?

A .:

Yes.

C.C.:

And you say they jailed you two times.

A.: Mmm hmm.... two times. In 1983 year I gone in jail, and in 1985, first of

January I gone in jail about three months and a half, I in jail, to the

Bluefields.

C.C.: Did they treat you badly?

A.: Treat bad! Hit you, put you in water, leave you all night.

C.C.: You're up to your neck in water?

A.: Right here. Only your head can stick out from the water. Right here.

Sometimes twelve o'clock in the night take you out and throw to the water, whole night, until five o'clock in the morning and put you back in

jail.

C.C.: That's which? The Mint (Ministry of Interior)? The soldiers? Who does

that?

A.: The soldiers them, the Sandinista them, tie your foot and tie your hand,

no give you food, no give you water, sometimes eight days. You no

drink water, nothing, without food.

C.C.: Did that happen this past year as well, in 1985?

A.: Yes, 1985.

C.C.: Do you know if that has happened to other people as well?

A.: Mmm....plenty of them. Right now having plenty in jail in Bluefields.

C.C.: From your community and other communities?

A.: Yah, from every place and from every town, little place, catch and carry

to the boat.

C.C.: It's terrible. What about..., have they done anything in your community?

With the crops or the animals? Did they come in and kill animals in Little

Sandy Bay as well?

A.: Yes.

C.C.: In what year?

A.: In 1983, killed one man from the same place I think, and one from

Sandy Bay. Killed and buried in one hole.

C.C.: What about livestock, cows, horses or pigs? Did the army destroy

those?

A.: Killed with the arms, with the gun.

C.C.: Bombs?

A.: No, with the rifle.

C.C.: The army just shot with...

A.: The AKA (machine gun), yes. When them fighting, no fighting for ... by

the bushes and when the fight start, bomb it with helicopter, and push

and pull (planes).

C.C.: What year?

A.: 1983, 1984. Last year, 1985, first of January, that time Brooklyn Rivera

come this side. They fight hard, fight hard, hard,

C.C.: How many days?

A.: About four days - fight hard.

C.C.: Did the army attack?

A.: Them people bad. Sandinista people bad; bad, bad, bad, bad. Funny

thing, everything, no gives sugar, no, nothing will, nothing stop. Sometimes bring it, sell you, two pound, two pound each house. How are you going to live with your family? Right now we can't get bar. We got to sew with the sack cloth, the sack what, ... we make with bar, with that we can fit in with family and sleep there. We have to buy one pants, shirt. Hard, hard, hard, hard that thing and dear. Six, seven thousand for one pants. How we want buy it? We no have work. Nothing. No company. This government, when take this place, six years, with this year. No company. No work. Nothing. Only fight business. That's all. Kill the people them. That's all they do it. Nothing else, a good thing

doing. Pure bad thing doing. Still up to now.

C.C.:

What about medical care, doctors or health?

A .:

Sometime, bring a little medicine, pills, like indigestion, but no doctor, no come. No doctor. Hard, hard, everything hard. Plenty people - sick people we have, but no medicine, nothing. Hard, hard, hard life for we in this area.



▲ "Conejo" from Karawalla, Rio Grande

C.C.:

So, what do you

think about Misurasata and the fighters, do you think it is necessary?

A .:

We need that.

C.C.:

And the people support the fighters?

A .:

We need that. We need help. We want freedom in this country. Too much trouble with the Sandinista government. Too much molest the poor people them. So we want that our country will be free.

C.C.:

So you say you walked and came here last night from Little Sandy Bay?

A .:

Yesterday, at seven o'clock I leave my home and half past nine I come here.

C.C.:

You came to visit?

A .:

Mmm hmm.

C.C.:

Thank you.

# Ariswatla

ontinued my notes on Jan. 16th. Arrived at Ariswatla at about 7-8 p.m. on Jan. 10th. Community prepared food for fighters and political heads. Not feeling in a good mood, so tried sleeping. At about 12 a.m., Brooklyn brought community leaders to meet me. Asked them to relate their concerns rather than giving them a speech. They were all consistent in their denunciations of the repressive actions taken against them by the SANDINISTA forces and the continuing oppression which they are facing. Also spoke about the high cost of living, lack of financial resources and destruction wreaked upon their community and livelihood (animals, crops, etc.) by the government.

They also spoke in support of the resistance and MISURASATA as the sole, legitimate representative of the Indian peoples of the Atlantic Coast. Also, they feel as if they are jailed. The men don't dare leave the village to go to Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas), because they are afraid of being arrested and tortured or disappeared. This is because of the genocidal acts carried out against them by the government. In one instance, eight of their youths were executed by the SANDINISTAS - the youngest one was 12 years old. They also have knowledge that in a nearby community, 12-20 Indian people were buried alive in a mass



▲ Arrival at Ariswatla by our 33 foot dugout boat powered by two 55 horsepower Johnsons.



Ariswatla, preparing meal for the delegation

grave. They now have to send their women to do their shopping, etc., in Bilwi. After I addressed them, expressing my support for their resistance and organization MISURASATA, they asked me if WCIP recognized MISATAN, and after I answered in the negative, they responded that that was good and as President of WCIP, I was also their leader.

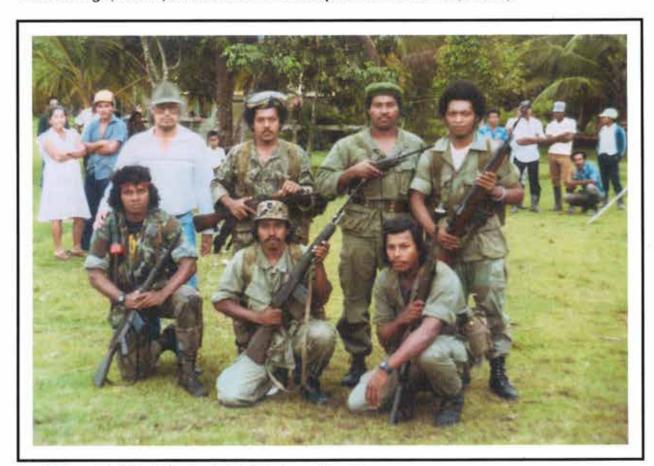
In March, 1985 in Colombia, the Executive Council of the WCIP issued a "Bogota Declaration" explicitly recognizing the legitimacy of the Indian resistance in Nicaragua and the Indian organization MISURASATA. (See Appendix C for the Declaration)

In July, 1985 the WCIP Commission on Nicaragua recommended that MISATAN not be recognized as a legitimate representative organization and this recommendation was adopted at the WCIP Executive Council meeting in July, 1985.

Unfortunately, with the international publicity and the criticism from so-called "progressive organizations" as a result of this trip, and with the perceived threat of alienating funding agencies held by some members of the WCIP Executive Council, my responsibilities and duties were purportedly suspended in March, 1986 until such time that our General Assembly could deal with this issue. The General Assembly was to have been held by the end of 1986 and had been subsequently re-scheduled for mid-1987.

In the meantime, the majority of the WCIP Executive Council and Commission members have abandoned the previously recognized Indian resistance and its legitimate leaders thereby betraying the trust and aspirations of support from the WCIP so eagerly embraced and confirmed by the Indian villagers and leaders visited.

After this session, we left and passed by Prinsapolka. Because of potential presence of SANDINISTA forces who have two detachments nearby, we decided not to stop. Went back out to sea and arrived at the next village (Waunta) at about 5:30 a.m. and slept until about 10 a.m. (Jan. 11).



Clem with Julien, Ariel, Condor, Diplo, Raton, and Imyula

# Children at Waunta village.

# Waunta

The met with the village later in the day and heard a lot of stories of repression faced by the community. Some of this testimony has been taped. One young woman testified about being tortured by the SANDINISTAS and that they drove a truck over her arm, which had to be amputated, with what appears to be a lot of her shoulder also lost. Also an elderly man testified that he now has to use a stick (staff) to help him walk because of government repression.

An elderly woman testified that the SANDINISTAS, when they had community members bound in the church for something like l8 days, that her daughter starved to death and that she now has to take care of five orphaned children, with no help or resources. Another man brought out a wrecked sewing machine, relating that in the SANDINISTA invasion, all their possessions were destroyed or stolen by the invaders, as well as their livestock and crops, trees, destroyed. More evidence on tape. Generally, the people support MISURASATA and request international support for the repression they're facing.



This woman, from Waunta, tells the story of how she lost her arm.



This man walks with a cane as a result of government repression.

### Waunta, January 11th, 1986

Woman:

(1)

What the Sandinista have done to me. The Sandinista military just they, after being torturing me, they passed the car, the truck, to my hands and they just cut it. As the situation now I am facing, and I have five children and the whole situation that I am facing that Sandinista have done to me and this is my condition that I want to testify. As you can see in my physical condition.

Woman:

(1)

After they have done to me, I have been trying to seek justice, and to some of the official of the Sandinista and have been denouncing and they never did nothing to protect me, what the soldiers have done to me and they have promised me to recognize me some assistance but they never do it. So, I also testifying saying all the atrocity and the repression that our people suffer in here and other villages that I have living, and the situation was and is still very, very terrible for our people. They destroyed my house and also they destroyed the house of my sister, so myself and my sister, you know, don't have no where to stay, no shelters. We just live wherever we can stay, but we don't have families or no one can protect us so the situation is very critical.









David Garcia

Balford

Rene Garcia Baker

### Young man: (I)

All the young people are forced to the military draft for two years. And also after the two years they are saying that we have to continue serving the army. If not, to go to Managua and pick up coffee in that area in the Pacific, freely.

That's the reason, in this region, the Atlantic Coast, there is no possibility for we, the young people to attend the school, because there is the place that they go to recruit the youngster.

I was recruited for ten days, and was trained in there for the military draft, but they were ready to send me to the field to fight and I had a chance, with others just to defect, but some of my friends have been killed and had chance to escape and because of that now I am in this village. I am from Bilwi, Puerto Cabezas. He lives there.

So all the young people from seventeen to twenty-four are hiding in the bush or in the villages and not lives in Puerto Cabezas to attend their school because of this problem.

## Old man:

(1)

I can testify saying as an old people I have been living in these villages. The Sandinistas don't respect no ones, even kids, women, old people, sick people, crippled or blind. When they come here, just repress everyone indiscriminatory.

I am blind, I cannot see and they, when they came they just put me, the gun here in my ear.

And also they came and took all what is belong to our people, our seeds, blankets, and whatever we had. So we don't have either what to, how to cover and where to get and now we lives in a, we sometimes use to cover, some of the sacks, plastic bag or other things that we can find.

Yet treating us, our people as animals. They are still trying to do again that kind of treatment to our people. They are trying to control our people by food. They don't want to give us food and also the way how we can have self-sufficience because they want to submit, to control our people by hunger. Although I feel happy today that you my Indian brothers and relatives came to visit me and to learn about the situation of our people and we feel honoured with your presence.

I express my thankful and I feel happiness today.



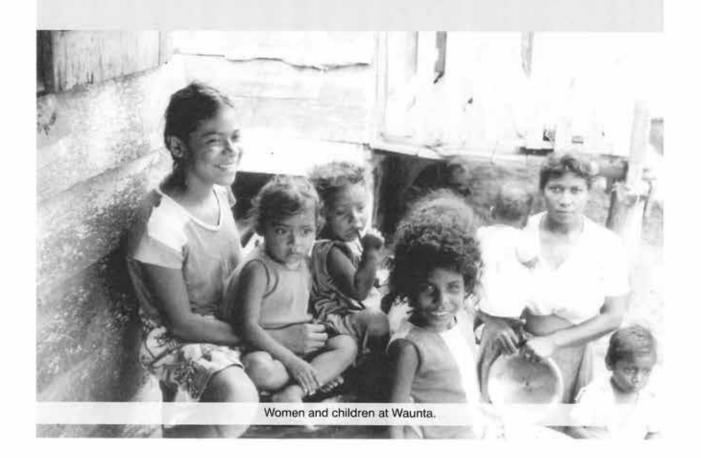


Brooklyn Rivera speaks to the villagers at Waunta.

### **Community Interviews**

Bock Hamen (B.H.): My name is Bock Hamen from Tasbapauni. We was starting this Misurasata in 1981. The Sandinista did fool us in the Atlantic coast, the Indians. We know we, the coast is for the Indians, for our right we are fighting. In '82 we begin fight against the Sandinista with 22 (caliber rifle) and lanza (spear), sticks and pistols and etc.

> Afterwards the Sandinista came down and catch the young boys, they studying them and carried them and shoot them down like animals. And catch the pueblo (people) them, and tie them up and carry them into prison. Which in that there, is not right to do that, to do the Indian, because the Indian them have the rights. So, in '83 the Sandinista begin to do worse things then. They used to catch the campesinos (farmers) them and put them in sack and throw them overboard and tow them behind the boats. And shoot down the little children them, for



nothing. So that's why we are telling you all who in the outside, we are letting you know that what the Sandinista is doing on the Atlantic Coast, the Indian rights.

So that's all I did have to tell you all.

Clem Chartier (C.C.): Have you yourself seen any of these things happened?

B.H.:

I personally see it with my own eyes.

C.C.:

Where and how, when?

B.H.:

It's happened in Tasbapauni and the Rio Grande River.

C.C.:

What happened?

B.H.:

That was in '82, beginning of '82. That's what the Sandinista they doing.

C.C.:

Is that one of reasons you are involved in this fight?

B.H.:

Involved in the fight and what the Sandinista's they doing. The civils and the campesinos them, catch them and shoot them down and go and go and burn down them house, which that is not right to do then. We are fighting for our right and for our people them. So that's what the Sandinistas do

David Garcias (D.G.): I am very happy today to see you. This evening I glad to see you. I am a Miskitu Indian. So my problem is, 1982 year, the Sandinista's been here one days and same time they bring all the military, call all the people, they say, "come to church house" and then we come; every little young girls, men, and some old man so bring here and just tie them up, tie the hand. And then he say "Uno is a Miskitu?" he say. "Uno is Misurasata?" he say, "you no have nothing to do here," he say, "I am boss in Nicaragua". "What I tell you, you have to do that", he say. Then old people say, well some old people get in trouble and afraid, so alright, he say, but some brave man he say, "no I can't do that". I say, "if you don't want do it, alright your life is today is lost and then alright get a piece a rope" and tie my hands. And then him pick up lumber, two by four and get, "alright", he say and then he said, "lay down like this", and then hit and kick my neck.

I got still life, they don't kill me. So, then after they give me little chance, them, "alright" he say "Uno, I give you a little chance, only five minutes, go to your home and eat and come back", he say. And then everybody gone house, get a little food and come and bring it here.

And after, he say "alright" he say, "I am boss in Nicaragua coast", he say "Thomas Borge give me orders", he say, Indian all they kill them, because no want Indian here in Nicaragua coast. Only want some Spanish people and change out our people into dust, so who want being here.

Then after, two young fellas they catch, they sent to military. Misurasata military they catch. Alright he say, "you - you is brave man - come here", he say and then gone, tie him up and hit with lumbers and then we take advantage to get a little chance to run from here and then same time God spare life, well, you got to get chance and I quit from here to

cross over the next side; crossover. So I swim - I swim, I swim and same time three military, with rifles, get rifle so can shoot to me but God fear, no touch me; nothing. I cross over, only swim and I cross over and run into bush. Alright, then one day and one night I sleep in the bush and then I meet with my wife and then my wife she say "old man" she say, "how you come, God spare lifetime", and then about fifteen days I turn back....

END OF SIDE TWO TAPE FOUR. START OF SIDE ONE TAPE FIVE.



.... and back to home. I see my house. I am very sorry, so what I have it and my fowls and pigs and carry them, all eat, kill and eat. And then my ... wasn't working, machine break down. What I have lumber to build my house, all burned. So then after about one month after, I gone to Puerto Cabezas, I talk what I lose my things, they say, "I don't care, lose is lose. I no have nothing to do with that", he say. "Go about your business! Haul ass from here. I don't want to see nothing to you." I say, "alright I come back." God spare life, well I in here, my poor Indian people, what I live, I live, God help me. Without work in here in Nicaragua, no have money to buy one pound of coffee or one pound of sugar. No have way. Where we going to find that money to buy that things? All too dear! You know what flour is? One pound is now ten cordobas, where I am going to get ten cordobas for buy it? Nothing. I have children, no have dress - naked. When I come sleep, drop down, no have no sheet to cover. No have no sheet to cover.

C.C.:

You mentioned that the Sandinista's had captured two young Misurasata fighters and was torturing them - other than that do you know if there were any killings - did they kill anybody?



In addition to more serious meetings, time is found to enjoy music and relaxation.

D.G.:

Yes, sir, no, not here, in Walpasiksa, but not here, God spare us. Only got punishment; hit him with lumber and carried to jail in Puerto Cabezas and carried to Managua. About one year or two years is getting free and is come back. My name is David Garcias.

C.C.:

On the massacre, could you give me a little bit of information in English?

Unidentified male continued (in English): Walpasiksa people them, when you come plenty them, 1982 year, they come and so much boy kill them and kill them and throw them in water and the jahncrow (vultures) come and eat, and no give permission for buried. People all got in the church, they can't come out and no give them order to bury, to come and jahncrow eat it. And some man tie them up in the church and they walk about the boys them, they lay down and they walk about, all of them. They punish him, and tie the foot, tie the hand and they hit with two-byfour, some bust the head, some broke the hand, doing all kinds of badness.

C.C.:

OK, thank you.

### Testimony Given at Public Meeting

Cleopas Conrado: (I)

Some of the experience that we are facing under the Sandinista government, first of all I have to say that the oppression of the government against our people, it's intolerable. They have been killing many of our people and also they are coming to our village and capturing our young people and taking them to prison in Puerto Cabezas and other places.

Now they are coming with a new kind of politics, with a so called autonomy. They are trying to conquest our minds, saying that the government will recognize our rights, but we don't trust them. We do not believe in this kind of autonomy. Because we are convinced, if we accept such a kind of autonomy, we will be submitted and we will become a slave of the government.

So we want to request you, or ask you, to help us in order to strengthen our struggle against the Sandinista government. We don't have the resources. We don't have much strength to continue our resistance. Also, we don't have the resources to assist our fighters or warriors, so

we beg to you, to do whatever is possible in order to support our struggle, our resistance, so we can continue our fight for our liberation and rights.

That's all I have to ask you and request you, and I believe that some of my other brothers will come and share with you the situation and thoughts of our people.

My name is Cleopas Conrado.

# Nicholas Serapio: (I)

I live in this village for many years and I have experienced in my life that since this government came into the power our people are really suffering a lot. We never experienced in our whole life, this kind of cruel situation, of suffering and starvation by the hands of the Sandinistas.



We have been comparing the situation in the past and now at the present time, and we feel that our living is very limited and very desperate situation. Everything is very hard now, at the present time. So our people are suffering and we don't know how to continue surviving under the Sandinista regime.

We still survive and we have some means of subsistence because of our Indian warriors. Since our young people took in arms, in order to defend our people and our villages, we are still surviving. But we have to say, that at the beginning, the government have killed many of our people. In all our history, we never knew before that certain governments been killing so many of the children of this country.

Since the fights have been developing in this area and especially since the confrontation in Haulover, we have been limited in all our sources of subsistence. At the present time we don't have the way how we can get our basic needs for survival. Everything is limited and controlled by the government and we don't have the means and we almost feel that we are in prison in our villages.

I have a feeling, which is, if there is a possibility to go out internationally and speak on behalf of my people and spread the words about the reality that my people are facing, that will be a great opportunity for myself or others; to share the truth about my people's struggle.

I feel very sad when I see the cruel reality of suffering my people and when I feel that I cannot do much; nothing for my own people. My name is Nicholas Serapio.

Bonita Chow Willington: I feel very happy to see your face, of you, my Indian brothers. Our tragedy, it's over four years in the hands of the Sandinista.

The government sent their soldiers and their aircrafts to bomb our villages and we were forced to leave our villages and we spent over a month in the bush, with all our children and some of our women were pregnant at that time. And because of that, some of the children is buried in the bush. We were living in a very difficult situation in the bush and we were like animals at that time.

And after one month, we had chance to return to our villages and we found all our animals; the cattle, the pigs, the chickens and whatever



Brooklyn Rivera speaks to the villagers at Waunta.

we had, the soldiers had destroyed totally, killed all of them. And we found our houses destroyed and our fruit trees. And at that time, we didn't know how to survive and the situation since then, it's starvation, suffering daily for our people.

Our people denounced to the government what the soldiers have been done, with the destruction of our villages and the government people in Puerto Cabezas promised to pay some of the things, but they told us to pay one hundred cordobas for each chicken and three hundred for each pig and one thousand for each cow. But later on, they changed their mind, saying that they are not willing to pay all these things because they have been done by the Contras, by our own fighters and not by their soldiers.

And now they are coming with a new kind of politics and they are talking about autonomy, and saying lots of pretty words, but of course our people, we don't believe all whatever they are saying. We don't trust this government and we don't support, or participate in this government called 'autonomy' that they are talking about. So we don't know what will happen with this autonomy that the government are trying to bring and impose to our people.

The other thing I want to say is, we heard that many people from other countries, organizations and governments, are sending supplies and aid for our people through the government. But I have to testify, saying that our people never see anything of this supposed material, articles, and aid that these agencies are sending for our people. So we want to denounce that. It's not coming, any help for our people.

We heard that the government distribute these aids and goods to their own people in Puerto Cabezas and Managua, but they are not sending nothing to our communities. The other thing, it's in the past, International Red Cross was coming to our villages, bringing some medicine, clothes and food to distribute to our people, but the government prohibit, stopped them and now we are suffering because the International Red Cross is no longer coming to our communities.

So we don't believe. We want to ask, to all the international opinion, not to believe whatever the Sandinista are saying about, that they are doing for our people. The other thing is, I have been in a meeting about the autonomy and discussion, and our people, altogether, talked clearly to the government official, that we don't believe or support their autonomy because we want our land. For autonomy, for our people, means land and that is what we want. And we want that all the Sandinista get out from our land and just leave us alone in our territories and communities.



We have a commitment with our own people and we did formally, since the beginning, that we must continue fighting for our freedom. We will never give up from such a commitment and our fighters also have this commitment. Because of that, we are working together. We support our fighters because they are fighting for our rights and our freedom. And there are things, I want to say to you Brooklyn, it's we don't want any division among our fighters, among our people. We don't want to hear that one group is coming from north or other from the south, because that weakens our struggle. We want all the fighters, works in one direction and in one organization which is our organization that we start from the very beginning and please work in behalf of the unity of all our warriors.

My name is Bonita Chow Willington.

### Unidentified male:

(1)

I feel very happy for the opportunity to share with you, my relatives, about our situation and our struggle that daily...

END OF TAPE FIVE SIDE ONE. START OF TAPE FIVE SIDE TWO.

Unidentified male continued: ...and we were obligated to drink waters and some of them, of us, were forced to walk and were killed in the road, from here to Puerto Cabezas, when they took our people to imprisonment.

The other destruction that they have committed is when the soldiers arrived in our villages, they start to machine gun all the fruit trees, and destroyed the crops and the animals, including whatever we had in our homes, like seeds, blankets, and the covers that we had, they destroyed and practically they leave us, our people, without nothing, what we had.

Because of that, at the present time our people are really in a difficult situation, where a lack of everything. We are poorer now than before, but we have a conviction and decision that we want to continue with our resistance because this is the only alternative for survival, as a community, as a people in our land, so this we will continue doing in the future.

The other thing is, they are trying to control our people through the food and because of that, they are sending just small amounts of food and limiting everything and saying that we can have the food; just ten pounds for each family for whole month. And also very expensive everything and we don't have the means how to get these basic needs and also in this community, there is no school. The government doesn't provide any teacher, any education for our kids. We believe all these things it's because of our resistance and they want to, are seeking every means how to submit our people under their control.

It looks like, what they're seeking it's our people will go to them with their needs and beg to them many things. Then they will be willing to provide some of the things that we need. We feel that what they are seeking it's to force our people to submit under their control and use us as their employees, workers in order to convert our people into different kind of people, but I can say we will never accept such a condition. We will continue resisting for our liberation.

And that's all I have to say, but finally I need to add asking you to do whatever it is possible for you to support our struggle; to approach different government and organization, international groups, to provide some assistance and support politically or diplomatically, so we can continue our struggle, until we will overcome and have our freedom and rights. Thank you.

### Cleo Rivera: (I)

What I want to share with you it's, I have six sons and all of them have been captured and tortured by the Sandinista. Some of them have been in prison for many years. One is in Honduras. He is very sick because of the torture that has been committed against him. He almost died in the hands of the Sandinista. The others, now they are in the bush, fighting against the Sandinista.

Because of that, I have been denounced by the Sandinista as a Contra, because my sons are in the resistance. Because of that I don't have chance to go to Puerto Cabezas. My name is in the list of the government soldiers, but I want to say I have done nothing against the Sandinista, and why they have me in their list? My sons are doing what they think it's right. It's not my fault. They came several times in this community, and all the time when they came here, they have committed many repression against our people. And the first time they came, they captured all the women and tied their hands and have been punishing them, beating, torturing them in that place and we have suffered a lot.

Because of that the next time that they came, we had to leave our village and hide in the bush for many days and where we suffered lots and all our things were destroyed and when we returned we didn't find nothing. The other thing, it's we heard that some agencies, internationally, sending some aid for my people, but we never see nothing in this village.

When we were in the bush, hiding there, we suffered a lots. We were in the swamp; lots of mosquitoes, lack of food and everything. When we returned since last year, because of the Indian resistance forces in our village the Sandinista doesn't longer come in this community. The other thing that I want to say, it's we disapprove that some of the warriors from Kisan are now talking with the government in the northern area. We don't trust any of the government and how we support these warriors and give food and everything and now they are in talks with the government and we don't understand what they are doing, in this kind of politics with the government.

I cannot describe all the evilness that the Sandinista have been doing against our people. Because of that we never give up from our resistance and we will never accept their autonomy plan. Because, all these are lies and they just want to slave our people and because of that, we will continue resisting against the injustice and oppression.

Thank you, that's all.

C.C.:

Can I get her name and age?

Cleo Rivera. Fifty-two years old.

C.C.:

Another witness, translation only.

Unidentified male at Waunta meeting: I feel sad when we saw all our suffering and you as a leader how are you fighting for the freedom and liberation of our people. By the time, the situation is very difficult for all our resistance. Some of my Indian brothers like you and leaders have been trying to do something for our people and their cause and I never thought that some of my Indian brothers and Indian leaders will come and visit our people, in our land. There are Indian people and Indian leaders who are concerned about our situation and there are Indian leaders and organizations who are willing to support our resistance, but now I have learned and discovered, through your presence here in our land, that there are people like you, are concerned and willing to support our cause.

> What you have said, if you fulfill, or complete, then there will be a great support for all our people in their struggle. So I hope that you will support Misurasata and our leaders and all our people, because in that way we believe that our struggle will be easy and in a short time we can overcome and we can have our freedom.

> What I really feel happy is what you have said, that there are Indian people are willing to come and join our resistance. We think that will be a great thing, because we will never give up from our resistance and we will never support this government, and we want to continue our resistance and if we get some support, materially or physically, with the presence of other Indian warriors, then our forces will get more strength, and we will have the power to defeat and build our liberation.

# **Medical Observations at Waunta**



- Wounded Misurasata Fighter, Marvin Clarence (Picwa)
- ▼ Beach at Waunta



WOUNTA, NICARAGUA - January 11, 1986

MICHBLE HUMPHREY - Age 1 year. 3/4 inch diameter hole in foot under front. Also 1/2 inch diameter hole in big toe. Wounds penetrate all surface skin and tissue. Origin unknown. Wounds inflamed. Rinse with Betadyne solution, apply teramycin cream, bandage.

NIKASIO GARCIA - Age 64. Swollen thumb and wrist from puncture in thumb by large fishhook 5 days ago. Cleanse and drain of fluids. Apply teramycin. Bandage. Temp: 39 C. Issue 1 penicillin pill. Recommend see physician.

UNNAMED NALE - Approx 35 Years. 1 inch open wound on hand. Cleanse & bandage, with teramycin.

UNNAMED MALE - Approximately 40. Apparent boil on top of hand. No treatment.

PETRONILA HUMPHRIES - 60 Years. Faralyzed right arm and leg after suffering some kind of attack 5 months ago. Taken to Puerto Cabezas Hospital, but no diagnosis or medication issued.

Could not speak after the event, but now improving with slow speech.

Pulse: 84 Resp: 24 BP: 160/110 Temp: Normal. Recommend see physician.

JOYCE PICANSU - Age 32. Complains of continuing severe back and joint pain for past 6 months. Saw doctor in Puerto Cabezas 5 months ago, he issued 2 pills, which patient states did not help. Patient also suffers numerous headaches and complains of "occasional state of drunken feeling".

Pulse: 64 Strong & Regular BP: 104/86. Recommend see physician.

ELCILITA CHACON - 18 years. Patient complains of six months of continuous coughing. Speech is very hoarse and evidence of significant nasal congestion. Minor lung noise, bilateral. Pupils Equal and reactive.

Temp: Normal Patient has no husband or children. Saw doctor 3 months ago and was issued 20 pills. Medication had no effect.

Cough is reproductive and patient complains of odor to flem, color: yellow.

Recommend see physician.



Left to Right, Eklan James (Misri) (top left), Waldo Martinez Coban (Elepante), Oveno Torres (Leah), and Antonio Jonathan (Chow)

# Layasiksa

n one of the community meetings, mention was made of 20 Indian people rounded up by the SANDINISTAS, taken out into the bush and never seen or heard from or about since.

Spent the night in Waunta and got up at about 5 a.m. for a 6 a.m. departure to Layasiksa, arriving there at about 8 a.m., January 12th.

Met with the community (Sunday) in front of the Moravian church and again received testimony of SANDINISTA invasion and bombing. Were shown 3 craters caused by 250 and 500 pound bombs (testimony is on tape). Also, one private interview with a Moravian pastor who did it on the basis that his name and picture never appear, he is very terrified.



Ariel Zuniga Rodriguez (Kuyo), Brooklyn Rivera, Oveno Torres, and Federico Escobar (Raton) being greeted by Layasiksa villager, Alejandro Molina

Alberto Rivera (A.R.):

There was an assembly in Puerto Cabezas a few weeks ago and we were there and the Sandinista security and soldiers threatened our people, saying "you Layasiksa and Kukulaya, the other communities are continually supporting the warriors, but you will see what will happen to you. We will destroy all your villages if you will continue supporting the warriors, if you have still the meetings in that village with the warriors". And because of that, we want to overcome in this struggle and have our freedom, so we can not be destroyed in our village.

C.C.:

When was the meeting?

A.R.:

November 20th. He said, "I will keep in my mind and my heart and I will never forget, because you said so many beautiful words that give us more strength and more hope". And I hope that continuing in being strong in our resistance and keep in my mind whatever you said and I hope that we can work together; as relatives, as one family and cause.

I ask you to continue supporting Brooklyn and our organization, until you will dead. My name is Alberto Rivera, fifty-six years old.





Left: Brooklyn Rivera at the village of Layasiksa

Right: Commander David Rodriguez in Layasiksa one week prior to being wounded.

Tranquilino Peter (T.P.): Motherland, our heart; it's not free, we will rather prepare to die.

(1)

Always this commitment and we feel grateful because of your presence which demonstrates that you are concerned about our people and their struggle. So we feel honoured with your presence here, in support

of our struggle.

C.C.:

Could I get your name?

T.P.:

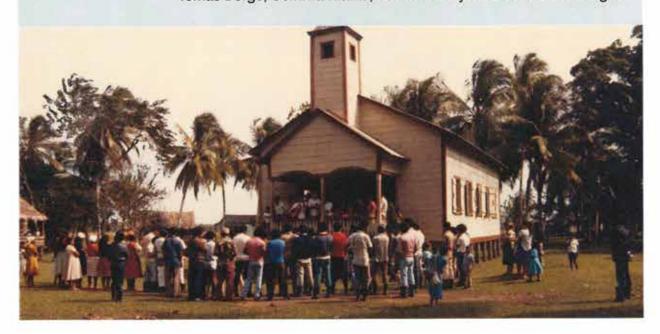
Tranquilino Peter

### Interview of villager after the meeting

C.C:

The following is an interview (with a Miskitu man who wanted to remain anonymous, no translator used).

Anonymous Miskitu (A.M.): Friend, I telling you many things, because is small people. But I got study too, long with this revolution in Nicaragua. Because, we sir, own the land; own the Nicaragua, Atlantic Coast. And now supposed to; we no study, we no tell, we no look in the right, nobody can, look in to we, to what Indian people trouble got in Nicaragua, coast Atlantic. So I telling you many things because when you coming from far, for looking we to Nicaragua. So I want to tell you this short word; what this Nicaragua government is treating poor Indian people in Nicaragua. Tomas Borge, Commandante, come in last year around about August





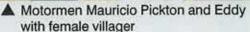
Brooklyn Rivera, Juan Ramon Rodriguez (Diplo), and Uriel Venegas (Plaisni)

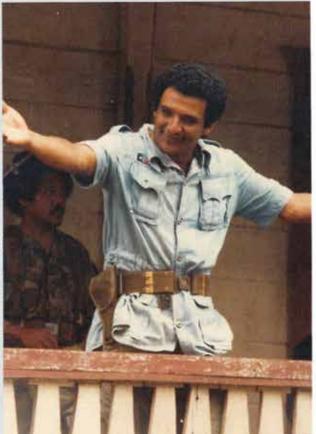
25th. And when Tomas Borge come, he calling pile of people to the meeting, to Nino Jesus (a part of Puerto Cabezas). And they, Commandante Tomas Borge, talking about them, what them want doing right now! But I hearing that, all what Commandante Tomas Borge talking is not right, only politic talking. Because Tomas Borge talking this word, say, to we, "same as, don't remember to what them doing in '81, '82, '83 in this coast Atlantic". Them no study that because it too bad doing say. Killing too much people in this coast Atlantic say. Rio Coco, Klingna, Yulu, Sandy Bay, Walpasiksa, Prinsawala River, Sharon, Rio Grande, Layasiksa, Kukulaya all that side, what he doing is, now he find out that, really bad say.

But say, he tell him to we, say must forget that, because Commandante them now studying for that thing; no want do again, because trying for help a Nicaragua coast people they, like good government. Because if like that more, no going get good way with these Indian people in coast Atlantic say. So that's why, he begging now from us forget that what he doing '81, '82, '83. And he telling, he must do, minister and church people, they must go in the bush, they must beg the boy what them fighting in the bush, must tell them, "government no want war, no want

kill people more, no want cut coconut tree and no want put fire in house, no want kill more cows, no want kill people, no want put people in jail", say "no", say that's why he trying for, begging for Tomas help. But that is lie. That is really lie. Commandante talking, that is all is politic. We is Indian. We no study, but we all know, is what talking is not right. So that's why now, we begging to outside people, who they want help are to we, must try a help to coast people. Because this government he want thin out all this Indian people. When he finished that jam, December month, he calling back to the Port again for one assembly, a pastoral. And they, government delegate Doctor Mirna Cunningham and one Captain for the 28th Siuna, gone and talking about Brooklyn. Say, if the Indian people them want a land, this coast, call Brooklyn but don't call the assessories (advisors), because them no want that. And them no, no, no want that. If Brooklyn want come with assessories, better no come say. We study Sandinista government, no want to give coast Atlantic to Indian. That's why he begging to Indian people must







call Brooklyn but no call assessories. What that, what that, they Indian people seen revolution coming. What he doing is, all is lie! All is lie!

C.C:

Could you briefly tell me your own experience?

A.M:

Now, all that I see when I drop in jail. When I drop in jail, I sorry. When I came to the Port, investigate me forty-five days. All my skin, my pants, my shirt, is blood; same like a bad people, same like an animal. And I stand there all that because I no know about Contra business, so that's why I tell him, "but I is the civil man." But them trying for ask me something and I tell him, "No, I is a civil man," and then send me to Managua.

And when he wants send me to Managua carry me with truck, carry me, hide it to the airport, in the bush and shove me in Aeronica (name of airline) and carry me to Managua. And then he carry me to Managua, he carry me to Zona Franca (prison). They keep me eight months. I eat bean's water, white beans boiled in water, not beans, water with salt, one little teacup for twelve hours. Then he started me to work every two o'clock in the morning....

END OF TAPE FIVE SIDE TWO. START OF TAPE SIX SIDE ONE.

A.M. continued:

He called me in my cell, four men. And when he carry out to the door, give me shovel, four shovel, and when he carry me out, put me in a truck and carried me to the basura (garbage-dump). When I go to basura I see from my band, that kind of nasty thing I no see, but they carry me same as, I load that dirt into truck. And when I see all this shit, shit, I don't know that shit, even where it come, but with other, I have to do that. When I do it that, I crying. I crying, but I doing that. Four or five times I hauling to lake. When I come there, put me a bano, a bath. But when I bathe, still my skin stink shit.

And I stand all that. And when they put me to work, they tell me, the Sandinista them, "Work! Work! Uno Contra". No want to do that. Like Christian people, but Uno is a real, bad people say. And that, we know, God help, have to do that. Crying for help! For we right! But where going get for a we? No talk nothing just doing. All that, do to we.

And then, get a hernia and heavy thing. He tell we, "lift it up that!" Sometime whole piece of iron, sometime whole piece of cement old block, what them broke. Some two hundred and change pound. But me want to lift up that. And body hot but doing that. And when it came in the evening, sweat, beds, we bathe in that. All that, we stand it in jailhouse in Zona Franca. Sometimes whole night Bocabajo. We no know what name is Bocabajo, say, "Alright turn your mouth down." Some three, four, five hours can't stand. We can't stand that and all Sandinista doing that to we. With bad what? We Christian people. We hearing that. But no talk nothing. Like people, not like animal, like them. We like people standing all that. And when he taking out from there, carry it to the ground, I say. Say, when he carry there whole day. Some



▲ Far Back, Mauricio and Eddy, left middle, Eustace Flores, and front right, Edwin Zuniga (Condor)

time till ten, nine o'clock night. Work, work, work, dust, hot, no food, all that we doing in grande regimen abierta Sandinista (great open Sandinista regime).

C.C: How long were you kept in jail like that?

A.M: Eight months in Managua. And then, yes let me out. But when he let me out, you see, me like I is man, but now I is a quarter man.

Right now I is a quarter man. You see right now about twelve, or I don't know what time, but I still with old jacket because I is a sick man. I got TB right now. If I no wear this old jacket; cold. If now I start for work, all of my body hot and I got family. Where am I going to find money or something to give my family? Nothing.

C.C: What year was that? And how old are you?

A.M: In 1982, I am thirty-nine.

C.C: How many children do you have?

A.M: Have seven.

C.C: The information that I have I can publish this information?

A.M: Yes.

A.M:

C.C: But you don't want me to use your name?

No. Because you know what this government. I really afraid with this government. Because this government, is not government. I want to tell you something my friend. I think this government is one of the part of, more part in this world. Now, supposed to Mexico government, I think government, go farther there for mind the Mexico people; but this Sandinista government is not like father or government. This Sandinista government is man, only study, for kill people. No study for building Nicaragua. Or no study for help the poor people or no study for help the people, they praying for live like people, no. That's why I afraid, because I got baby small, small, small, now. And supposed now I tell my name, and maybe three or four months time, maybe this what I



▲ Brooklyn Rivera with Elder and children at Layasiksa

tell, maybe find out or see my picture or hear my name; going to catch me and drop me back in jail. And who going let me out there? Who going to let me out? That's why I afraid, I afraid, but I telling. Like I no got my name, or I no got my town. But I telling, what I want tell you, or my right. For right the coast Indian.



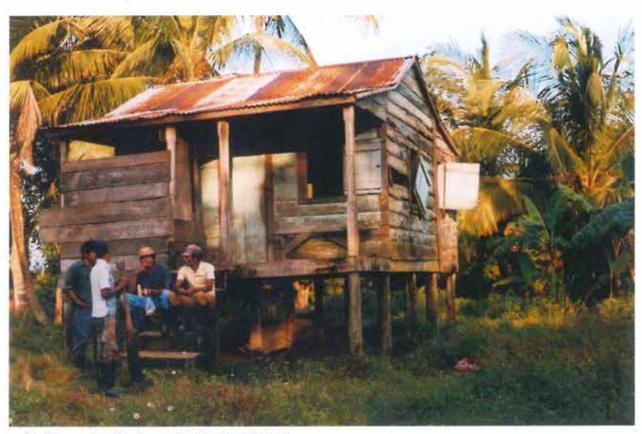
# Kukalaya

Later that day, we walked to Kukalaya, a little over one hour away, arriving just before dark, about 5:30 p.m. Later that evening, held a meeting with the community at the Moravian church, by gas-lamp. Here again, testimony was taped, mainly with respect to bombing and invasion by the SANDINISTAS; and repression, including many deaths.

SANDINISTAS dropped fourteen 500 pound bombs on this small community of 200-300 people. Took picture of one crater, beside house, where family of about 10 were killed. Also, people testified that MISURASATA was busy defending other communities and that their youth grabbed machetes, sticks and 22's to try to protect the community. Was futile as SANDINISTAS invaded with about 1000-1200 men, using helicopters, push and pull planes, by foot and by water. Community now happy that MISURASATA resistance fighters are protecting the community. One man giving testimony wants his name, picture and story publicized.

Also at about 8:45 p.m., during the meeting at the church, two men arrived by canoe (4 hours paddling) from Haulover. They heard Brooklyn was in so came to see him. We met with them later from about 10:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. They also spoke about the repression they're facing and particularly spoke about the need of the community for international aid so that they can continue supporting the resistance fighters. They will resist as long as is necessary. Also don't recognize any other organization but MISURASATA, including the supposed Council of Elders in Honduras. The elder of the two said he has been a leader in ALPROMISU and then with MISURASATA, and is still a MISURASATA leader in Haulover. That he has received my business card from Johnny and would like to keep in





A House where family was killed by bomb blast.

communication. Also, he says all the elders within the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast are supporting the resistance and MISURASATA and none of them support the government's proposed autonomy, because they see it as another political ploy by the SANDINISTAS to undermine Indian resistance and Indian rights. Got a short statement by the other man on tape. Next morning, while seeing us off, the elder said "Goodbye, you're our chief" acknowledging the WCIP. Tried sleeping on the floor, too cold, and up at 5 a.m. and took photos of bomb crater and house where family was killed. Also testimony on tape.

## At community meeting

Unidentified Kukulaya Miskitu Man: Children, our elders were teaching us that we are free (I) nations.

Many, many years ago, we were living in our communities, free. We were doing whatever we needed. Then, we can go wherever we want and do whatever we want and nothing will happen and no one will prohibit our activities.

Also in the past we were having whatever we want in our villages. We were having cattle, pigs, chickens whatever our people had for their survival and that is where some of the sources of our self-sufficience as Indian people in these communities. Fish and have use of our rivers and our land but since the Sandinista came in power, everything has been changed. And now we don't have chance to do whatever we need in order to survive. We cannot exercise all our rights and this is the reason we are really suffering in our own villages.



Man on aisle seat of second row of benches on left: Ulak.

Right benches, front row, left to right: Waldo Martinez (Elepante), Hilario Thompson (Lalo), and Imyula

In the past we were free to hunt and to get whatever kind of meat we can get from our land and freely. And even we can get the meat to take to Puerto Cabezas and sell there, and get some of the basic needs for our people. But since the Sandinista came in power now only these animals have the freedom to be there and we don't have chance to hunt and get the meat for our people.

In 1982, the Sandinista soldiers came in this community and they start to capture all our people and we were tied our hands and we were imprisoned in this church for many, many days.

So when all the men of the village were tied our hands and we were imprisoned in this building, the soldiers proceeded to destroy whatever our people have in their homes; beginning for all the things that we had, including the livestock, the fruit trees, and the crops that belonged to our people.

At the same time when the soldiers invaded our community, they killed all the pigs that we had, and some of them they used it for meat, the soldiers, and they have freely from our people.

At the present time, we don't have any kind of animals in our community and we don't have meat for our people. The Sandinista soldiers took from us all of our 22 rifles and shotguns that we were using to hunt. Because of that, now there is lots of wild animals that are destroying our crops and whatever we had in our villages and all around them, and we don't know how to hunt these animals in order to get meat for our people. We are living always with intimidation and in difficulty. We always have to take care from the soldiers of the government. If we meet them anywhere, they will arrest us and sometimes they can execute us, anywhere that they can find us. So we are fear to go anywhere or to go either to plant or cultivate our land because we may disappear anytime, and no one will know what has happened to our people. So this is a big uncertainty situation that we daily face in order to survive.

### Roberto Elias:

(1)

I want to talk about what the soldiers did to our people in 1983. When the soldiers invade our communities, in 1983, we didn't have a chance to escape. We didn't have chance to hide from the Sandinista, because they came from three directions. They came through the air using their aircrafts, airplanes and they came through the roads walking through Lapan community and they came through Haulover, which is by the river; using the river.

We were very sad, since we didn't have the means how to escape from the hands of the Sandinista, because they came from the various directions. At that time our resistance fighters were not there in this community because they were fighting against Sandinista in Haulover, and also in Sukatpin and because of that we were alone and just the civilian in this community.

Some of the young people from this village decide to face the situation against the Sandinista and they used the rifles - 22, shotgun, machete, axes, and whatever they had, and about twenty of them they went to the savannas and fight against the Sandinista in order to defend our people.

Some of our people tried their best how to escape from the soldiers and because of that some of them went to the swampy area, on the dust, and all the, in the water, in the river, into the mangrove area, in order to hide from the Sandinista, and they suffered a lot, the persecution of the soldiers.

We didn't have chance to take our things that we have in our houses. So we just took our children, and leave all our things in our houses, and we went to the bush, hiding from the Sandinista. So they have chance to destroy whatever we had in this community.

When we were escaping from the Sandinistas, the airplanes and the helicopters came and start to drop five hundred pound bombs right there in our villages and were attacking to our people using machine guns from the push and pull aircrafts and also the MI-8 helicopters.

When we were running away from the Sandinista, the push and pull aircraft were following us and continuing machine gunning all our people and we had to get into the water and when the darkness came we were in the mangrove area hiding, but we were facing very desperate situation because of the in discriminatory attack against our people.





So we went to the close community of Layasiksa and we were hiding in the bush there, and we spent over a month and half in that area, facing all the limitations and lack of everythings and our children especially have been suffering the rains, and the bites of the mosquitoes, and the starving situation in this condition.

Then the Sandinista tried to deceive our people. They were broadcasting through their radios, saying, "You people return to your community. We have medicine, we have food, clothing for you and please return and nothing will be happen." But we didn't trust them and we were, rather than, well running far away from this community because we knew that they were lying, were trying to lie our people.

Later on, we decided to come close to our villages and start to cultivate our plantation, our land, in order to get some food for our survival. Then the Sandinista sent some of our people from the community of Waunta, saying that we must return back to our villages. But we accepted to go to Waunta, thirty-two persons and when we went there, there was nothing of the...

END OF SIDE ONE TAPE SIX START OF TAPE SIX SIDE TWO Roberto Elias continued: When the bombing and when they were attacking our villages, were killed two little kids, that were recent born and of course, at that time, these kids they didn't have names yet. The mothers had in their hand, at that time, so were killed, during the bombing. So, other one young man, have been killed also. I have the name and the mother is right here in this place.

The name of the young man is Richard Davis.

My name is Roberto Elias.

C.C.:

Okay, thank you.

# Unidentified Male: (I)

Our people that were arrested and were in prison for several years. Twenty young people from this community were arrested by the soldiers and I was one among those group. I was arrested from the village of Lapan and we were taken to Managua.

When the security of the Sandinista were torturing me, they were accusing me that I was one of the fighters of the Seven Benk confrontation. That I was one of the leader, who had some eighty-five men in my hand, and fought against the soldiers. Because of that I were mistreated very bad and they put me in prison in Puerto Cabezas first of all and I were there in five different jail house.

The first jail house that I had been confined, called the "Chiquita" and after three months they sent me to Managua to continue the imprisonment. In Managua, I was confined in three different jail house, and one of the place it called Cell 20. The jail house that I was in, is No. 25. Then they took me out from there, and took me to another jail house and the number was "7".

But when our resistance group in the Atlantic Coast, when our fighterswarriors were continuing fighting this Sandinista, and also because of the international pressure, they took me out from that jail house and sent me to other one and the number was "8"; the number "8".

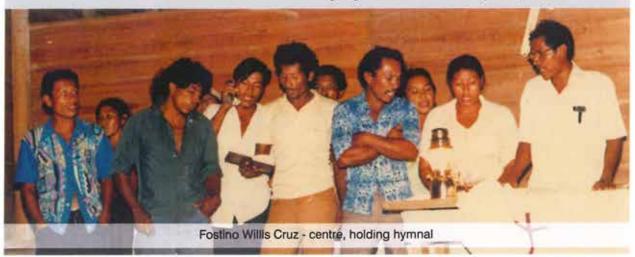
The situation of suffering that I was facing in prison, I always had in my mind, that this is part of the struggle of our people and we have hope that sometime, we will be free. And myself, will have chance to be free from the prison and will continue in the resistance against the Sandinista for our freedom.

When we were in prison, we heard that the soldiers invaded our village and killed some of our people. And we thought that some day they will have their payment for all this atrocity against our people.

When we were free from the prison, the Sandinista promised us to get us to the doctors and also to rebuild our houses, and other promises they made, but now I can say that nothing of these promises they have completed. And I want to say, because of the torture they have committed against me, I need to have some three different operations, and I feel almost blind in my eyes. But I don't know how to get any aid to face this situation. I am almost dying physically, because of all the mistreatment I got from the soldiers.

They never complete their promises and I can testify, the twenty young people that we were arrested, now, all of them are sick and useless. We are just living in a half way, and the situation is terrible because of all the torture that were committed by the security force.

That some of the agency in Puerto Cabezas are getting some aids for our people. But I was recently there in Puerto Cabezas and were seeking any medicines, and any help for our people. And everyone were closing their doors. The organization that you mentioned like CEPAD (Evangelical aid agency) and IDSIM (Moravian Church Social Program) that they are getting all kind of donations and aids from the international organization and agency. We don't see nothing. So we believe that all this group, is same like the Sandinista, they are agreed between them and working together and never help our people.



Organizations, groups even Misatan and they're the same one. Lots if you take all my story internationally and spread the reality and what is really going on with our people and the tragedy that we are facing by the Sandinista.

(1)

Fosteno Willis Cruz (F.W.C.): The first thing my hands were tied, and you can see some of the signs in here that I have, because they tied my hands. They broke my head and there is the sign too. They took away my fingernails from my foot and took in just a rough way the fingernail. They were putting us some electricity in my head and my ear, forcing us to give all the names of the warriors from our community. They were hitting us, beating us with a stick, a lumber two by four like this, that one and sometimes we were losing memories for many hours and they were forcing us to talk, even lies, in order to get the information that they were asking for.

> Many times, they were taking us from the jail house at midnight and they were taking in certain places and they was showing us that they have killed some of the other people and say, "If you don't talk, we will kill you like this, we have killed already."

> I was sentenced for six year imprisonment, but because of the Indian resistance, I was freed before that period, and I have to say that, because of these warriors, now we have some alleviation at the present time, in our villages because they protecting our community and our people.

C.C:

Could I get his name and his age?

F.W.C:

Fosteno Willis Cruz, thirty-five years old.

C.C:

Does he mind if his name is published or not published?

F.W.C:

No problem because I suffered. I have been tortured so no problem.

Interview of villagers next morning, January 13th

C.C.:

In the morning, still in Kukulaya, I am at a house that was hit by a bomb, in 1983. The crater is approximately thirty feet from the house, it's about twenty to twenty-five feet in diameter. There is about a four foot depression, however, it is swamp and it is filled with water. I was just informed that the people that were living in the house at the time, were killed when the bomb fell and that there were about fourteen bombs

dropped of five hundred pounds each.

C.C.: Okay, there was a bomb that fell beside this house, could you tell me

what year it was and what happened to the family living here?

Serefino Hamilton Levy (S.H.L.): Yes.

C.C.: What happened?

S.H.L.: Well, lot that people who stay here, only working as fish, and eat, but,

and this, all one same like a Christian. All want this, but ten people are

dead.

C.C.: In this family?

S.H.L.: Yes.

C.C.: What was the name of the family?

S.H.L.: Amanda Desmond.

C.C.: And the family?

S.H.L.: Yes.

C.C.: How many children?

S.H.L.: Yes, children and the father and mother, all one.

C.C.: What year did the bombs fall?

S.H.L.: 1983.

C.C.: How many bombs fell?

S.H.L.: The bomb is the same ammunition, five hundred pounds you dropping

in.

C.C.: Five hundred pounds - how many?

S.H.L.: The same time this bomb is dropping five hundred pounds - fourteen

bombs.

C.C.: Fourteen.

S.H.L.: Yes.

C.C.: Okay, and was there any protection for the village?

S.H.L.: Yes.

C.C.: Who protected the village?

S.H.L.: What you say?

C.C.: Protection. Did somebody protect the people? Who was here? Was

there....

S.H.L.: The same time me still here and come in here the Sandinista and they

strike over vonder.

C.C.: Was there fighters here to protect the community?

S.H.L.: Yes.

C.C.: Misurasata or anybody else?

S.H.L.: Only Misurasata did this time, this fighting, this Haulover, and Sukatpin.

C.C.: They were not here?

S.H.L.: Yeah, nothing.

C.C.: So it was only the...

S.H.L.: Only these people, these town boys this.

C.C.: The town was here by itself, when the Sandinista's attacked?

S.H.L.: Yes. And the fighting, they marched at us and only there was 22.

C.C.: I see. Okay, thank you. Could I have your name?

S.H.L.: Serefino Hamilton Levy.

C.C.: Okay, thank you.

# Medical Observations at Kukalaya

KUKALAYA, NICARAGUA - January 13, 1986

Elena Bolanos - 65 years, approximate. Patient does not know actual age. 15 days ago patient suffered closed fracture of at least one, perhaps both the radius and ulna below wrist approximately 2 inches. Major angulation of fracture area, with fracture causing distersion of skin. For 15 days the patients arm has been cushioned with a simple pad of cotton. No splint or attempt to set the arm had been made. All movement and sensation in fingers is lost. Treatment executed was to Splint with no return of feeling or loss of circulation. Issue one Tylox for pain. Recommendation: Visit physician at earliest possible ability.

Probability of Recommendation being carried out: 2 day cance trip to nearest clinic. No relatives or close friends able to conduct the trip in the immediate future. Advise patient and elderly husband that failure to seek medical attention might cause permanent loss of feeling and use of hand.



Commanders David Rodriguez and Humberto Thompson travelling from Kukalaya to Lapan

# Kukalaya to Lapan

We then left by canoe at about 6-6:30 a.m. on our way to Lapan. Traveled by canoe for about one hour. Then started our walk about 7:45 a.m. Later walked through swamp, water up to mid-thigh, then through jungle mud, finally getting to a river which we had to swim across. Fortunately, a canoe arrived at mid-point, I held on to get across, strong current.

After another one-half to three-quarters of an hour through jungle came out again to savannah. People with 4 horses there to meet us from Lapan. Brooklyn, Hank rode and I rode one for about one-half to one mile then gave up and walked for another three hours or so. Arrived in Lapan at 3:30 p.m., a very long walk without anything to eat since about 5:30 a.m.

Slept as soon as arrived, too tired to eat a prepared meal. Woke up about 5:30 p.m. and was informed that we would meet the community and fighters (MISURA?) the next day and then leave at midnight for a 5 hour walk to Sukatpin.



# Lapan

Next morning met with the community. Beautiful crowd, with a lot of oranges and orange juice offered to us during the meeting. Here again received taped testimony of repression and terrorism inflicted upon the community by the SANDINISTAS. Also, have one testimony by hand written notes from a female leader of the community who came to Brooklyn and me after the meeting and didn't want to be taped.

Met at approximately 9:00 a.m. with community. Heard testimony/accounts before Brooklyn spoke (taped - sometimes only taped interpreter because of lack of sufficient cassettes - conserving).



Agustin Lagos (A.L.): In 1981 many of our people have been killed and all our people have been repressed by the Sandinistas. But up until now, we are always in our position. We are strength, and we want to continue our struggle and we want your support in order to overcome with our resistance for our freedom.

We were feeling as orphans without any support. But with your presence now we feel that other Indian brothers and leaders are concerned about our situation and we sure that now, you will do whatever is possible, to get any support. So our struggle will go forward and we will have more strength to fight the enemy and to overcome and to conquest our rights.

The government through the Commander Tomas Borge have promised it themselves, that next February they will be recognizing our rights; they will be giving the autonomy to our people. We are not sure if that is true or not, but what we need is more support, more supplies in order to carry out our resistance, because this is the way that we can have more strength and also to force the government to recognize what is ours.



Brooklyn Rivera speaking to fighters at Lapan



Fred O'Neil Zuninga, Juan Espinal, and Elaris Lagos

In 1982, our people have been suffering a lots, by the hands of the Sandinista. And up until now all our people, don't want to continue suffering. We don't want to become slaves of the Sandinista; we want to be free. That's why we are in this resistance. All our people and elders especially, are always willing to continue our resistance, continue the fight against the Sandinista, in our land, in our bushes. To continue and never to give up since we want what is belong to our people.

If we, the old people will die, we want that our children will be free and will have their education according to our customs, and our people and the nation will be free. That's why we don't care, even if we have to die. That's all I want to say and thank you to everyone.

C.C:

Could I get his name?

A.L:

Agustin Lagos, forty-five years old.

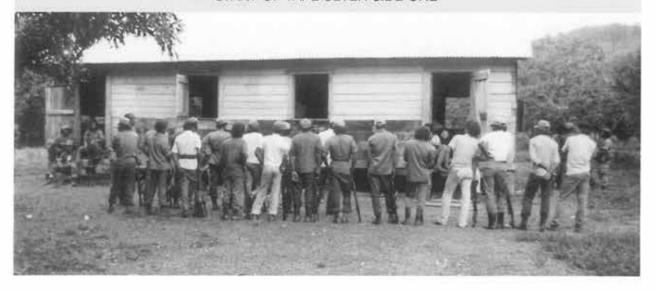
Jeremiah Fisher: (I) I just recently arrived to the community, and I want to share few things with you. First of all, I want to give my greetings to all our visitor this morning. This is the voice of the Indian people from the Atlantic Coast, what I am trying to talk about. Especially, we want to talk or to say a few words to the other Indian people who lives in other countries.

The Nicaragua Indian people are suffering a lots and all of our people are in sad condition. This sadness we don't know when will be finishing, but we know that the struggle will continue for freedom. Of course our people are strength and powerful people, and always our people are fighting and will continue fighting for their rights, for our needs, the lack of supplies, it's so bigger. All the atrocity that the Sandinista government have committed against our people, we will never finish talking all about that, because there is so many repression, that our people have faced during all these time.

We want a victory, since many of our youngsters and our people have give their lives and blood for the freedom of our land. And we don't want that all our struggle and all our fight against the Sandinista government will lose or will dilute because of lack of support. Right here, in this school building, the Sandinista soldiers capture our brother, Acalino Lagos, and beat him there, and kicked him there and kill after then. And they took in a coffin there and put right in that area and buried him there in 1982.

Because of that, we will never put on knees to the Sandinista government. We will never want to give up from our resistance because all of the suffering of our people and whatever they did and because of the denial of our rights...

END OF TAPE SIX SIDE TWO START OF TAPE SEVEN SIDE ONE



...If you start to walk from here to the Yulu community you will find lots of cross, small cross on the roads. That is some of the example of the massive massacre that the Sandinista government have been committing to our people. At that time they were saying that they were killing the Contras or the Somocista, but now we can testify that all of those people were our brothers and our people from this community and others. That they were killing poor civilian Indians from these villages.

Because of that, we rose up with arms in our hands. Because of that we had to fight in order to defend our people and defend our communities. Since then we are in this resistance and we are continuing. Of course the difficult, lots of difficulties we are facing, but we will continue because this is part of our means of survival for our nation.



Left to right: Jose Perez, Juana Mitchel, Perfecto Perez, Mecario Amadeus, unknown man, Glinis de Rosalis, unknown woman, Vincent Marchina, unknown youth, and Marta Davis



Cypriano Daram

Because of that we want to ask you to take all these messages and this information that we are providing, to other Indian people in other countries and nations, to tell about these realities that our people are facing. So maybe some of the people and organizations will be willing to support our cause, and provide some assistance, some aid to our people so we can increase with our resistance for liberation.

Sometimes they are coming into our villages and make a list of all the people that you can see here. They saying that will send to some agencies and government for aid and supplies, for the old people and for the whole villages. And we know that many of these agencies and organization and even government are sending aids and some assistance for the people, but we don't see nothing, absolutely nothing in our villages. You can see, that all the people who lives here they don't have nothing and they don't receive nothing from the government or this help or aids that are sent from other part of the world for our people.

Because of that we want to ask you once again, to you, to do whatever is possible, and not to stop, keep doing to get support and aids assistance for our people and we will be very grateful for this.

Thank you. I am Jeremiah Fisher. I am fifty-five years old.

## James Dauns: (I)

Since the Sandinista came in power 1979, they have promised us lots of many good things. That they will recognize our rights and we will be a free people in our land.

But after then, after a few years, when they were in power they start to undo all these promises and they start to repress our people and they came with their real face, as a one land.

Because of that, during these years, they were treating us as people from other countries, even that we live in our own land. They have been trained to exterminate our nation using different methods and different ways of repression against our people.

Since when the soldiers invade our community in 1982, our people lost their means or their freedom to mobilize and to cultivate our land, or to work in our own ways of living because everything were restricted by the control by the soldiers.

Right there within this building, school building, many of our young people and others from the village have been captured, and mistreated, tortured by the soldiers in 1982.



Mama Tara, Sipura Lago with Brooklyn Rivera

Since I am one of the leaders of the elders here, the Sandinista have been trying to kill me. I am a leader since Alpromisu and Misurasata in this village, and I am fighting for my people. Because of that, they try in many ways, how to kill me during this situation.

Right there in that building, within that building, inside that building, I was kicked by the soldiers and I was mistreated by all the soldiers that came to our community.

At that time Acalino Lagos was with me there, in that building and he was killed as my other brother said already.

Because of that, since then I feel useless, and I cannot work for my children, to get what we need, for my family, since I am sick and because of all the mistreatment and the torture that I suffered.

After all these atrocity against our people, they saying, "well, now we will give you the autonomy for your people", and at the present time they are discussing about this autonomy plan in order to impose against our people. So some people, if they really don't analyze what is happen, will think that the Miskitu are united with the Sandinista through this autonomy plan.

But if you really analyzed what has happened, of course we are not, and we will never get together or support this autonomy, because we have learned that this is just lies and they are not giving what is our rights.

We want our real rights. We want our own leaders, the real leaders of our people, that we have already.

They have already lied our people for many years and at the present time we won't permit them to continue lying and fooling around our people.

There is a small road that we have to get to Bilwi, but we can not travel all the time or use this road because its sometimes, its useless, the bridge have been destroyed and we cannot use, so we have more difficulty because of that.

They are saying that with the autonomy they will recognize all our rights. But that is pure lies, because since now, we are saying that there is nothing happen and we never see nothing from the government in our villages. Even those things or aids that are sent by other people, we don't see nothing, not at all with our people. So we don't trust to them.

In the past, we were going to Bilwi and we were getting all what we need, our basic needs in the village that we don't produce. But now, all the store it belongs to the government and are controlled through what the government calls enterprise, Enebas (government agency which controlled food distribution), and they control these foods and they have all the prices very high, very expensive, everything, and they are trying to control the people through these goods, that they are bringing to sell for the people.

So because of that all of the communities in this area of the prairie we are facing very difficult situation because there is no way how we can take with us our things that we have in the village, and take to Bilwi and sell there and get some of the things that we need for our children.

The other thing I want to say, it's from the north, in the north, they are promoting lots of division and creation of groups on behalf of the Indian people. But we don't want such a things. We have our own organization and we want all our people be together and we don't want that our people will be divided. Especially this is happening in the north, in Honduras.

Since our fighters are facing lots of limitations because of lack of supplies, some of them they are in talks with the Sandinista in Yulu village. Because they were abandoned from the other leaders in Honduras. In two years, they never sent nothing and they don't know how to get food, or medicine, whatever they need. So because of that, there is this situation that it's undermining our struggle and our position. But our people, and myself, are still in the position how to go forward in this struggle. That is our aim and that is what we want to do. And we are looking different ways and different opportunity to go forward in this struggle that we have.

We see that if we leave our warriors be alone, then they start to get confused and they start to make mistakes and such a things that are happening in Yulu, so we cannot leave them alone, because they are orphans and we need to continue leading them in the right direction of our struggle.

So thanks for your presence here, that you came to visit us, our people, and we ask you to take us, our boys and our needs, to the international and try to do whatever, its in your hand for our needs for our people.

Well, I heard whatever you said and promised to do for our cause and I will be so glad whatever you do to support our struggle. So many thanks for that commitment with our people.

Fifty-six years old, James Dauns.

# Unidentified Woman: (I) v

Also, my situation that I have suffered during the visit of the soldiers when, even I am an old lady in this village. I was captured and threatened by the soldiers to hit me with six bullets and kill me. That is they threat me during that time.

Also I lost one of my sons. Because of that I have this mourning in my head, but I don't afraid of the Sandinista. I am still working to support the warriors and I am doing whatever its possible for my people and for my warriors and will never give up from what I am doing, cause I am not afraid.

I am an Indian woman, and I am proud to be Indian. Because of that I not afraid to die, if its necessary to die for my people, I am willing to do. And because of that I will keep doing in behalf of my people and because we are fighting for our freedom.

When the Sandinista soldiers came, they took us from our house, all the people during three in the morning, and they took us everyones, even the little kids of nine days that were born and took us in a Catholic church building and if we protest, they were threaten us to kill us, everyone's there.

And also they were separating the women from the men. The women were in this building. And you know why they were doing that? Because they were committing different rapes and atrocity against our people and they were hiding, that they didn't want the men to look, or to see what they were doing against the women and by themselves here in this building.

Now they are using this autonomy words, but it's in our own language (klauna). They are saying we will recognize all these things, but we don't want this kind of autonomy, even if they are using in our own language, we don't believe them. What we can see, its they are still repressing our people, they're still capturing our people and trying to destroy us, so we don't want this kind of autonomy of the government.

Just one and one leader which is you and we follow you and we have hope in your leadership, but now the government are trying to bring and impose different names and different persons like Hazel Law, like Mirna Cunningham and all these puppet that they are working for the government. We don't know who they are. If Hazel Law really loved our people, she must be with you and take in your belt (gestured to pistol) and walk with you all the time, and support our interest. But she is now with the government and we don't know who she is....

### END OF TAPE SEVEN SIDE ONE START OF TAPE SEVEN SIDE TWO

## Boramay Louis: (I)

...the means and the possibility to get whatever we need. The basic needs for our family and our community. But the Sandinista, since the Sandinista came in power, in this country, all whatever we had have been destroyed, including our livestock, our fruit trees and because of that, now we are more poor.

In the past, we had animals like cows, pigs, chickens and others but now the Sandinista came into this village and took over all these things that we had.

All the articles, like my shirts and other clothes, are very expensive. For instance a shirt costs twenty-five to thirty thousand each one, so we don't know where to get those money, to get the clothing that we need for our people.

In this entire village, we don't see what is sugar or what is salt. Because of that we are very sad, since we are suffering a lot.

We know that they have all those things, there in their store, but they don't want to give us nothing; including the medicine, which is very important for our people here. But we don't know where to find a pill for all our people because there is no way we can get them.

Many of our people, a lot of old people are supporting the resistance of our warriors. Because of that, our people are supporting and giving whatever they have to the warriors. Feeding them and sharing what they have. And in the past the Sandinista killed many of our people, arguing that they are supporting the warriors.

Boramay Louis, forty-two years



After the meeting (approximately 1 p.m.), an elderly looking lady came up and through Brooklyn explained that she had been persecuted by the SANDINISTAS, that she personally saw people killed at the incarceration centre at Bilwi, that there were also drownings and hanging people by the neck then drowning them. Because of these and other atrocities, she supports the resistance; has five sons in the movement. Hopes Indians everywhere can send them aid in whatever form possible. They will never give up the resistance and will never accept the government's autonomy or the imposed Indian leaders, such as Hazel Lau, Myrna Cunningham and Armando Rojas Smith. She has been a leader of this community for the past five years and supports MISURASATA and their leader, Brooklyn Rivera, "also tell our sad story to the world. This is our land, Indian land, not SANDINISTA land, Cuban land or Russian land, or anybody else's, this is our land and we and our fighters can live in it and defend it ourselves."

Also, they have no voice to get out to the Indigenous world, but through me can now have information spread, the three Indigenous visitors brings them a message that they are not isolated and alone—very grateful.

NOTE: Another village testimony that Brooklyn is loved by fighters, villagers and leaders. All express great emotions of happiness and when down to serious business, express clearly their resolve to continue the resistance and reject all government manipulations, including "Autonomia".

### End of notes.

In 1973 the Miskitu and Sumu Indians formed an Indian organization called ALPROMISU (Alliance for progress of the Miskitu and Sumu), which was a founding member of the WCIP in 1975. After the SANDINISTA revolution's success in 1979, at the urging of President Ortega, the Indian organization at their 1979 Annual Assembly changed their name to recognize the revolution. This was after Mr. Ortega failed to convince them to abandon their Indianness and separate forms of organization and set-up mass organizations as was being done by the non-Indian Nicaraguans. Hence the name MISURASATA which stands for Miskitu, Sumu, Rama, Sandinista, Aslatatanka (working together).

With the failed assimilation policies and the start of the prepression by the SANDINISTAS in 1981, a group of youths, lead by Steadman Fagoth, cut-off "Sandinista working together" (SATA) and formed an armed organization known as MISURA, which later joined the Contras in their fight to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. MISURA is not community based and in 1985 changed its name to KISAN.

MISURASATA which continues to be the legitimate representative of the Indian peoples remains community based, with traditional village leaders forming the political base, along with the leaders currently in exile in Costa Rica. The armed resitance of MISURASATA takes its direction from that leadership.

In the interim, the government has appointed village leaders who are being used to carry out the government's initiatives, along with giving legitimacy to government actions, such as their autonomy project, which are meant to bolster the government's image abroad. The government also in July 1984 created the organization MISATAN which is made up of Indian government employees.

Later on in the afternoon, met with fighters of the community and they incorporated into the MISURASATA structure. We were informed at about 6:00 p.m. that we wouldn't leave until 4 a.m. the next morning as there were two trucks to transport us to Sukatpin and Yulu, which we otherwise would take two days to walk to, 4-5 hours to Sukatpin and another 3-4 hours from there to Yulu.







▲ Fighter - at Lapan

# **Medical Observations at Lapan**

LAPAN, Nicaragua - January 14, 1986

peeling/flaking skin. Skin is discolored. Severe hair loss. Symptoms began 2 years ago when patient's 22 year old son was killed in a nearby village. Patient states that his son was killed by MISURA indian fighters who accused him of collusion with the Sandinistas. Patient says that as he carried the body of his son on his back for the trip back home...blood from the body trickled all over him and subsequently his present symptoms began. Relatives say that he is feverish, but I decide against palpation without gloves and other sterile equipment. Patient complains of chills and is under a wool blanket in the heat of the day. His face is swollen, eyes puffed and recessed behind eyelids.

No vitals taken with lack of protective material preventing safe examination. RECOMMENDATION: See Physician as soon as possible.

MATILDA NORMAN BECKFORD- Age 38. Patient complains of severe c-spine pain while working during the day. Sometimes the pain becomes so severe that she can only turn her head from side to side by physically grasping her head with both hands and turning it. Pain radiates to lower back. Palpation reveals significant swelling in lower c-spine. Painful for patient to sit. Patient says pain began two years ago when she had to double her daily workload because her husband was incapacitate for 7 years previous to that. RECOMMENDATION: See Physician.

LYDIAN LARGOS BLUCHA - Age 70 to 80, patient is unsure. Patient has been blind for 35 years. Two weeks ago caught a fever and has been unable to break with local remedies. Complains of pain over entire body and is only minimally ambulatory, able to complete short walks around the house before succumbing to pain. Patient has never seen a physician, ever in her life. Loud wheezing in both upper lungs. RESPIRATION: 52 Shallow PULSE: 80 Strong/Regular SKIN: Normal BLOOD PRESSURE: 158/98 TEMP: 37 C

BLUCHA(Continued-Supplemental) - Patient states that her husband
Ecidero Blucha, age 82, was beaten by Sandinista soldiers in 1984
and died of his injuries a few months later. Patient states reason
for the beating was that her husband was suspected of having given aid to
indian resistance fighters.

ALBERTO LARGOS - Age 5. When boy was 1 year old, was subjected to severe itching on his legs, which he scratched into open sores. Now presenting 90% coverage by scabs and sores on his legs below the knees, throughout feet. Legs inflamed. Parents state they took the child to a Sandinista doctor in Puerto Cabezas 1 year ago, but were given no diagnosis, treatment or medication.

TREATMENT: Issue betadyne solution mix, 1 quart, and suggest daily swabbing with the solution until exhausted. Also urge child not to scratch and cover legs with clean wrappings after each swabbing.

RECOMMENDATION: See physician as: soon as possible.

JAMES DARAM - Age 56. Complains of c-spine pain resulting from Sandinista soldiers twisting his head and neck during a torture session two years ago. Patient exhibits normal range of movement, but also complains of pain from "crushed throat" while having been choked. Patient states he was a church singer before the torture incident, and no can no longer sing or shout. Patient's voice is hoarse and weak sounding. Palpation of c-spine reveals semi hard mass slightly to the left of center and at the level of the 4th cervical vertebrae.

LEONSA GARCIA - Age 36. Productive cough for 7 months. Patient saw doctor who issued 30 pills, for use 3 a day. Pills have been no help and condition has continued to worsen. Now suffering pain in back and trembling. PULSE: 96 Strong and Regular LUNGS: Clear BP: 108/78 TEMP:37.1 RECOMMENDATION: See physician.

MIRA PICKTON GARCIA - Age 15 months. Fever for one week now, more at night, less in the day. TEMP: 39.5 C (Rectal).

Rectal temp agitates patient who cries and becomes irritated, screaming. PULSE: 156

RECOMMENDATION: See Physician

MAKARIA RIVERA GARCIA - Age 60 to 70, patient is not sure.

Patient complains that for 4 years it has felt like her "heart is working too hard." PULSE:72 Weak BP: 126/88 RESPIRATIONS: 32 Shallow Patient exhibits distended arm veins.

Lungs are clear, but capacity appears diminished with shallow breaths.

A deep breath only brings half what a normal person would inhale.

Saw Sandinista doctor 1 year ago, was issued 6 pills but no diagnosis.

Patient complains that all people who go see the Sandinista doctors all get the same pills, regardless of ailment. Also complains that no injections are ever given to the indians.

### ALSO TREAT TODAY:

NANK ADAMS - Member of party. American. Insect bites becoming inflamed and occasionally broken open. Treat with commercial application.

- 8 COMBATANTS AND VILLAGERS WITH HEADACHES Issue aspirin.
- 3 COMBATANTS Badly blistered feet from combat boots of the wrong sizes and without socks. Long march previous day.



Elminicia Member and her two children with Monico Osa

## Sukatpin

Woke-up at 3:30 a.m. and started our march at 4 a.m. arriving at about 5:30 a.m. at the river where the trucks were waiting. After bathing in the river and in daylight we set out for Sukatpin, arriving about 7:30 a.m. and within 10 minutes community members were flocking to greet Brooklyn and MISURASATA resistance forces. Started the meeting at 8 a.m. in the Moravian church, which was completely packed; elders, children and in-between.

Heard testimony, on tape, that there were several mass graves in the area of people/leaders murdered by the SANDINISTAS. That there was one on the way to Yulu, near to Yulu.



Brooklyn Rivera addressing Sukatpin villagers.

#### George Sedan: (I)

We are grateful for your visit here in our communities and you took us in surprise this early morning, but we feel very grateful with your presence. All our people here, the women, the old people, the children know what's have been happen against our people in this community.

We are very grateful because we have our leader with us, among us. Since our resistance, all our leader have left to Honduras and since then we didn't have chance to see them or talk to them but now our leader, Rivera is coming with some other Indian leaders from other country and because of that we are honoured with the presence of this group.

Because of the repression that our people have suffered by the hands of the Sandinista, all our people had to flee to the bush and spend several days there. We built our small ranch there, in those area of the bush and we suffered a lots. Many of our children were sick and they're still sick now and we don't know how to get any aid in this community. Our people are still suffering because of the repression and all the restriction that this community are suffering.

But with the presence of our leader we are very happy because we know that he is still leading our struggle and trying to take the right direction of our struggle in order to get victory in this resistance that we are facing daily.

They are sending their people here to make many promises to our people, offering lots of things, including trucks, roads, medicines and other aids. But our people never see nothing, absolutely nothing here. We are abandoned here ourselves and just with the support of our warriors. And our subsistence activity that we are doing daily, we are surviving here. And we want to beg you to do whatever you can, for the cause of our people, to support our struggle. And we hope that you will return freely and without any incident, back to your home and do whatever its in your possibility, for our people in resistance.

George Sedan - sixty years.

#### Mr. Penak: (I)

Many thanks. I want to express many thanks for the presence of people that I never saw them before, not I am meeting and talking to them.

When the Sandinista front arrived in this community, they start to mistreat our people, even were kicking us and were killing us, our people, and we suffered a lot since they came to our land in this country.

When you visit the Yulu community, you can see there is a massive grave that the Sandinista soldier have killed our people in a massive way. All our children, our young people have been killed during all these years.

When we were in this community, the soldiers arrived very early morning, when it still dark and they captured our young people and tied their neck, riding the horses, they were taking these young people as animals, in this road to the other direction.

The soldiers didn't make any differences between the elderly, old people, the pregnant women, all the women, even children. But they mistreat every one in discriminatory, to our people and we suffered lots. All the people that you can see here in this building.

Then later on, they came, one of our commander and he meet with our people and he understood all our needs and our problems. So our people, decide to leave this community and go to Yulu community. And he lead us and protect us our poor people, when we were mobilizing in this journey to Yulu. In 1982, the first invasion and occupation of the village.



C.C.:

And the march last year, was '85?

Penak:

'85, but the people decided to leave the village in '85, last year.

Russell Means:

How many in the mass grave?

Penak:

Twelve. Just in one grave and there is others in the middle of the road, that have been massacred. Others graves there also.

C.C.:

What about the disappearances?

Penak:

Yes, there are a few of them among our people, but have been captured by the soldiers and then disappear from prison.

But now we have some chance, some alleviation in our villages because of our young people, our children, took up in arms and fighting for our rights, defending our community and our people. Because of that, now we have some free movement and survival in this

community.



C.C.:

Could he tell how long they stayed out of the village last year, when they

came back?

Penak:

Two months, in this community, October and November. Sixty-five

years old.....Penak.

C.C.:

Quarter to twelve, the meeting is over. Brooklyn, Alphonso and myself went outside and shook the peoples' hands, one by one, as they came

out.

#### Some evidence on the disappeared taken later in the day

#### Andrea Hulsa:

About three years and a half ago, about two thousand soldiers of the EPS (Sandinista army) went to my home village, which is about one and a half hours walk from here and its called Klingna. Someones, I don't know exactly who, denounced to the soldiers that my husband was a Contra, was working with the warriors, supporting the warriors. So the soldier went to my home, and immediately capture my husband and he was barefoot at that moment and took right away with them. Tied their hands and carried any place, that I don't know where.

Later on, I went to Puerto Cabezas and asked the soldiers there and the security about the whereabouts of my husband, but no one's told me, they no answer me my request. Someone told me that my husband is supposed to be in Honduras with the Contra. Then, after a few days or weeks, I went back to Puerto Cabezas, still insisting to find about my husband, but they never give me any positive answer. So later on, his brother, my husband's brother, went to Managua to look for him in 1984 and the government people told him that he was there among the hundred of prisoners, who were there, in prison.

But, when all of them have been released by the amnesty my husband still didn't appear. So it's clear that now my husband is one of the disappeared persons and my situation very desperate, since I have nine children, three boys and six girls and I don't have mother or father or other relatives on myself and I don't know how to survive. My kids they are still very small and they cannot help me in any way. So that is the situation that I want to present, the disappear of my husband.

C.C:

And how old was he?



Left to right: Adistan Ocian (Iliti), Commander Logan, Oveno Torres, unkown, Pablo Logos, and Imyula (in cab of truck)

Hulsa:

Forty.

Unidentified male:

Manasis Hulsa - forty.

C.C:

And it was your brother that disappeared?

Hulsa:

Yes.

C.C:

You went to Managua to check?

Hulsa:

Yes.

After the meeting, Bob and I looked at a couple people needing medical attention, which was the case in every village. Bob has kept a record of all the people he has examined. Left on the trucks, which happened to be SANDINISTA IFA food transport trucks, to Yulu at about 2-2:30 p.m. and stopped at the mass grave for photos.

C.C:

We are standing beside two crucifixes. Could you tell me what this signifies?

B.R:

Yes. In this place, in 1982 and sometime July, the Sandinista soldiers capture a group of Indian leaders and community people. And this is the grave of massive massacre by the soldiers. Village leaders from Yulu, from Karata, from Klingna, Dakban and others of this area, have been killed by the soldiers, after being tortured and after being killed. So, they buried everyone in just one hole in this area, that we can see. Twelve bodies have been buried here and our people put this cross and meaning, well, there is the Indian leader been killed by the soldiers.

C.C:

Thank you.



On way from Sukatpin to Yulu, Condor, Hank Adams and Federico Esobar (Raton).

# Medical Observations at Sukatpin

JULIAN LAMPSON - Age 15. Complains of fever. TEMP: 38 C. Says fever was worse yesterday. Also complains of headache.

PRANSISCO GARCIA - Age 31. 3 days ago slashed his leg with a machete. Bandaged at the time with no medicine. Removal of bandage reveals 3 inch gash on kneecap with underlying patella fracture and extruded muscle tissue extending 1.5 inches outside the wound. Palpation produces extreme pain reaction by patient and evidences crepitus in the area of the wound. Right toes and foot are unresponsive and paralyzed. Found a large leaf of tobacco on the wound under the bandages and wonder if dullness of feeling in skin around the wound is due to this traditional treatment.

TREATMENT: WASH WOUND WITH BETADYNE SOLUTION. BANDAGE AND SPLINT.
REPLACE TOBACCO WITH PRESH LEAF. ISSUE 1-TYLOX FOR PAIN.
RECOMMENDATION: See physician as soon as possible.

Note: It is a nine hour walk to the nearest place to catch a truck to Puerto Cabezas. However, after speaking with friends, they agree to take him out on horseback.



Left to right: Raily Wilson (Barbon), unknown, Bonel Celinto (Apache), unknown, Waldo, Sanders Bonds (Caiman), Centino Gamboa, and unknown.

### Yulu

Arrived Yulu at about 4 p.m. Before meeting, fighters and a lot of people came to the house to greet Brooklyn; elders, children, etc.

Brooklyn met with some of the MISURA fighters. In meantime, I found village leader who was at the house where Pantin died. There were eight of them in a bedroom, including Juan Salgado (Serpiente) and Pantin was getting off the bed turning to sit on the floor when the pistol fell out of his pants pocket, discharging, bullet going through his chest and into the ceiling. Took several pictures. Also took photo of meeting with fighters. They explained to Brooklyn their dealings with the SANDINISTAS (i.e. peace talks).

Eduardo Pantin was the leading commander of the troops in Yulu and surrounding area. These fighters, numbering about 300 were aligned with MISURA. Just days before the fourth round of peace talks in

Columbia on May 25 and 26, 1985, the Nicaraguan government was successful in arriving at a one month cease-fire with Commander Pantin. However, in June 1985 Pantin died. The government's two original responses were that it was an accidental death and also that he was assassinated by the CIA. MISURASATA on the other hand accused the SANDINISTA security forces of executing Pantin.

Since the death of Pantin, his subcommanders have continued dealing with the government, with the two major leaders being Serpiente and Rafaga, both of whom were in Bilwi during our visit to Yulu, although both had previously sent messages that they wanted to meet with Mr. Rivera. A message had been sent to Bilwi to inform them that Brooklyn was in Yulu, but MISURASATA for security reasons couldn't remain in Yulu for a longer period of time, while waiting for a response from them.



After supper, starting at about 8:00-8:30 p.m., Brooklyn met with three elders until about 11:30 p.m. in our bedroom. They explained what had taken place in Honduras as they had been there.

Due to the short notice of the pending trip, as explained in the introduction, I was not able to prepare adequately or get a proper briefing as to what I should expect to experience on the trip in terms of necessary provisions. As a consequence, I did not take a jacket or a blanket which lead to great discomfort.

In the evening I had a chance to interview Hank Adams about testimony he received through conversations with people at Ariswatla on January 10th.

C.C.:

Tonight is January 15, and I am sitting here with Hank Adams and Hank is going to relate to me conversations held with people at Ariswatla, on January the 10th.

H.A .:

Late on the evening of January 10th, we arrived at Ariswatla from Kuamwatla on the Prinzapolka River and we went to this outdoor sheltered eating area where the community had began preparing and serving food to the fighting men and Misurasata warriors. And in the course of that gathering, a number of people of the Ariswatla community came up to myself and Russell Means and introduced themselves and began telling us various things that had happened in that community and nearby.

Primarily, actions taken by the Sandinista army against local Miskitu Indian people. The people who introduced themselves first were Eduardo Vass and his wife, who were the people who were essentially in charge of preparing the food for the Misurasata warrior forces and Brooklyn Rivera. Essentially, they wanted us to know of certain atrocities that they said had been committed against that village. And they said in 1982 that the Sandinista army in a large force had invaded the village and came at four o'clock in the morning and started rounding up people and then had taken all the young men, primarily in their teens, into one building, tied them up and began beating and torturing them.

And that in that village, nine young men had been beaten to death and killed, either in that house, or shot in escaping that house, during the course of that initial invasion of Ariswatla by the Sandinista army. The youngest of those who had been killed was twelve and the other ones who were killed ranged in age to about twenty.

They did tell us of more recent atrocities, not in that village, in the next or nearby villages. One involving the burying of a small group, again saying somewhere between half a dozen and twenty people, burying them alive in an open grave which was probably dug by the victims themselves.

And then, within the last year, meaning late '84 through '85, somewhere in that period between late 1984 and the middle of 1985, that another person nearby had been tortured and immolated or burned to death.

And it was not only Mr. Vass and his wife, who had related these things, but a group of other men from the Ariswatla community had gathered around in sort of a semi-circle and there were about eight of them filling in details. They did talk about the problems of not being able to go outside their communities in order to secure their livelihood from the natural produce or the cropland produce because they were vulnerable to being arrested or killed or disappeared if they were found outside their villages which remains a proscribed or prohibited activity.



And they said that they had real difficulties in getting goods from Puerto Cabezas which was the main distribution point for a monthly allowance, or monthly quota of goods. They complained that everything that was allowed them, they had to buy and almost no one had any money any more, and no means of securing the money to buy the allowed food stuffs and other stores because they just can't make money any more when they are limited to the confines of their village. And then, also, they complained of the excessive prices of those rations that are allowed on a monthly basis, to essentially each family group. But the rations are there, but they are made inaccessible by either cost or lack of money on the part of the people.

At Ariswatla, they discussed the political situation on the Atlantic Coast among the Indian people, and uniformly, the eight adults who had approached us, said that there was just one organization - Misurasata. They said, "you know that, who is Misatan? Who is Kisan? We have never heard of them. We never known of them, they have not been here. We've not sent people to them, they don't represent us." They said there is just one organization and that is Misurasata. And its leader, Brooklyn Rivera, is our leader in the sense of representations to the Nicaragual government, or in representation of the one organization that they recognize - Misurasata.

They were very emphatic in this. They said, as other said after them, in other villages, "Who are these people, like Mirna Cunningham and even Hazel Law? We don't know them, they have not been here. I mean we've heard their names, we know who they are, but we don't know them. They aren't our representatives." Again, in support of their statements that there was but one organization that they recognize as their representative, and that was Misurasata.

C.C.:

Okay, that's it?

H.A.:

Yeah.

### Thursday, January 16, 1986

Had first good night's sleep in five days, scored a blanket so didn't freeze. Woke up last, about 7 a.m. (Jan. 16th). Had breakfast at about 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. Brooklyn started meeting with the Yulu fighters at about 9 a.m. There were about 50 fighters present, two whom I had met before: Apache in Managua and the other in Bilwi. Brooklyn spoke to them about 2 hours, even during a twenty minute rain. Afterwards, the three visitors spoke, then we went to the Moravian church in the same yard and started meeting with the community. During the meeting with fighters, there were 30-40 villagers listening from the front of the church. Meeting in the church started at about 11:40 a.m. After prayer, and the introductory remarks by Brooklyn, the three guests spoke. We then waited for some testimony or crowd reaction (about 300 people at meeting). After about five minutes of hushed discussion, man from another village came forward and spoke about the repression by SANDINISTAS suffered by their village, relating that eighteen young men had been arrested and since then only eight have returned, they have the other ten listed as disappeared. A young man read off the list of the disappeared and then I asked for the list, which he gave me. The following list was provided by Eldred Smith, from Maniwatla and Roger Lockwood, 29 years old, from Mile 43:

- 1. Emiliano Ruiz Pasquier
- 2. Electesanio Dauns
- 3. Claudio Mendes
- Emiliano Mendes
- Valentin Pasquier
- Lorenzo Pasquier
- Pedro Gonzales
- 8. Agafito Almanza
- Gregorio Jiowel
- 10. Netan Ubit

(All of the above were young men, in the range of 16-20 years. They were from Maniwatla).

Then after another long silence, the village leader got up and stated that his people were too scared to talk, but that he would, as he personally suffered repression. He then related his personal experience, describing the torture he underwent by the SANDINISTA security forces in Bilwi and also the machine-gunning of villagers. They then gave some names of those executed and said that they would provide a list. A list was then given to me by an elder who said some of those on the list were buried in the mass grave.

#### Elder Smith: (I)

The first time the Sandinista invaded our community, which is Maniwatla, was the 22nd of July of 1982. They went to our community with full up six trucks, and they start to kill our animals, our cattle, livestock and our pigs, and whatever we had in our village and start to eat all these things that they have killed.

Then, they invite us in a meeting in the church, and then they present a list of names of supposed Contra revolutionary, in our community, that have been working against the government. I don't know who gave this list to them, maybe some of ears from somewhere, and they start to capture or detain eighteen persons from the community.

With this eighteen persons, after few years, nine of them have been released. But, there is the other nine persons, that we never seen again, so they are disappeared persons and I want to give the names.

#### (Names provided):

Emiliano Ruiz, Electesanio Dauns, Claudio Mendes, Emiliano Mendes, Valentin Pasquier, Lorenzo Pasquier, Pedro Gonzales, Agafito Almanza, Gregorio Jiowel, Netan Ubit.



MISURA Fighters (Kisan por la Paz)



The parents for these nine person are still looking to them. All the time asking to the government. And the answer it's, they say one thing, one time, "well, we have in prison," other times they say, "we don't know where they are." They don't exist, so up til now these nine people are still disappeared.

Since then our problem is still going along by the time and they always going to our villages and capture our people, and they say, "let's go to the bush, to seek the Contras." And they took many of our people, and going to the bush and spend several days - five, eight days there, looking for Contras supposedly, in the bush.

Because of that, in our community there is no cows, and other animals and because of that, we don't have even the possibility to plant flowers in our community, because there is no shit of cows. And also, we don't have meat and we the Miskitu people have our custom to hunt and get our own meat. But there is now no way we can have this kind of possibility for our subsistence. And recently, just few days ago, I don't remember exactly the day, one of our people, he was fishing in the river and the soldiers went and captured and tied their hands for almost half a day. And they did the same way to other person, who is widow in the village, after have been killed the husband - mistreat to this woman from the village.

And also, we don't have the chance to hunt with our dogs, in the bush. This is because we have recent bad incident in the village, when one of our young people with their dog went to the bush to hunt. He found some of the bomb that was buried by the soldiers and exploded and killed him in the bush.

In our community, there is a area that is restricted by the soldiers and they control it by themselves. We cannot go in through there to utilize our land or to have movement in that community because they have a base camp in that community.

All our people from the community, they don't want to see the soldiers there in that village. There is a base camp near to the community, in a hill, and all our people they don't want to see the soldiers there.

That's all. Elder Smith, sixty-five years old.

#### **Britania Woo:** (1)

Many of my people are afraid to talk, but myself, I was once in prison so I don't care to talk.

First of all, I have say on the 8th of March 1982, the Sandinista soldiers captured me and took me in prison, and tied my hands in Puerto Cabezas.

My hands were tied and I was put in a prison, in the security of state, Bilwi. They start to interrogate me, and accusing me saying that "I am the head of the Contras in Yulu, that I am giving training to the young people, and I am a leader in this village and fighting against the government."

When they asked me all about this, I never say a words to them because I was willing to die myself and even that I know that my young people were in the bush fighting. I was not ready to tell them, or accuse them, or denounce them about their presence.

They beat me there as they wanted and also they destroyed one of my eyes, which is blind, now I cannot see. And after all these torture, I was released the 8th of May and I returned to my village here in Yulu.

Then I had chance to work in the health center here, in the community, and the next month in June, there was a flood in this Wawa River and no ones couldn't pass the river and the Sandinista soldiers surround all the village of Maniwatla.

Then after Maniwatla, they came to this community and start to capture all the young people. Among those there are four of my relatives. And since then, we never see again those young people, four and other group, from about twenty and twenty-three years old, that have been captured from this village.

And there are lots of other wives and relatives that are missing their families and we have the names and let's see if there is the list of the names of all disappeared from this community.

(Names provided):

Michael Amadias, Astron Amadias, Billy Armstrong, Thomas Pineer, Bernando Chau, Larry Willington, Arbot Willington, Emilio Willington, Eman Willington.

So they captured all of these, our people from this village, tied their hands and then we never see them again among our people. And also few others of our people have been captured, tied their hands and killed them right there - machine gunning them, close to the village.

C.C:

Do they have any names of those?



B.R:

They will make the list before I go.

Woo:

Then they started to concentrate the women inside the church and also took....

#### END OF TAPE EIGHT SIDE ONE START OF TAPE EIGHT SIDE TWO

Woo continued:

...They had a hole there, in a piece of wood, and then put my head into that hole, my neck put it right there. And then, they had water in a pan and put my head into the water, so I was drown into the water.

Since I didn't say no words, they start to kick me with their feet, and just right over me and start to put pressure and hit me with their feet, jump up.

After then, when they didn't hear nothing from me, they took me with a shovel in midnight, in certain empty area. Then they forced me to make my own grave, my own hole and then say, "well, stand up, right there, and start to talk. Otherwise we will bury you in this hole, alive."

Then they took me out my shirt and say, "stand straight and we will shoot you." I say, "better kill me good, otherwise I have a large family and they will do whatever to do to fight against you." And because of that they hit me - beat me with the machine gun that they had in their hands.

And also, they put me some string things, like electric things in my head and also in my penis. Well, that's the way I can describe all the torture, that I have been facing.

C.C:

Can I get his name and age?

B.R.:

Britania Woo, sixty years old.

C.C:

Do they mind if their name is used?

Woo:

No problem, I just worry about my children, but I hope this will help some way, to spread the reality, of what is really happening to our people.







C.C:

What about the first gentleman?

Discussion in Miskitu.

C.C:

What did he say?

B.R:

I don't know, he say.

C.C:

O.K., well we won't use it.

Angele Bayo Lockwood: In 1981, I was the pastor of the community of Bihmuna in Coco
(I) River. In that year, the community of Bihmuna been relocate in Tasba Pri
area with other communities.

I was with my family for nine days in the relocation camp of Truhlaya. My family were sick and my wife almost died in that camp. Because of that we decided to leave the camp. But the government people didn't permit us to leave the camp. But later on, I had chance to hide and leave the camp by our own way.

Then I came to my home village, which is Maniwatla, and spend several days there. Since my wife is from Seven Benk community, we went there to visit our family in that community.

So when we were traveling to that village we met with a group of soldiers of the Sandinista. So they arrest us in that place and took us back to the community. During those same days, there was a big confrontation between the Indian warriors and the Sandinista soldiers in Seven Benk and about four days fights. So I was naked there, and tied my hands by the soldiers and were there for several days in prison, in that situation.

So after the fight, they told me, because they lose lots of soldiers in that fight, of Seven Benk, they have to take me with them in prisonment. I was in prison for over two months and a half in Bilwi. There I was tortured and mistreated by the soldiers.

C.C.:

Could he describe some of that torturing?

A.B.L.:

My hands were tied and then they beat me, in my head. And also, the same time my feet were tied and all my arms too, so they was beating me daily.

C.C.:

How?

A.B.L.:

They were using their hands and also their feet to kick me and to beat me. They were punishing us and tying our hands and just laid us down on the ground for many hours there, starving and naked.

They were threaten us frequently, saying that they would be killing me because many of their soldiers have been kill in that fight. But thanks to God, they never killed me and now I can be in this situation.

After then, they took me in prison in Managua. And I was there for two years imprisonment. After then I have been released by the decree of amnesty, but I face many kind of illness in my body because of the mistreatment.

Since then, I am trying to get some medical assistance of care, but there is no way that I can get a cure for my body, still with lots of sickness. Still parts of my body are swollen and I feel pains in many part of my body and because of that I am looking to get some medical care, but it's very difficult, no way I can find it.

C.C.:

As well he mentioned that he is a pastor, a Moravian pastor and that he also witnessed and knows other pastors being arrested and I believe, some killed. Could he relate some of that to us?

A.B.L.:

When the soldiers captured me, at the same time captured other pastor called Povis Simon with me in that area. At the time we were arrested together. And he was killed later on by the soldiers.

C.C.:

Does he know how?

A.B.L.:

He was with the soldiers there, right in the confrontations and because the fight was going on, he tried to save, you know, he tried to leave the area where he was and the soldiers shoot him and killed right there.

Other pastor called Olpilario Uten. These pastor invite some of the soldiers to his home to have some food in community of Kuakuil. But later on, these same soldiers captured him and took him to prison in Puerto Cabezas. And he was killed right there inside of the jail house. And that's happen March 19, 1981 at one in the morning.

When my wife has been trying to visit me in prison and the soldiers were saying, "no, you cannot come to see him, there is no permission."

And they were arguing that I am a Contra revolutionary and because of that, I don't have rights for any visit and anything that my wife was carrying for myself, just the soldiers took all and never gave to me.

Unless if my wife send through the Red Cross, I could receive some of these things. My wife suffered a lots there in Managua, trying to visit me. She spent many times there, in a whole day in the sun, trying to have some permission to visit me, but never have succeed. Everyday from seven in the morning, to four in the afternoon, daily.

C.C.:

Doing what?

A.B.L.:

We were cleaning garbages and we were making ditches and we were cutting bush, and other things like that we have been doing.

C.C.:

You also mentioned earlier that there was thirteen pastors that you know of that were arrested. Do you know if they were all released?

A.B.L.: Yes, I know that all have been released.

C.C.: All thirteen?

A.B.L.: Four of them, they were forced stay in Managua and were denied to let

them come to the region. Then this last year, two of them were allowed

to come to the region.

C.C.: So those thirteen, don't include the two that were murdered?

A.B.L.: It's apart.

C.C.: Does he know of any more pastors that were murdered?

A.B.L.: Forty-one. I know other case which is from village of Dakban, he is

Astiniano and he just disappeared from the community and until now we are not sure about his whereabouts. That's all the specific case that I

can mention for now.

C.C.: Okay, could I have your name and age?

A.B.L.: My name is Angele Bayo Lockwood, thirty-eight years old.

C.C.: And your position in the community?

A.B.L.: I am pastor of this Moravian church, a reverend. I have also other six

communities in my church.

C.C.: Okay, thank you.

A.B.L.: To me since we are still in the hands of this government. But I hope it will

be useful, in some way you can use it.

Brooklyn then started speaking at about 1:40 p.m. and immediately drew a response from an elderly lady and a middle-aged one. The last one spoke very forcefully for about five minutes. A young fighter said she was saying that the SANDINISTAS came in and destroyed everything, and slaughtered their cattle, pigs and chickens and that they were terrorized by the SANDINISTAS, that's why nobody wants to testify.

NOTE: I asked Woo if okay to use his name, said rather reluctantly yes; I suffered so the world should know what has happened to us (to me). The other man said he would prefer not, although he broke the ice by being the first to testify, he exhibited the same terror of being discovered by the SANDINISTAS. Woo added that he was however, worried about what the SANDINISTAS could do to his family, wasn't worried about himself.

2:30 p.m. - Brooklyn still speaking. All meetings have been in Miskitu and relevant parts, Brooklyn has been our interpreter, but vast majority of time, no interpretation but able to observe reactions and facial characteristics, dynamics.

NOTE: One of the Indian fighters, Condor, during the meeting with the MISURA fighters, said, unsolicited, that I was most important to their resistance, as I was President of WCIP, i.e. their international president, that Means wants to fight SANDINISTAS, but it isn't that easy, that they need more supplies, etc., and if they were to fight, Means would then realize what war really is.

At this meeting, Condor also asked how do I see the people present in the meeting. I mentioned that they looked tired, worn by the war, but that they still looked determined and smiled when there was something said which was encouraging towards their resistance and victory. He said yes, "the sparkle is out of their eyes. Yes, the people are tired but not defeated, but we need a lot of help to continue the resistance".

NOTE: Son of Moravian pastor where we stayed last night, mentioned to Hank some of the repression faced by people, that one method of binding people was to put their hands behind their backs and bind them with wire, with the wire also pushed through their hands so that if they tried to work it over, they would damage their hands more.

NOTE: 3:15 p.m. Hank just informed Bob and I that an 86 year old woman just arrived, she heard Brooklyn was here so she walked 5 miles to come and see him.

3:17 p.m. Brooklyn finished speech. Women then asked a question and Brooklyn talking again. Elders and villagers still listening very intently.

People now laughing and joking, don't know what exchange Brooklyn and they are having, including an older woman, many involved in discussion, fairly lively.

3:25 p.m. People clap for Brooklyn who just ended his address. Brooklyn and I then walk out to front of church, so that people can shake our hand while leaving the church.

Approximately 4:45 - 6:00 p.m. Brooklyn again met with Yulu fighters, first in the green shack, then with a smaller number in the bedroom. At 7:00-7:15 p.m., Brooklyn met with 18-20 leaders from Yulu and five surrounding communities (Maniwatla, Awaskira, Butara, Dakban, Klingna). They met until 10:30 and then three pastors said closing prayers for 15 minutes.

11:00 p.m. Brooklyn asked me to write a note to (Name omitted) regarding help for widow and two children of executed leader, they are in Bilwi.

NOTE: While Brooklyn was meeting MISURA fighters in bedroom, I was chatting for about one-half hour with Samuel (Manco) about WCIP and some of our activities on the Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast situation. He informed me that SANDINISTAS had captured one of Brooklyn's bodyguards last January 1985 in Sandy Bay area and cut out his tongue, pieces of his fingers, pulled out teeth and tortured him to death. They (the fighters) found the body later (I confirmed this with Brooklyn). Said they don't do that when they capture SANDINISTAS, but that they should, i.e. SANDINISTAS started shooting them, so they now are shooting back, SANDINISTAS now torturing them, so they should now do the same to them. Also went on to say its a Christian war, that Miskitus believe in god and they (the fighters) pray every morning at 4 a.m. Also mentioned that they (he) don't receive a cent for fighting in the resistance. That he is fighting for his people's liberation and that he is prepared to fight to the end, if he dies, he feels



Brooklyn speaking to MISURA Fighters (Kisan por la Paz)



that in the end his people will still see victory. He also mentioned (unsolicited) that they don't need fighters from outside, that they need resources for arms, ammunition, supplies, etc., that there are thousands of youths, women and elders wanting to fight but that there are no arms, etc. for them. That outside support should be for that purpose, otherwise they will also be accused of bringing in mercenaries and thus detract from their original legitimate war of resistance against the SANDINISTA invasion and repression of their communities and people.

NOTE: Earlier, I asked Condor what that roll of wire on his chest area was for. Said that its a whip. When they catch SANDINISTAS, they whip them a few times, before turning them loose. (In the past, MISURASATA used to just disarm them and release them, but because of continuing atrocity, fighters now respond with some punishment).

### Yulu to Kukalaya

Up at 5:30 a.m., after quick breakfast, we started off in the MISATAN jeep and two trucks, about 6:30 a.m., arrived at Sukatpin at 8 a.m. and at Lapan at 10:20 a.m., bridge at river was fixed by community members of Lapan, so saved us a one to one and a half hour walk. Now back in the orange groves, eating and sucking oranges. Note - yesterday Bob charged his T.V. batteries with MISATAN's jeep so now can use up his last hour of video. Left Lapan at about 2 p.m. Rode first 200 yards on horseback, then

walked, reached the river at 4:15 p.m. Hoping we can go by canoe rather than the long walk through the jungle mud and swamp. Waited for Bob for 1 hour (a little over), left river landing (crossing) at 5:30 p.m. with 10 people and gear in the canoe, water often coming in over the sides.

Cramped and sore, very dark, a lot of jungle noise, very calm night. One hour later we came upon another canoe, empty. four of us got in, Hank and three others. Arrived at landing at 9:15 p.m. then started walking at 9:30 p.m. through the long portage, arrived at drop-off/pick-up point for Kukalaya at 11 p.m., walked through a lot of water and mud, had heavy rains in past few days. Walked by moonlight. Carried one of Bob's small bags. Waited for canoes until 12 a.m., in rain and hoards of mosquitoes. Finally had to use my mosquito repellant, first time on trip. Two canoes arrived at midnight and we reached Kukalaya at 1 a.m. Had something to eat and hot coffee, then shown to house where staying for the night. Everybody went to bed at 2 a.m. with scheduled wake-up at 5 a.m. for walk to Blackwater (Layasiksa).

Clem and Condor



### Kukalaya to Blackwater (Layasiksa)

Laid down on uneven floor boards, all wet and miserable, finally took soaking boots off. Laid awake all night - no sleep but could rest. Started raining hard at 5 a.m. and people started getting up just before 6 a.m. Started walking for Blackwater at 7 a.m., arriving there at 8 a.m., is now 8:15 a.m., have had a little rest now and feel good. Way to Blackwater full of mud and water because of heavy rains, not dry like last week. Brooklyn said as we arrived, rest-up we leave in 2 minutes for a 5 hour walk to the next village! Kuyu says the boat is about 10 minutes away.

Noon-time: Meeting with leader from Haulover, Orlando Budier and Brooklyn; community building at Moravian church, requests WCIP's help to raise funds, costs about 800,000 cordobas, community already raised about 250,000 cordobas, but only have about 30,000 left and community has no resources to contribute more, would like WCIP to see if can help raise one-half of what is needed, i.e. about 400,000 cordobas, can be delivered through MISURASATA in Costa Rica, because of currency exchange if sent to Moravian church directly. Promised \$100.00 when reach Costa Rica and try to raise more but can't promise more than that. Explained also will try to get humanitarian aid flowing through Costa Rica and MISURASATA. Brooklyn said we can meet with government in Costa Rica to try to set this up, e.g. customs, etc. I can also meet with Canadian Ambassador - medicine is a priority (should try to get a medical field hospital).

1:30 p.m. Meeting with community leaders from around area and Prinsapolka region, including Wawa, Haulover (sixteen in number). Meeting started with prayer by an elder.

\*Book "A Village Journal" - each village should record (one man said "if we start writing about all the things the SANDINISTAS did to us, we would never finish talking about it or have enough paper) in its own language and style what has happened to them since the invasion and the continuing repression. Then we will publish it, as a people's own story/account.

By this point in the trip, having heard testimony in every village visited about the atrocities committed against the Indian peoples by the SANDINISTA government, I thought that a more thorough explanation by Indian leaders in the Atlantic Coast would help get their message to the outside world. I suggested that it should be done in their own language and writing style and that it could then be published as such, along with a translated version. It would then serve to be informative, as well as a document of testimony. It was also suggested that the narratives include the Indian understanding of the reasons or events which lead to this government repression and the birth of the Indian resistance.

Orlando Budier: From Haulover, one of the communal leaders.

Grant Smith: Wawa, one of the communal leaders.

Eliseo Gamboa: Wawa, one of the communal leaders.

Simpuriano Pinar: Elder (74 years and three months) from Wawa; also, upper river, Butara, 70

years ago lived there and heard we were here so decided to come. Believes

creator made this encounter possible.

Bernard Allen: Wawa, one of communal leaders.

Chrisanto Rivera: Kukalaya, a leader and one of the organizers of canoe mobilization.

Arnold Coleman: One of the leaders escorting us to Lapan, from Kukalaya.

(missing name): Also attended us on trip. Community leader from Kukalaya.



Eveleno Forbes: Community leader from Wawa. "Our elders were praying, we believe this is our

answer to the prayers, your visit".

Santo Lopez: Leader from Haulover. "We were praying all the time some of our brothers from

other countries would visit us, we believe this is our grandfather's answer to our

prayers".

Loriano Jeanette: Blackwater. "Hope you continue visiting our people in the future, otherwise, we

will feel sad and alone and whatever you can do to support our struggle we would appreciate that. We send our greetings to our brothers in your homes.

from us here in the Coast".

Oliver Jonathan: One of the leaders from Karata. "We heard you were coming so were getting

ready with food, etc. but later heard no chance for you to visit us, so our people

send their best wishes to you through me."

Miguel Sanchez: From one of the communities on the Prinsapolka River (Galilea community)

"We feel joy and thankfulness for this meeting."

Jose Eduardo: Also from Galilea community, "Express my thanks as well".

Nicolas Sanchez: From Tuburos on Prinsapolka River, one of the youth organizers. "Many of our

leaders were getting ready to come and visit, but couldn't because of illness and other problems, but would like to have you come to our community;

especially you, Brooklyn, our leader, we haven't seen you for so long!"

Herbaceo Tawak: Also from Tuburos community, one of assistants of leader, "I'm a secretary".

Nicholas Serapeo: One of the leaders from Layasiksa (Blackwater).

Saturdino Conrado: One of the communal leaders from Layasiksa.

Heard testimony (taped) and then meeting went on until 6:00 p.m.

B.R. is providing translation at a meeting with community leaders.

#### Loriano Jeanette:

In 1982, September 28, when the Sandinista soldiers invaded our community first time, they start to capture all our mens and tied their hands and we were arrested inside of this church building and after then, they took all our mens to the river and forced us to drink water for four hours.

Then some of our mens were taken into the valley, the prairie, and they were tied our hands and we were leave there naked for whole night and when the mosquito were biting us and we tried to protect from them, they were kicking us with their feet and mistreating physically.

Then they took us back inside of this building and the soldiers took me apart from the rest of my brothers, and they carry me out with them in the village to visit, house by house. They were using me as a translator. And the first thing that they did, is they took me to a house of one young lady and proposed to her, that if she will make love with him, the officer of the Sandinista, then they will be releasing her father from the prison.

But this young lady didn't accept it, to do this. Then this officer threaten her with his pistol, putting it to her ear and threaten to kill her if she doesn't allow to him. Because of that, she was forced to do it, and so, she was raped by this officer.

Then the soldiers and the officer took me to other houses in this community, to be said to all the womens of these prisoner and propose them to do the same way, to make love with them, in order to free their mens from the imprisonment. Many of our women didn't accept, rejected these kinds of proposals, but the soldiers forced them to do it. Of course, some of them, just had chance to hide and to run away from the soldiers before to committed this rape.

After these massive rapes in this community, they didn't fulfill, complete their promises. None of the mens were released. Even myself, that they promised me to release, since I was the translator, but they didn't do and took us all of our men to prison to Puerto Cabezas. And in the middle of the way, they tried to kill me.

And also, another time the soldiers came to capture all the young people of this community. Because of that, our youngsters were forced to leave this community, many of them went to the bush, hiding there. For instance, one of them spent about fifteen to sixteen days in the bush, you know, just avoiding the capture of the soldiers. Because of that, all our youngsters suffered a lots the persecution by the Sandinista.

Loriano Jeanette is my name. My community is Layasiksa, thirty-four years old.

#### Oliver Jonathan: (I)

I came from the community of Karata. My name is Oliver Jonathan. In 1982, in Karata community, in 1982, the Sandinista soldiers invade our community and they took imprison ten mens from the community. Since then, our people didn't see back none of these ten mens up til now. Later on, we have learned that the soldiers execute all these mens, when they were taken in prison.

In 1983 they returned to our community. All our canoes of the village were destroyed, they took away from our village. They arrested all our people and put in prison in a school house and we were forced to starve. All the young ladies, were also imprisoned there. After nine days we were released. And later on we were relocate from the community. They wanted to take a certain area, but our people rejected this, so all our community were relocate to Puerto Cabezas. We were surrounded there in camps in Puerto Cabezas, for one month. Then they allowed us to return to our community. And we found that all our fruit trees were destroyed, all of our crops also destroyed, and our livestock, including pigs, chickens, cows, whatever we had in our community were totally wiped out, destroyed by the soldiers...

#### END OF TAPE EIGHT, SIDE TWO START OF TAPE NINE, SIDE ONE

...And also, whatever we had inside of our houses, we didn't find nothing including the plates and the other things that we were use in the kitchen, the soldiers took them and just threw it to the lagoon. Since then, our people now are living in a very worse condition than ever we experienced in our life. Now we are many times more poor than before.

That's all I want to say, many thanks. I am forty-four years old.

### Simpuriano Pinair: (I)

I am from the Butara village. Simpuriano Pinar is my name, seventy-four years old.

In 1982, when the resistance or the fights began in this region, one of my sons were capture and later on disappeared by the soldiers. He just went to cultivate their land and the soldiers capture him there and then just disappear him.

Other of my son, were captured and tied their hand and just threw it in the water on the river and were killed. After three days we found his body.

Other young people, youngsters from the community of Prata, close to Butara, when the people from this community was relocating by the soldiers, these youngsters escape from the soldiers and came to hide in my community in Butara. Then, later on the soldiers came and arrest these youngsters and also disappeared them.

Also, other youngster from the community of Kuakuil have been arrested. Even those who have been helping the soldiers, but later on capture him and also disappear by the military.

At that time when the soldiers were invading our community, were burning all the houses in this community. All in this area of Butara, the houses were burned by the soldiers.

Every good things that they were finding in the houses they were taking with them. That's all I want to say. Many things I can say, but it's not possible.

#### Miguel Sanchez: (I)

I am from community of Galilea. Miguel Sanchez is my name. When the Sandinista invade our community, all the rest of the community were relocate to Galilea. And that time, one of the young lady from the community were arrested by the soldiers and they committed rape right there inside of the church building in the community.

Then they proceeded to destroy whatever we had in our community; community to community and just leave empty in this area.

Then they took me apart, and accused me that I am the supporter of the resistance, the warriors and they start to tie my hands and they hung

me up and left me there over one whole night. In the morning, they just untied me back.

Also, one of the other villages called Panawahl, there the soldiers tried to capture all the people and our people fled to the bush, and spend many days there, suffering in that situation.

Many of our women had their children there in the bush. Because they spend so many times there. Because of that, many of these kids were, they died in this situation.

C.C:

Were they born there?

Sanchez:

Yes, that's all I want to say, I'm thirty-nine years old.

Unidentified male from Wawa: What I want to say its what its going on in the present time in my community. Of course, I can say many things about what happened in the past, but at that time I was in the bush and I do prefer that others will testify what they have seen there. I need to talk about the present time.

At the present time, the Sandinista has occupied militarily the community of Wawa. There are about fifty well-armed soldiers. They have ditch or holes within the land, the soil of the communities, about eight of them.

They also making holes and ditches all around the fruit trees, like mangos and grapefruit. Because of this, all the fruit trees are dying.

Indian people are surviving from these fruit trees and especially in Wawa, because we are not cultivating much in that area.

Also since three days ago, they started to make a some six feet deep. What they doing is by the night, starting at 6:00 all the soldiers with their arms and radio communications they going into these holes and spend the night hiding there and then coming out when the daylight is come, six in the morning.

All roads there, we are not allowed to use it or walk there because only they are using. So, if our people needs to go to plant or to the plantation or to fish, we have to get a special permission from the soldiers.

Also, we are allowed to walk within the village until seven in the evening. Even the pool that we have, where we getting water, we were not free to use because they are controlling. Right there, where I have my house, they build big ditches. One time one of our kids drop off into this ditch. When we tried to took him back all the soldier rose up against myself and my family.

This early morning, eight of our leaders had to leave the community to come here, so when we will returning back to the community we don't know what will be happen - if they will arrest us or they will kill us. We don't know.

C.C:

Can we get their names and their ages?

Answers:

I am Grant Williams - thirty-four years
I am Gedna Allen - fifty years.

Cristobel Baden - forty-two years. Eliseo Gamboa - forty-two years. Aveleno Forbes - forty-five years.

Ignacio Diaz - forty years.

Oliver Jonathan - forty-four years. Simpuriano Pinair - seventy-four years.

We came all together, except these two from Karata.

C.C:

So that's eight of them from the three communities?

B.R:

Afraid of what will be happen, when they go back.

Nicholos Sanchez:

(I)

I am trying to testify about what happen to the community of Alamikamba in 1981. At that time our people didn't have any kind of arms or weapons to defend, but we were willing to face the cruel situation because some of our people at the time already were in prison and suffered lots by the Sandinistas.

At that time, the soldiers invaded the communities and were killed two of our young people, two of my brothers and we began the resistance because of that. Those two youngster were sixteen and seventeen and the names that he mentioned (Felizciano Sanchez and Adolpho Tawak).

I'm trying to tell the truth of what happened, to you my brothers, Indian leaders, so you may really understand this situation.

Since 1982, we began our resistance to defend our community and our people and fight strongly against the repressive soldiers. And they start to accuse that we are anti-government, that we are fighting against them and they were saying lots of lies against our people. So they start to repress and to commit many atrocity against all the people of this Prinzapolka River area.

In 1983, when our resistance forces were facing the fights against the government, they bombed the community of Panawahl and they use at that time bombs of five hundred pounds. And also they start to invade all the communities along this river. And since the repression were so bigger against our people many of the people decided to leave their community, and fled into the bush, hiding from the soldiers.

At that time there was a flood along the river. Also the soldiers destroyed totally whatever there were in the communities along the river.

And they were saying, "now, tell Misurasata, or Brooklyn Rivera, all your leaders to come and defend you and because we have the arms and we are fighting against you and will kill you whoever are oppose against our actions."

And always they were saying and now keep saying, lots of lies against our leader Brooklyn, saying that he is not doing nothing for our people or not representing our people. That the government is the real democracy and Brooklyn has interests with other ideologies, like the communists and other things, that they doing and nothing good our leaders is doing for our people. That kind of lie things they were saying.

During that time I was captured, because I was with the warriors. Then they were giving me other name and they were accusing me I was one of the commander of the warriors. All the military confrontation and what all the resistance were happening in this area, were accusing me that I was leading these resistance.

So when we were in prison, person like Hazel Law, they were, she was forcing us to talk and ask what Brooklyn was teaching us to do. I told them that we have to fight for our rights and this government is oppressive against our people and we have to defend against them.

So now, I know very well all the lies of the Sandinista and I'm sure that they will never deceive myself. They oppress too much in so many ways to our people, and we will never give up into their hands or to put in our knees to them.

Because of that with the warriors we decide to create the Indian Youth Along The River. We see that many of these youngsters need to organize and to participate into the resistance since many of them are really not know what has happened. So we need to lead them and help them to do whatever for the cause of our people.

### END OF TAPE NINE. SIDE ONE START OF TAPE NINE, SIDE TWO

Sanchez continued: ....or to use our people in their military draft, or whatever they want to confuse and to utilize against our people.

> And our people fully support this youth organization and they do whatever to help our youngsters. We believe that the young people have the strength and the will to carry out this resistance of our people. So there is a wide enthusiasm and participation of the young people in this youth organization in the area.

> So we are doing this with the support of our elders and we are trying to have the guidance of our people, our elders and fight for the rights of all our people.

> And because of that, now we are learning that even the children, the kids of this new generation since they're small kids they start to rediscover their identity and rights and now we are becoming a stronger nation, as an Indian people. So we don't want to hear nothing about the politics of Tomas Borge.

From Pinzapolka River, and twenty-nine years old. Nicholos Sanchez.

There was a question on autonomy. Could he give his views on autonomy?

Sanchez:

Yes. We heard many politics from the government and we think this is one of the supreme politics of the Sandinista, but we don't trust no government autonomy. Only our leader Brooklyn Rivera can tell us what is the position and we support them and he know what's the autonomy.

Our people what understand it, they want, they're using this autonomy or they want to use this autonomy to continue repressing and killing our people, so we don't want this kind of autonomy. We don't support the government.

And what is the ironic thing, its when they giving some fishing hook or fishing line and some other little things and saying, "this is the autonomy we are giving you", so how this can be autonomy? So what I can say in the name of our young people and all the Indian people, what we will continue offering to them, is bullets to defend our lives.

That's all I want to say, very many thanks.

Simpuriano Pinair:

Already I have talked few words and give my name and age.

Now I can say its since 1981, when the repression began. If we start to talk all about that, we will never end.

At that time, I was in the upper part of the Wawa River in my community and the soldiers capture one of the spiritual leaders of the church and kill him right there in the village with knives. And also, I was arrested, but well, they didn't kill me for luck.

C.C:

Did they do anything to him?

Pinair:

No, they just arrest me, but I don't get killed. But, since then they start to kill many people in all those areas, like Sangnilaya, like Auhyapihni communities, and if you travel in that area you can see lots of bone. human bone and other part of the bone, like part of the head you can find there in that area.

Many bodies were floating on the river. For instance, in Butara community, we found four bodies right there in the river and we buried them. That's all I can say.

C.C:

Thank you.

Community organized a fiesta and then put on a traditional dance. Dancers later pulled some of us to dance with them. Later, everybody danced to Miskitu music. Dance lasted until about 10-10:30 p.m. Then Brooklyn and community leaders met in circle until 2 a.m. The leaders from Haulover, Wawa, Karata, went home after the meeting. I went to sleep in my hammock at 11 p.m. Got up next morning at 8 a.m. The leaders want their names published because fear repression when they returned to their communities, particularly if SANDINISTAS find out they came and met with Brooklyn.



Villagers by the church.



Brooklyn Rivera and fighters return to Layasiksa.

# Blackwater (Layasiksa)

A woman from Kukalaya, Kalistra Torres, age 20, problem of her brother being arrested in Bilwi on December 10, 1985 and since being transferred to jail in Managua. Brother is Casiniro Torres Michel, age 18, born June 29, 1967. Reason for arrest: he was just walking around at night and soldiers just took him to prison. She heard he is now sentenced to 2 years in Managua by SANDINISTAS. Her mother, Viola Torres Michel, is in Bilwi. Had been supporting MISURASATA, and the resistance, but not a warrior.

#### NOTES:

- Layasiksa still has no cows or pigs since the slaughter by the SANDINISTAS, they do have chickens, horses and dogs.
- An elder explained to me that there is no food in the community, very little rice and if can't catch fish, then go hungry, many children are malnourished, etc. That the SANDINISTAS are very bad and the Indians have never experienced this kind of repression. Feels will be willing to co-exist with the SANDINISTAS if Indian land and other rights are respected and SANDINISTAS stay on the pacific side.
- 3. Brooklyn informed us at 2:30 p.m. that tomorrow we go to Waunta and then north to Krukira for two days, etc., getting back to our departure location Thursday or Friday. Means informed Brooklyn he will take a sailboat from Waunta for the return if one is available, etc. Brooklyn mentioned that trip was scheduled for a 15 day period, that it wasn't possible to do this kind of trip and work necessary in 5 days. Note: On way here Means mentioned he would insist that we be back on Sunday, that was now a week ago today. Brooklyn had informed me on January 1, 1986 that the trip would be two to three weeks, so I was prepared for being here this extra time.
- 4. 4:30 p.m. Speaking to man, Florentino Pantin, 38 years old, owner of house beside bomb crater. He mentioned that the people heard the fighting, bombing in Kukalaya and the people fled by canoe and on foot. His wife and four children fled to the bush. Then in the afternoon, about 4 p.m., five planes and one helicopter came. Dropped three bombs and SANDINISTAS burned one house, slaughtered all livestock, left to rot, cut down orange and coconut trees and destroyed personal belongings. His house was destroyed by the bomb. All three houses near his were also destroyed. People stayed in the bush for two months. No place to sleep and nothing to eat, just sit down and get up to walk around a bit. Moved everyday because SANDINISTAS were looking for them. A lot of sickness and four died: 1 baby girl, 12 years old, 2 about 50 years old (1 man and 1 woman); 1 old man about 60.

They only had fish and yuca, sometimes, not everyday, no salt and just straight water. People just ran, no time to take blankets, or anything, just had some fish hooks and machetes (475 people, whole town, left together). This happened sometime in November 1982. Second time they came, they came three times.

First time came and got ten people, took them to jail, since have returned, in 1981. Third time they killed cows, cut coconut (communication problems - done in English, no translation). In 1982 captured people and put in church. 1981 also Haulover and Wawa people all came here to hide, "plenty people, maybe 1000 - 1500". He was also tied in church, tied three days and three nights - no eating, no drinking, no moving, couldn't go to toilet. They were beaten, not sure with what. Also, women and children were there and also tied and beaten. Women were raped by the soldiers, could see it happen.

## Monday January 20, 1986

11:10 am - Yesterday's and this morning's apprehensions of SANDINISTA build-up at Waunta Bar now confirmed. According to Eddy, there are 108 SANDINISTAS with heavy artillery at both ends of bar (mouth of river) with two coast guard cutters anchored just out of the mouth. Figures 300 soldiers could mobilize by land from towards Kukalaya and when ready radio in air support for invasion, so everybody has to be ready to leave, also we must leave this 4 p.m., as our presence is endangering the village.

6 p.m. - 108 SANDINISTAS confirmed by Brooklyn, however still waiting for gas, need one barrel if fight way through, three if sneak out by river to Kuamwatla. Also, apprehension that SANDINISTAS may invade by air and river, same as in the past. But possibly, SANDINISTAS may only occupy bar for 48-72 hours, seems only interested in us, not in occupying Waunta. Almost a wait-and-see attitude. SANDINISTAS moved in to bar Sunday evening, also backed by coast guard cutters. MISURASATA fighters sent to the area. Brooklyn and fighters met all day, charting some possible restructuring of armed side.

# Tuesday January 21, 1986

This a.m. some villagers are leaving, Brooklyn explained to me that it is time of year for cultivation/plantations so some people going now, also acknowledges that villagers are generally prepared to leave/flee if SANDINISTAS attack. There is an air of expectancy of this real possibility throughout the village. Brooklyn also reminded us at breakfast to be ready to move at any minute.

NOTE: State of clothing: everyday see people, all ages, wearing clothes with patches upon patches. Also saw an older woman sewing patch upon patches of some child's article of clothing, some kind of blouse.

# Under Attack at Blackwater (Layasiksa)

"Resume" - now somewhere on the Bambana River, slept here the night and we'll be holing up here until we get intelligence reports and decision made as to how and where to move. Currently, we know of two villagers wounded in the first attack and Brooklyn informed me today that besides the six wounded we recovered from the second attack, two youngsters were killed. Notes: Bob and I were playing Frisbee then I was talking Spanish to one of the fighters, then we heard, and Bob spotted, the two planes in the distance, someone said were push and pull planes. Villagers started moving, and ourselves and fighters got out of sight. Then the third plane approached. They circled around town for about 15 minutes and we started moving from tree to tree while planes were out of sight. Orders to fighters not to shoot unless attacked. Finally, the three planes started diving, straffing and dropping bombs. On 2nd strike, Bob and I were behind a big tree, so bullets missed us, but hit the tree. We got out safely after about one-half hour. Then planes left, after one and one-half to two hours from about one mile away from village, it was decided that we should cross the lagoon in our big boat, which now only had one 55 h.p. motor, other was on a different boat and was hit, big boat had been hidden. About 18 to 20 of us got in, Brooklyn, 4 guests, several fighters and a number of young warriors, most without arms. Purpose was to get us to safety. While crossing the lagoon, the planes came back from Bilwi with restocks of ammo and caught us in the open. Fortunately, we had enough time to hit close to shore and to lily pads. Then the strafing and bombing started. Jumped into water at about the same time, boat still going full speed. Somehow wasn't hit and made it to lily pads. While moving saw Brooklyn, he was heading further into the lily pads. To my



Push and Pull, fully armed



Spotter plane

left I saw the trees about 200 yards away, so decided to head for them, but then had to get back to open water. When I got away from the pads, I looked up and saw the boat to my right, about twenty yards away and beyond and above the boat a plane was bearing straight towards the boat and me. After I saw the orange flames I dove as far down as possible and for as long as possible. Again, somehow managed not to be hit. I thought for sure I would die with that burst.

Kept swimming, came across Russell Means and told him to head towards the trees, so he did. We made it to the trees, with dozens of roots, jungle trees, and were able to hide. However, we heard moaning and I went out a ways and found David at the edge of the roots. After I got there, found that he was wounded badly in the thigh. Called Russell to help and he pulled David in while I brought his packsack which he was worried about, after I took it off him. He had just gotten off his 30-40 pound utility belt, so I hung it on the roots. We continued hiding as the planes buzzed us, looking for targets. Heard moans so went back out and found a young boy, trying to swim. Got to him in time and dragged him in as far as I could then called Russell for help. I looked at the boy, he had a shattered left elbow and forearm (hit twice), shattered left hip and gouged-out left thigh. Miracle he swam as long as he did. When I reached him he was calling for his "mama". Found out later, he's 14 years old. During this time, my watch stopped at 3:55 p.m. We finally got them, after about twenty minutes on to a clump of mud. Planes had left just after I found him. We also heard the motor start. Bob who was hiding in the lily pads, started the motor and moved the boat which didn't get destroyed. After about 10 to 15 minutes, villagers in a canoe came along, so we loaded up David and the 14 year old, Russell, Hank and myself and went down the river for about two to three miles where we found the rest. There were four more wounded; but not as badly. Also mention of at least one missing. Moved everyone further down river to a temporary camp of villagers after emergency treatment in canoe and two on land.

After about four hours, the motor was dried and cleaned, had fallen in water on Bob and we all moved further to regroup. Passed canoe loads and camps of villagers for miles. Everybody seeking shelter from the SANDINISTAS. Before moving to first villager's camp, at approximately 5 p.m., the three planes arrived back, circled in area we were in, about three miles from second attack site; however, couldn't find us. Have first and third attacks on tape.

# Tuesday, January 21, 1986

C.C:

Quarter to twelve, two planes coming in.

Miskitu Male:

Planes coming (laughter).

C.C:

Damn, no film!

Planes are circling over. There's two of them, push and pull.

R.M:

Oh shit! They're on their way!

Voice:

Get back!!

Miskitu voice:

Another one coming!

C.C:

What is that one?

No response.

C.C:

Small cessna flying by.

Women speaking in Miskitu (sounds of crying and speaking, sounds of planes circling).

C.C:

It's all right. Do you need your mike? (Question to Bob Martin).

B.M:

Yeah!

Male and female talking in Miskitu, no translation.

R.M:

Helicopters?

C.C:

Somebody said a helicopter is coming.

Women and man speaking in Miskitu, no translation.

B.M:

Sorry, I didn't mean to shove you, but I saw that guy coming right for the

door.

C.C:

Yeah! No, that's okay.

B.M:

He may have seen you out there.

C.C:

Planes are circling.

B. M:

Here it comes again. (Miskitu voices and plane sounds still in

background).

C.C:

Bastards!

B.M:

Kind of stay back from the window.

C.C:

Yeah.

H.A:

Are there three of them?

C.C:

Yeah! Somebody said a helicopter, but...

R.M:

No doubt about it folks.

C.C:

It's too soon to waste a shot, a picture.

Still circling.

R.M:

Back over the boat area now.

C.C:

Yeah, they're looking for the boat.

B.M:

Got your tape-recorder?

H.A:

Went right back up here.

C.C:

Yeah, I got some.

B.M:

Can I roll a little tape on there?

Plane sounds low overhead.

Miskitu voice:

Sandinista!

R.M:

Ready?

B.M:

What the fuck are we going to do out there?

R.M:

There's a board nailed on the back. (of back door).

There's two more.

C.C:

There's four?

Voice:

There's three.

C.C:

He's got a rocket mounted there, eh? Under the wing?

Miskitu voices in background and plane sounds.

C.C:

We've left the house now, we're in the trees making a run for it.

Fucker! That guy would have spotted us!

Voice:

Shit!

C.C:

They spotted us for sure!

R.M:

Right there.

Diplo (Juan Zuniga): OK, let's go, let's go, let's go, let's go! (Running sounds, planes

flying low.)

One by one, one by one...., go Hank.....

C.C:

Go ahead!

Diplo:

Russell...., Clem....

C.C:

Running. (sounds of running.)

Diplo:

Clem go there!

Go Clem!

C.C:

Running again!

We're on the outskirts into thick bush now. Still circling.

Diplo:

Watch out!!

R.M:

Seven on the side. That's a seven on the ....

C.C:

Running again! (running sounds and noise of planes)

Here it comes again!

B.R:

"We cannot shoot first, because that they're expecting. That we shoot

them and they will bomb with five hundred pounds, you see".

C.C:

That's right, they'll bring the helicopters in.

B.R:

Yeah! Yeah!

C.C:

The helicopters are probably just waiting out of range.

B.R:

Yeah! So we don't..., we have to keep, you know....

C.C:

They want to provoke and then attack, if... after...

B.R:

Yeah!

B.R. speaks iln Miskitu, no translation.

B.R:

Now maybe some of you will go with the civilians, to hide in the bush. Like you Hank, maybe him, Clem, and hide there, because we will be here, but we know how to, you know, get away. So civilians, no problem, you know. They're walking. You see all the people are walking, women everything, except who has the uniform. They will start to bomb. The problem with all your load and such a thing. Maybe if you

would share with some other few civilians.

B.R. gives instructions in Miskitu - no translation.

B.R:

Why don't you go with the civilians. Just walk. Follow them.

C.C:

Brooklyn has ordered Bob, myself, and Hank to walk out with the

civilians.

Oh, on this side?!

B.M: No, don't take them.

C.C: No, I'm not.

What's he going to do, the sucker?

No response.

C.C: I don't know if I'd rather go or stay and catch the action.

He's getting ready to do something.

Voice: Yeah!

C.C: Nose dive!!

B.M: Nose-diving in!

C.C: Nose dive!!

Yeah!

B.M: Watch out!!! (rocket fire)

C.C: We've got to try and find some more trees.

They're shooting!

Running again! That last one took a nose-dive and fired on us.

Voice: Well boys!

C.C: Don't jump back whatever you do, I'm behind you.

Dumping it? (T.V. equipment)

Well, they fired first.

He may change direction. That guy up there, looks like he may change

direction.

Civilians are still walking out.

Diplo:

Come on, come on....come here, come here, come here! The other

one?

C.C:

Bob!

Diplo:

Bob!

C.C:

Hank!

Diplo:

Hank, come here!

C.C:

Here it comes!

Diplo:

Watch out! Watch out! (rocket fire)

C.C:

Shot again!

Get down! (rocket fire again)

Who's firing?

Oh God, I'm on an ant hill!

There's a villager. Villagers! Should we go?

Villagers are going.

Diplo:

Go with them!

C.C:

Okay, let's go!

Diplo:

Go with them! Go with them! Go with them!

Walking sounds and planes in background. Villagers speaking in Miskitu.

C.C:

Plane's coming down! Plane's coming low!!

Diplo:

No come out! No come out!

B.M:

Don't come out! Don't come out! Don't move!

Diplo:

Don't go inside!

C.C:

One more right above us.

Diplo:

No come out! No come out! Hide more! Hide more!

Hide more! Going to see you, hide some more! (rocket fire)

No come out! No come out!

Voices in Miskitu. Plane sounds continue.

C.C:

So much for, "we just fire when we're fired upon," by the Sandinistas. Another big lie. (In earlier talks, Sandinista army officials informed me, that their policy was not to fire, until they were fired upon).

Plane noise continues - rocket fire.

Voice:

Watch out!!! (more shots)

Miskitu voice:

Wait! Wait!

C.C:

Wait! Wait!

Miskitu voice:

Wait! Wait! Wait!

More rocket fire.

C.C:

No more big trees to hide behind...,hide behind, behind a little willow

and in the grass.

C.C:

The guy's going down again!

There he is, nose-diving!

Another one coming down!

B.M:

Get under a bush.

C.C:

I can't find one.

There, I'm in some bush now. Twelve twenty-two, plane still circling, still firing when they have a chance. (Nose dive and series of rocket firing.)

Bastards, shooting us again.

Miskitu voices in background.

Diplo:

Hey, come on, come here, come on!

C.C:

Which way?

Diplo:

Come here, come here!

C.C:

This way?

Diplo:

Come here, come here Hank! Come on, go, go, go!

Esta Julian! (Here's Julian)

C.C:

Follow Julian!

On the move again.

Villagers and warriors speaking in Miskitu.

C.C:

Stopped again.

END OF TAPE NINE SIDE TWO START OF TAPE TEN SIDE ONE

Miskitu voices in background. Walking sounds in water.

C.C:

Up to my ass in water.

Diplo:

Let's go, let's go, let's go! (then speaks in Spanish to fighters)

C.C:

Water up to our waists.

More dialogue in Miskitu and Spanish between warriors.

David's leading us out. Water now up to our shoulders.

More dialogue in Miskitu

Miskitu man:

Up too deep, you come this side.

C.C:

Your side?

B.M:

OK, my side?

C.C:

Yep.

Up to my neck.

Well, it's a better story now, Bob.

Bob:

Yeah, but I didn't get any film.

C.C:

Oh, yeah!

C.C:

Well, it was the mike or the film I guess.

B.M:

Yep!

C.C:

Oh shit!

B.M:

What?

C.C:

I got one tape in my back pocket!

B.M:

Audio tape?

C.C:

Yup.

B.M:

It'll be okay. Dry it out well tonight.

C.C:

Sloshing through a foot of water now. Back on the trail.

C.C:

Turning back.

Diplo:

Son of a bitch!

You made it!

B.R:

Yeah!

C.C:

That's good.

B.R:

All of us did!

C.C:

I thought you were back there.

B.R:

Yes.

Brooklyn and Diplo have an exchange in Spanish.

C.C:

One hour?

B.R:

...because they will be returning back .... yeah.

Unknown voice:

What are we going to do in that hour?

C.C:

Get away, ha-ha.

B.R:

Whatever its possible.

B.R. and others in Miskitu.

C.C:

Back to the deep water.

More discussion in Miskitu.

C.C:

The old man will know where to go...

B.R:

The motor.

C.C:

It's a motor, outboard.

B.R:

Yes, but we're not sure if it is ours, ha-ha. It might be the...ha-ha. Just

let's go.

...the bomb.

They dropped a bomb?

B.R:

Yes, just next to the....(rest is unintelligible)

Voices in Miskitu and Spanish.

C.C:

How long do you think they will chase us now?

B.R:

Huh?

C.C:

How many days do you think they will chase us?

B.R:

I don't know. I'm not sure.

B.R:

She left before the bombing.

C.C:

Yeah.

B.R:

Otherwise, you know, many people would be still there.

C.C:

That was a smart move.

B.R:

Yeah!

Voices in Miskitu.

B.R:

See the old man....

LATER:

C.C:

Twenty-five to two, we're now on the other side of the lagoon. There's

been a report that two villagers were wounded, one dying.

Quarter to two, I have standing beside me, Bob Martin news correspondent. Bob, what are your recollections of the incident that

happened around our tree?

### B.M:

Well, we were moving from tree to tree, through the village, trying to get to the bush, to avoid detection by the aircraft. And the aircraft opened fire, and, as we went for this one particular tree, yourself, Clem, and myself, one of the push - pull Sandinista airplanes, cut its engines and made a nose dive toward us. And, as it was approaching toward us we dove behind a large tree, about four feet in diameter and as we reached



Three of the wounded fighters: Norman Molina (Yull), "Pichi" (Small Pico), and David Rodriguez

behind that, the foliage over the top of us began shredding and large explosions or impact sound began on either side of us and the ground back behind us, about probably twenty-five to thirty feet was spewing up and that was my recollection of that moment, plus a severe case of the shakes and trying to mould myself into the back of that tree as tightly as possible.

C.C:

Well, my recollection Bob, is I said, "the plane's cutting its motors, it's stopping and it's coming down at us." And after that there was this big noise.

B.M:

That's right. You did. I agreed. And we both dove.

C.C:

Right, thanks. Any recollections you guys want to make.

R.M:

It's just that I felt so impotent, laying there waiting to be bombed. It was the worst feeling I've ever experienced. No way to fight back.

C.C:

Right.

LATER:

Quarter to three. We are in the big boat, seems like we're heading back to the village.

LATER:

It's about five o'clock. This is the third attack. About an hour and a half ago, they caught us on open water and bombed the shit, and strafed the shit out of us. At least six are wounded; one badly. They caught us on open water, just kept shooting at us and bombing us indiscriminately - trying kill us all. And now we're trying to get away up river. They're searching for us. They know they can't let us get away because of all the information that we have. They want us dead!

Plane sounds circling overhead.

H.A:

(unintelligible)

C.C:

Yeah, but they don't know we're here, they're just looking. The jungle's too thick.

C.C:

These are yours?

H.A:

Yeah.

They seem to be moving off now.

Heading back. It's now about five o'clock. My watch stopped at two minutes to four.

#### Sound of planes circling

C.C:

Yeah, they probably spotted a canoe, but maybe not targets.

They appear to be flown off again.

That last attack, lasted for about twenty-five minutes, maybe half an hour-total bombings. Yeah, the planes are still circling, heading back.

At one point, I was in the line of fire between the boat and the plane, and the shots came, orange flames and the bullets struck about, oh, I'm not even sure, just feet away in front of me. It was a hell of an experience, I thought I was going to die.

Near land, Russell and I, Means, were sort of close together and we heard somebody moaning and we found David in the water. We tried to get him to shore and then I went back out to look for somebody else. I thought I heard somebody, and there was a young kid shot at least three times. Left elbow shattered, left hip shattered and left leg shattered. He could barely keep up out of the water. He was trying to swim. I hauled him in, and later Russ came and helped me, and after fifteen minutes we got them onto some thick mud and finally a village canoe came along and gave us a hand and we were able to move down river, where we are now currently under another, not attack, just yet, because they can't spot us, but they're flying around still.

Here they come again.

Planes flying low overhead.

C.C:

You know what the bastards are doing eh? They're flying low, they're hoping that somebody will shoot at them, then the push and pull will come in.

Sound of planes flying close overhead.

We are about a mile from the attack on the lagoon. They keep circling this immediate area. They must have some idea that we're near here. They may have spotted one of the small canoes. Still circling, circling, waiting to bomb. And of course, Misurasata warriors don't have any anti-aircraft weapons. There is no way that they can defend themselves or ourselves, against the flying machinery of the Sandinista government and the Sandinistas know that.

We're expecting bombs any minute, any minute, strafing and bombing any minute. If the Sandinistas see anything move, they'll start shooting. Or, if they can't find us, they probably will turn back to the village or close by village and drop their bombs there, just to make their point before they fly back to their base.

When I was in Bilwi at Christmas time, the government was saying, military, our policy is "we don't shoot. We let them shoot first. If they shoot, then we'll return their fire." This certainly is not the case, they heard Brooklyn is in the country and now they are in a search and destroy mission.

There is no provocation at all. We were going from village to village talking to the people, and that's it. A lot of village support; the Sandinistas want to crush it. So they are trying to search us out and kill us, particularly, kill Brooklyn. But they now know that we're here and of course they know that we can't get out, and let the world know what they are doing to the Indian peoples and Indian villages. So at all costs, they have to get us and our information. It's now starting to rain; sitting here without boots in the jungle, little short sleeved shirt, pair of blue jeans and two socks with holes in the toes and hordes of mosquitoes. No jacket, no boots; lost in the attack.

C.C:

Nightfall, we just by canoe reached campsite of villagers. There's people here with most of their possessions and there is also a bed made for the wounded. There are five wounded laying here. And the villagers are helping out as much as possible. There's a fire, it's a pretty sad-looking scene.

Camp sounds in background.

B.R:

Ha-ha, you still have your tape-recorder, eh Clem?

Yeah! I'm just trying to catch some of the sounds of the camp. B.R: Yeah! Can you believe this Clem? C.C: No! B.R: You know, when they talk about, you know, revolution, democracy, freedom, such a thing, look.... C.C: Like when I was in Bilwi. B.R: Yeah! C.C: Oh yeah, you know, "there's been no fighting and the policy is, we won't shoot until, you know, they shoot first and we're ready to fall. We're very certain of that". Now they attack a village, you know, unprovoked, just because.... B.R: When the plane start to fly there, we gave order, not to shoot - not to provoke. Because they were looking for such an opportunity, to justify what they were planning to do. And they were, you know, flying very low the planes, and waiting that the fighters will shoot to them, but we didn't. And after then, well, they said, "the fighters not shooting. Let's, we will start the shooting and bomb the villages." And look what they did. I can't believe now how we save, from Clem, from that attack right there in the lagoon. C.C: I don't know, I can't believe it, that we escaped. B.R: Yeah, but look now the results...David, and... C.C: We pulled David and that young guy out. First, I found David, and Russell helped, and then I went back and found that young guy. Then we dragged him out for about half an hour. B.R: Yeah, he has his foot break. C.C: His left knee, his leg, his thigh, his left hip and his left elbow is shattered. B.R: Right, and also his arm.

C.C:

C.C: Yeah, his left elbow. When I found him, he was calling for his mother. B.R: Here are two other civilians. C.C: These are civilians? B.R: Yes these are civilians, that were wounded in the village during the attack, during the bomb within the village. C.C: It's a ruthless government, full of lies, ... treacherous. B.R: Yeah! Well this is the reality that our people have been facing during these, over four years and it's since 1981. C.C: Well, it's consistent with what they've been telling us. B.R: Yeah. But, well I think now many other people are witnessing, you know, what is the reality. You and Russell, and Bob, Hank are witness of these crude and coward attacks to the people. Now these poor people will spend many, many days here in this condition. Little baby and the mother. It's with all the mosquitoes and if the rain start, you can imagine what will be the situation. And no food and no medicine, nothing in this condition. I'm sure we'll spend weeks, weeks because the soldiers will continue tomorrow in the persecution. It's looks like they are trying to get our heads. C.C: That's right and they won't want us to get out of here alive to be witness to this. B.R: Right. Well I think anyway the world will know this reality. I just wondering how this group have saved from that attack, there in the boat, when we were coming. And you know, they spent all the ammunitions and the bombs, that they brought, trying to, want to wipe out, total. C.C: They weren't even afterwards shooting at the boat, they were shooting at the people.

B.R:

Yeah! Yeah! Well, anyway, someway, I, you know, I think your presence and others; even they don't respect, you see, even the presence of some persons who just want peace and want justice and a peaceful solution to the conflict. And you know, I have been doing my best as a leader to seek a peaceful alternative. That's why we have been in the table of negotiations for eight months, you know.

C.C:

That's right.

B.R:

And you know what happened. And now we still insist but look what they doing.

C.C:

It's hard for me to believe that they can do that kind of thing and yet put that kind of face to the world.

B.R:

Yeah, right.

C.C:

It has to be exposed.

B.R:

Yeah, right. Now it's how to get away from here.

B.R. and others in Miskitu.

C.C:

I got out the boat, and I don't know, somehow I made it to lily pads and bullets all over. And then I saw you walking that way kind of, towards my right and I started walking that way. Then I figured, maybe it's safer. I looked up and saw that the boat was close, so I figured it would be safer if I headed to open water. So, I was walking towards open water, and all of a sudden a fighter (plane) was coming down and the boat was between me and the fighter and I could just see him and they shot, orange flames, but they fell, I think close to the boat and I thought for sure I had it. Then I just kept going and diving and going and diving and finally I saw Russell. I says, "come on. Let's go to dry land. Let's go to land". We finally reached there. Then I heard David and went back for him and we got him on land. And then I heard this young guy, I heard somebody moaning out there, I went back, he was trying to swim, so I pulled him in and then Russell helped drag him through the mud. It's terrible.

B.R: Just I saw this guy, crying, "please help me!" And can you imagine?

Without any possibility, because you are, you know, in that situation

that someone is dying there....

C.C: Yeah!

B.R: And that was the plan.

C.C: Yeah. But when I found that young guy there, he was still trying to swim.

Just one side. He was calling his mother, "mama, mama."

B.R: Yeah! Yes, I saw him too, with the arm break. I don't know how all these

people, our group saved from this coward attack.

C.C: I saw one guy, well when I was getting away from the boat. I came up

and saw this mochilla (backpack) and I thought there was somebody dead, but then after the bullets stopped hitting, then the guy came up

again. So he looked okay, that's why I kept going towards shore.

B.R: Yeah!

C.C: Now there are more coming. About nine at night (Villagers reaching

that campsite).

Voices in Miskitu

Miskitu Male: What time you have, please?

C.C: No time, it stopped. During the attack my watch stopped, two minutes

to four.

We're in the boat now. They're trying to move the wounded to the boat.

Voices in Miskitu

C.C: Tell him we need some help up here.

Wounded crying out in pain, while being transferred to boat.

C.C: We're moving out now, the wounded are loaded and one motor is

working good (sounds of motor running).

We've been on the river for about ten minutes, just informed that it's twenty-two minutes after eight.

We just came upon some fighters on the river and we're going to pick them up.

A fighter just handed us a guitar (sound of guitar).

Come across a group of civilians sometime before nine o'clock.

Miskitu voices (villagers and fighter).

C.C:

Ten minutes further on, more villagers.

(A little later on) A new load of civilians, heading up the river.

More people up ahead. Misurasata fighters. A little village, well, little place, and the people are, what? They are fleeing now? They are leaving? These are still from Layasiksa?

Man:

Yes, the people them, yes.

C.C:

There's about ten canoes load of villagers here, still fleeing.

On the river earlier we passed several on both sides of the river. There's villagers everywhere along the river. Running, fleeing.

It's now 10:15. I made a mistake, there's about fifteen canoes and right now, the medicine-man is trying to fix David's leg.

The medicine-man is still working on the wounded and currently we are still moving, and pulling behind the string of canoes of villagers, so they can get away as far as possible (motor running in background).

Five canoe loads of villagers many miles up the river.

More villagers (Miskitu voices). This one canoe has a wounded civilian.

What time is it?

Pero, solo uno aqui? (But, there's only one here?)

Male:

Si, solo uno aqui. (Yes, there's only one here.)

C.C:.

Half past eleven. Kisota?

Fighter:

Yes.

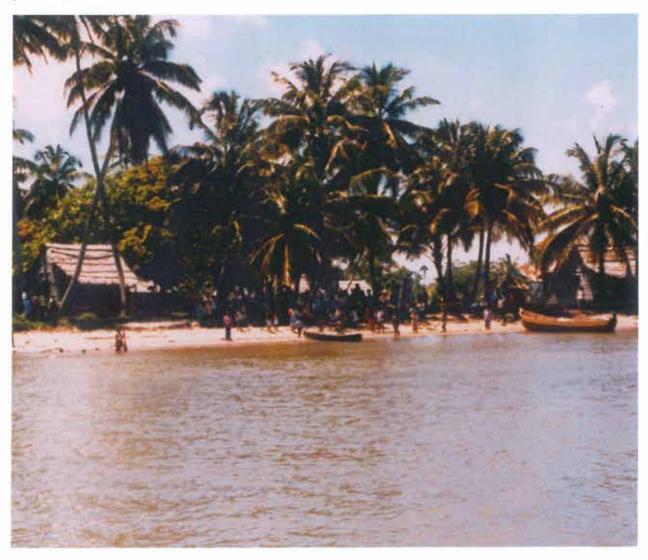
NOTE: Manco mentioned that probably the truck drivers informed on us because of their own safety. Yesterday, January 23rd, spoke to Brooklyn about this, he feels the SANDINISTAS knew where we were because they had sent a messenger to Bilwi to inform Serpiente and Rafaga that there would be a meeting in Layasiksa on Sunday. Feels that one of their party informed because there has been no response from them.

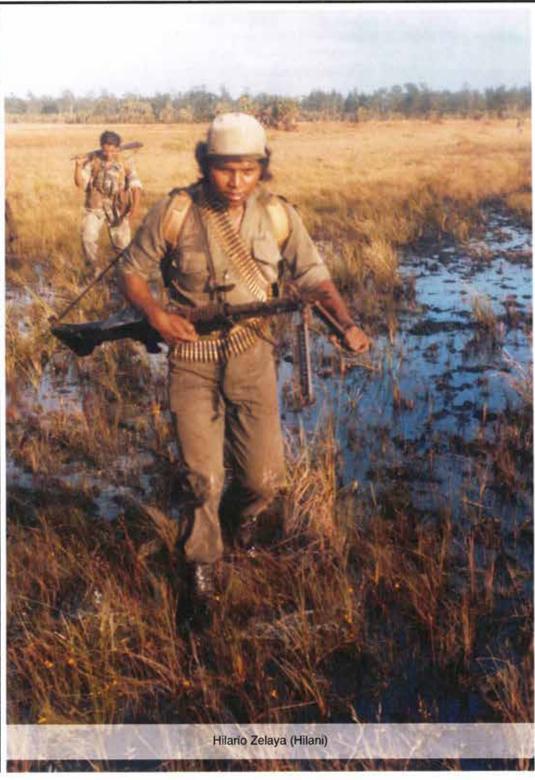


Wounded villager

Spent the night about ten miles down river and at 6 a.m. started walking through the jungle to other river system (also through periods of torrential rains) for about five to six hours. Spent afternoon there, Bob treated the wounded and I assisted. Wounds really stunk, a bit of gangerine was setting in. We mobilized by canoe at 5 p.m. and I convinced Brooklyn to send the 14 year old back with villagers and have him taken to red cross as a civilian casualty. Only has a 50-50 chance to survive one to two days unless gets medical attention.

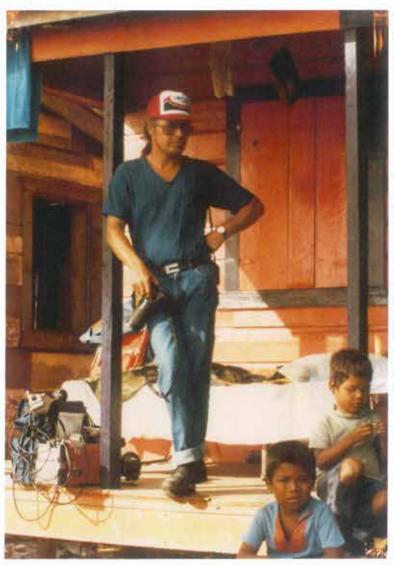
Traveled by canoe for about four hours arriving at a MISURASATA troop encampment. Spent night there, now about 1 p.m. We'll be staying here, or at least in this area, for next few days until enough intelligence comes in to decide our course of escape. Put my medicine bag out to dry, forgot it there. This place is called Yahbra Bila.





## Friday, January 24, 1986

# On the Move



We went to bed about 9 - 10 p.m. and at approximately 12 a.m. were informed that were moving out. Left camp in three canoes at about 12:30 -1:00 a.m., one had a little motor so didn't need to paddle. Arrived at another camp at 6 a.m. (internal refugees, one family belonging to one of MISURASATA warriors (Dicau) who was in our group). Had breakfast then rested. Also listened to tape from bombing of village, wasn't destroyed in the water. At about 4:30 we started getting ready to leave and at approximately 4:45 p.m., two push and pull planes flew by in search formation, got us hiding in houses and bush. Another great sense of anxiety. It appears that they're determined to find us. Now 5:35 p.m. waiting to move out after dark. At this camp the fighter's name is "Dicau".

# Auka

Slept in Moravian church at Auka, woke up at 6 a.m. During night, Bob had idea about reaching a ham operator, discussing it with Brooklyn about 8:00 - 8:15 a.m. when plane heard approaching. Had also just been informed that captive doctor had arrived, good thing because David's lower leg may have to be amputated. Hank and Russell climbed under benches along wall, plane left, someone said was a civilian plane. However, all planes to Atlantic Coast are connected in one way or another to SANDINISTA government.

We then crossed river in canoe to a spot cleared in jungle for us by villagers. A lot of mosquitoes, here for at least the day. Brooklyn also informed me last night that contact made with San Jose office and Canadian and United States Embassies are to be notified, however, didn't mention to notify the press.

C.C:

8:00 a.m., Saturday, 25th of January, fifth day of our evasion. There's a plane heading our way. They are still searching for us. Yesterday at about five o'clock, they also have flown by our camp. They're still searching actively. We're just making preparations to make a run for it if we have to again. The plane has gone by. We were told that it was probably a civilian plane, but of course the civil charters around here are all by the Sandinista's anyway. We are getting ready to cross the river to a more safe and secure place.

We're heading across the river now.

It's now four o'clock. We've been in our secure hiding place all day. We've been laying around and we've had a lot to eat. Villagers have brought food at least four times and we can't complain about not eating. I think we're probably eating too much. Bob is on the radio, two-way radio. We're trying to establish contact with a ham operator, but it doesn't seem to be possible. We'll be trying again tonight.

B.M:

Mayday, mayday this is KKN714 calling mayday, mayday, mayday.

Mayday, mayday this is KKN714 calling mayday, mayday, mayday.

C.C:

It's 4:03 Bob's trying to get through.

Radio sounds.

C.C:

Four minutes after eleven. We're going to wait and try again tonight.

At 5:30 we crossed back, crossed the river, back to the village. We've been standing around here now for about the last half hour. There are Indian leaders from six communities nearby that have come to meet with Brooklyn and Misurasata. As well, they have brought quite a bit of food, including two cows for Misurasata. They will be meeting in a little while.

9:00-9:30 a.m. - Just informed by Diplo that next emergency move, my two escorts will be Miskut and Condor, they know what to do and where to go. Conditions beginning to look very serious, because our boat is on a different river system from which we crossed and only two alternatives:

- When SANDINISTAS let off on bar (mouths exits/entrances to sea) come through for us or;
- 2. It be dragged about 5 6 miles through the jungle trail we crossed on day two of our escape.

Otherwise, we're on foot and small canoe, moving from place to place. One half hour later, after having a boiled egg and oranges brought by a villager, laying in my hammock, next to me in a hammock are a young couple (fighters). She's reading the bible out loud, over to my right, ten yards away, a young fighter, early twenties, has been reading the bible out loud for over one-half hour. Now 12:25 p.m., we just finished a big meal of rice, yuca and meat brought by villagers. Also, before meal, eight fighters got in formation and sang a short prayer in Miskitu.

At 5:30 p.m., we crossed the river to the village. There were a number of villagers and leaders from surrounding villages to meet Brooklyn. Meeting started at about 6:30 p.m. and lasted until 10:30 p.m. The guests also spoke and I mentioned what I thought were my last impressions in Nicaragua which I had made at Layasiksa. Basically, that "I was exhausted, not physically from the walking, etc., but rather mentally and spiritually because of the repression and genocidal acts committed by the SANDINISTAS against the Indian peoples and communities". I then added that I was sad to see the bombing take place in Layasiksa, but because it did happen, that I was glad I was there to witness this barbarity and now I had more than statements from direct witnesses; that I personally experienced. Also stated that I would go to Geneva, Human Rights Commission, and to the Nordic countries, Holland and England, that WCIP statement on Nicaragua would be stronger if it comes from me, because of my experience over past two to three weeks. Also, testimony given by five people, two are on tape. People were from the following villages: Limbaikan, Panawahl, Tuburos, Galilea, Bitil, Escondido, Ladrikula and Mango.

Meeting starting at 6:25 (p.m.).

Man says opening prayer in Miskitu.

C.C:

It's now 7:15, just left the meeting, it's still going on. Bob's going to try the two-way radio to see if we can't reach some ham operator.

B.M:

This is KKN714 calling mayday, mayday to any station. Mayday, mayday, this KKN714 mayday, mayday, calling any station. Break for a mayday. Break to a mayday.

Radio sounds.

C.C:

Nine o'clock, the meeting still going on.

About ten - ten-thirty, the meeting is over. I'm going to take some testimony from two witnesses that spoke during the meeting.

(1)

Felix Washington Rodamo: My name is Felix Washington Rodamo. I'm thirty-five years old. I am from a village called Prinsubila, along the Bambana River. I am involved in the Indian organization for many years, since the Alpromisu time. In the past, I was working in the Puerto Cabezas area. Later on, I returned to my community and have been working with my people. With the Sandinista regime, when they started to repress the people, I have witnessed some of the atrocity against my people. For instance, once the soldiers captured many of our people and tied their hands and put on the ground and start to beat and kick and kill them. And I was among them.

> And also another time, the soldiers capture us and some of them were put chains on their neck, and pull with the trucks and just on the road and they were killed there. And I witnessed all these violations of our human rights.

> Also, our community, because of the repression, had to flee to the bush and spend there for five months. And many of our children died there, because of lack of medicine and all the suffering in this condition in the bush. After then, we returned to our community and found all our goods, including the crops and livestock and whatever we had in our homes, were destroyed totally by the soldiers. Since then our people have been suffering a lots, all these repression against our people.

Many orphans and widows are in our communities as a result of all the casualties against our people. Because of that, our people cannot go along with this regime and we cannot give up from our resistance. Of course, we have lots of limitations. Many of our people are still empty arms. They don't have any weapons, arms to defend our communities and lives, but we will still go along with our resistance and do whatever it's fair to defend our nation. And even we are starving and we are in a very difficult situation, facing many limitations and different repression, we are going forward with our resistance, until we will die. We can't stop this, but otherwise our children will also continue. Thank you.

C.C:

Thank you.

**Hamon Flores:** 

I am from the community of Haulover, but now I live here in Auka. My name is Hamon Flores and I am sixty years old. In 1983, October 1st, I was there in my community and I presence the invasion and occupation of the community. And this happened when the six airplanes came to the village and start to bomb for many hours and took us there to where, in front of the community and also bombed, using mortars and rockets.

And all the people had to leave the community and hide in the bush. And we spent first four days without food, and we spent a month and a half in hiding in the bush and our people suffered a lot. They...

#### END OF TAPE TEN SIDE TWO START OF TAPE ELEVEN SIDE ONE

Flores continued:

Our people suffered lots in the bush for a month and a half. And we faced this situation. We starved and face many illness because of the condition of the area with many rains and bite of mosquito and so forth.

Even with all these and other atrocities, our people are still alive and facing these problems. Myself or three pastors in this community of Auka, That's all.

C.C:

Could you ask him if anybody got killed in that attack?

Flores:

Yes, I know one person was killed there.

C.C:

And what about in the bush when they were...

Flores:

Three persons died there in the bush.

C.C:

Okay, thank you.

During the meeting, Bob and I tried to reach a ham operator, no success, but Bob read part of message out just in case someone might monitor it. Went to bed about midnight, couldn't sleep. Church bell rang at 5 a.m. and at 5:30 a.m. we crossed back to our jungle hideout. Radio contact made with MISURASATA political office. We were informed that the 14 year old died and that the body of one of the two presumed dead was recovered from the lagoon.

NOTES: "Small Pico" - name of 14 year old, was six months with MISURASATA fighters. Marcial's body was recovered, he was 17 years old - four years as a warrior. Another still missing, body not recovered.

8:15 a.m. - Brooklyn also agreed to have a reporter at other end at 3:00 p.m. for Bob to talk to. Also, Manco mentioned that last night on Costa Rica radio station, reporting on bombing. Brooklyn also gave office more information on how to handle this with the press. Villagers brought us a big breakfast. Feeling very sad about the death of the 14 year old who I had rescued; "Small Pico".

NOTE: At meeting last night, Means mentioned that rather than now bringing in 100 warriors he and Hank would organize for arms, ammo, medicine, etc. Last Sunday or Monday, had been advised by fighters' meeting that men weren't required, but rather the supplying of arms for those waiting here, that MISURASATA could raise 15 - 20,000 fighters if it had the resources. Means a bit put out about the timing, however, since the bombing I think he's now glad about that decision.



Russell Means is a Lakota from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, U.S.A. Mr. Means was a founder and prominent leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC). Mr. Means broke with the mainstream policy of AIM/IITC, which supports the SANDINISTAS and became openly supportive of MISURASATA in March, 1985. At that time in Bogota, Columbia at a MISURASATA press conference prior to the second round of talks, Mr. Means unexpectedly announced that if the SANDINISTAS did not choose peace, that he would join the Indian resistance with 100 warriors from the Indian Nations in the territory now known as the U.S.A.

This statement continued to be made by Mr. Means and at the meeting of the military arm of MISURASATA on Sunday, January 19, 1986, Mr. Means was invited to attend for a brief period of time. At that point Mr. Means was clearly informed that the resistance didn't require or want 100 warriors to join them, but rather, that the projected financial costs that such an initiative would entail could be sent directly to MISURASATA. That they could then use the finances for some of their immediate requirements.

#### Sunday, January 26, 1986

(continued) - Now 2:10 p.m., waiting for 3:00 p.m. radio communication.

Sunday, January 26th, up at five o'clock. At 5:30 we crossed back to our jungle hideaway, had a good wash. Now radio contact has been made.

People are talking, I'm not sure to whom.

Radio sounds (Speaking in Miskitu).

C.C:

C.C: Did they get any communication to the press?

B.R: They have been doing that. I gave new orientation how to do it.

C.C: 8:15 a.m. Brooklyn just informed me that the Costa Rica office confirmed that the fourteen year old boy that we sent to get treatment

died. As well, the villagers have recovered the body of one of the

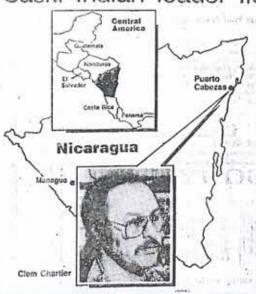
fighters that died in the lagoon.

C.C: 5:30. The reporter couldn't be located today. So there was no

communication to the reporter. However, I got my message through that Donald (Rojas) be contacted and that World Council members be notified and Canadian national organizations be notified to pressure the government and the national press to pick up on the story. We'll be

trying to get a Tico Times reporter for tomorrow to make contact.

## Sask, Indian leader flees through Nicaraguan jungle



By Earl Fowler of the Star-Phoenix

An international Indian leader from Saskatoon is beading south through the Nicaraguan jungle in an attempt to avoid being captured or killed by government

tured or killed by government troops.

Clem Chortier, president of the World Council of Indiagenous Peoples (WCIP), is in Indian-controlled territory near Puerto Caberas, on Nicarngua's northern Atlantic coast, according to a group in radio contact with his companion.

companions.

Supportive Indian groups are smuggling him and has party through the jumgle, trying to get them safely into Costa Rica, Armstrong Waggins of the Indian Law Resource Centre gaid Tuesday in an inferview from Washington, D.C. Winnier a Michiel Lettine back

Wiggins, a Miskito Indian leader in exile from Nicuragia, said the government wants to silence Chartier to keep him from publicly denouncing its little-known conflict with 260,600 fodians, blacks and mulatios on the Atlantic coast of the Central American country. This is a distortion of the facts,

Pastora Valle-Garay, Nicaraguan consul general in Canada, and in an interview from Toronto. He said Chartier is in his country illegally, and could be deported or jailed if caught.

Chartier, a 40-year-old Metis lawyer originally from Buffalo Narrows, entered Nicaragua clandestinely from Costa Rica with some American companions in January.

He decided to do this, Wiggins said, after the Sondinista government deated him permission to visit small Miskito, Samo and Rama Indian coastal settlements.

He had been attempting to mediate a settlement between the Nicaraguan government and their an groups in the region. The Dec-19 issue of the Sandinista-aligned acwapaper, Barricada Internacional, curried a report on his meeting with President Daniel Ortega.

These talks have been suspended, and Chartier became "very, very upset" with the government's refusal to allow him to visit Indam leaders, said Wiggins. Chartier sneaked into Nicara-

gua with a group including Russell Means, head of the New American Indian Movement, former ABC television corresponent Robert Martin, and Brooklyn Rivera, general co-ordinator of Misurisata, one of the major groups representing coastal Indi-

Means was slightly injured on the weekend by shrapped from a recket fixed by a government plane. Armstrong cash but he said the group is in little danger of attack by government ground troops, because Indian guardins control the region

Valle-Garay said Means vowed in January media interviews to smuggle 100 "Indian warrana" from Canada and the United States into Nicorogua, to fight against the Sandinistas.

against the Sandinistas. He said he was uncertain whether Means followed through with this threat. But people who come to Nicaragan with a plan of war, and who enter the country claudestinety, are no more and inless than foreign mercenaries—and they have to accept the consequences.

# for native leader gro

By Earl Fowler of the Star-Phoenix

One of Canada's most promi-need native leaders. Clerk Char-ther of Sankatpon, is believed to be in danger in Nicaragua.

The 40-year-old president of the World Coppell of Indigenous Peopien (WCH) entered the Central American country illegally earlier this month, and is apparently a guest of Miskito Indians. that is at odds with the Sandonista government.

"He's in potential danger," given that the "whole Atlantic coast Nicanagua ia in a war state, Andres Loper, acting executive director of WCIP, and in an interriew Weilnesday from his Ottowa

Tidon't know how the Nigura guan government feels, but I don't think they'd be too happy about it (Chartier's presence). Lopez added. The dameer is there, so we sould just like to see em come out of the country



Clem Chartier

"The latest news that I got today is that Mr. Chartier and other people are travelling north along the Atlantic coast. That's as of (Tuesday) morning

The Canadian embassy in Costa Rica, which handles Canadian affairs in Nicaragua, has informed the Saudinistas of its concern for Chartier's safety, said Department of External Affairs spokes man Notalie Kirschberg.

"We'd like to have more infor-mation (from Nicaragon) about his surety and well-being." Kirschberg said. It don't have many details, except that as pres-ident of the WCIP, he was very interested in visiting some mem-

bers of the Misuranta."

Misuranta is an organization representing the Miskito, Samo and Rama Indians, and others of mixed ancestry, in eastern Nicaragus. It accuses the Sandmintan of repressing coastal Indians, but has in turn been occused by the gavernment of supporting the conira revolutionaries backed by the United States.

Kirichberg said External Af-fairs learned list Friday that Chartier had entered the country illegally, along with some American companions. He did not in-form Canadian officials of his inpetions, she said, and petiber lust

The WCIP in an ambeella or ganization claiming to represent more than 60 million indiscours peoples in 28 countries, incloning Canada

Lopez said the WCIP executive. council, which did not sanction Chartier's trip, likely will hold an emergency meeting as Ottawa to discuss the matter.

"Obviously, they ritle govern-ing council) were not aware of it, and they are dissatisfied with this kind of thing," Lopez said, indi-cating that Chartier may face disciplinary action.

Chartier, a lowver originally from Buffale Narrows, has three children but is now single. Elected president of the world council in the fall of 1981, he is a former constitutional chairman of the Metis National Council and a former vice-president of the Amoria tion of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Sankatchewan

He is also a past president of the Canadian Indian Lawyers Associ-

Saskatoon Star Phoenix, January 30,1986

Clem Chartier's illegal attempt to visit Indian leaders in Nicaragua could cost him his job as president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP).

The council's two vice-presidents are to meet in Ottawa next week to discuss his actions and status within the organization. Andres Lopez, its acting executive director, said Wednesday.

Lopez said the executive of the council, which represents indigenous people of 28 countries, may decide to discipline the 40year-old Metis lawyer from Saskatoon. Some directors met last weekend to discuss the situation, but they decided to await more information before reaching a decision.

Nicaraguan Indian leader Armstrong Wiggins said he fears Chartier will be ousted from the influential position through a "coup" by executive members.

He said Chartier's attempt to escape from Nicaragua has drawn attention to a conflict along its Atlantic coast which has

received relatively little attention from Western media.

For centuries before the governing Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979, the coastal Indians and Creoles were ignored by the outside world, Wiggins said in an interview from Washington.

"Even though the Somoza system was very terrible, he did not invade Indian territory militarily or politically or ideologically, said Wiggins, who once represented coastal Indians in their negotiations with the Sandinistas.

When the Sandinistas came to power, they were determined to "incorporate the Atlantic coast into the change" by building schools and health facilities, said Pastor Vaile-Garay, Nicaragua's consul general to Canada.

"We found resistance, because some of these people didn't know what the Sandinista revolution was all about and couldn't care less," said Valle-Garay. "And also we were not very respectful,

I suppose, of their own cultural traditions.

He said skirmishes ensued between Sandinista troops and small groups of Indians, and the CIA and the counter-revolutionary forces known as contras, backed by the United States, have tried to take advantage of this.

But he agreed with Wiggins that the Indian struggle has little to do with that of the Honduras-based contras.

Wiggins said the Indians oppose the contras, and would be satisifed with greater autonomy and legal protection of their rights within a united Nicaragua. He said Chartier cannot leave Nicaragua through the north to Honduras, because the contras consider him an enemy.

Valle-Garay said the Nicaraguan government recognizes it made a mistake when it decided to relocate thousands of Miskito Indians from the Puerto Cabezas area near the Honduras border. He said it did so to protect them from contra attacks in the region.

## Indian group feared at risk in Nicaragua

Reuter

WASHINGTON

An Indian advisory group has urged the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States to intervene on behalf of three U.S. and Canadian Indian leaders feared to be in danger of attack by Government soldiers inside Nicaragua.

Officials at the Indian Law Resource Centre said they were concerned because the three, on a mistion to meet Miskito Indian leaders on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast, had not been in touch with them by ra-

dio in more than 24 hours. They were presumed to be unable to communicate with the outside.

Armstrong Wiggins, co-ordinator of the centre's program for Central and South American activities, urged ambassador Carlos Tunnerman to intervene on behalf of the three leaders to ensure they will be allowed to complete their mission without any mittary reprisals.

U.S. Indian activists Russell Means and Hank Adams, and Canadian Clem Chartier, head of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, entered Nicaragua clandestinely from Costa Rica about three weeks ago and travelled to the Miskito Indian area with Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera, a lawyer for the centre said.

In a letter to Mr. Tunnerman, Mr. Wiggies said that the Sandinista Air Force had carried out bembing runs in the past few days against the Miskito village of Layakiksa in which four civilians were killed.

"The timing of this new military offensive suggests that it is intended to capture or kill Brooklyn Rivera and a delegation of North Americans travelling with him," Mr. Wiggins said in the letter.

The Toronto Globe and Mail, January 27, 1

## 3 Activists Say Village Bombed

Nicaragua Denies Attack on Indians

By Terri Shaw

Three North American Indian leaders who entered Nicaragua illegally to visit Indians living in that country's Cambbean coastal region reported being attacked by Sandinista forces and escaping in a dignout cause to the Colombian island of San Andres.

Hank Adams, an Indian activist from Washington State, said in a telephone interview that Nicaraguan multury planes hambed a village that the group was visiting and later strated and rocketed a anali boot as which they were traveling. He said three teen-age robel adding traveling with them were

Adams traveled to Nicaragua with Russell Means, leader of the American Indian Movement; Clem Chartier, a Canadian Indian lawyer who is chairman of the World Council of Indian robel leader Brooklyn Rivera. Bob Martin, a journalist from Albuquerque, was also with them.

Nicaraguan Ambassador Carlos Tunnermann said the Indian delegation was accompanied by about 100 armed rebels from Rivera's group, Misurasata, and had provoked the bombing attack on the wilage of Layasiksa by firing on a Nicaraguan reconnaissance plane.

Tunnermann said that many of the Indian rebel groups on the Caribbean cause of Nicaragua had reached a crease-fire with the Sandmistas and that the visit of the North American group had disrupted that trace. He added that the government had broadcast appeals to the visiting Indian leaders, saying that if they reported to the Red Cross, the Moravian Church or local authorsties they would be guarantized safe conduct out of the country.

Adams and Means, interviewed by telephone from a hotel on San Andres Island, sald they had entered Nicaragus from Costa Rica on Jan. 8 without obtaining permission from the ruling Sandinistas. Adams and Chartier had been in Nicaragua



before at the invitation of the government and had visited the restricted Caribbean coast region with government escorts.

Adams said they traveled to the region illegally, because the government restricts who may travel to the isolated, underdeveloped region that historically has been separate from the dominant, Spanish-speaking western part of Nicaragua. Most residents of the coastal area are Indians or English-speaking blocks.

"I've been on the Atlantic Coast as a guest of the government," Adams said, but added that on such visits, "There is no access to resistain; villages or victim villages. People try to sneak up to you and whisper in your ear what is going on."

Adams said government military planes attacked the village of Layasiksa on Jan. 21, firing with rockets and injuring two villagers. The Nicaraguan government arranged for a group of foreign journalists to visit the village on Tuesday, and they reported seeing several craters apparently caused by 500-pound bombs. They also found a knapsack with a notebook belonging to Martin, the journalist.

Means, who Adams said received a "slight shrapnel wound" in the raid, said the armed men traveling with the group did not fire first and that he had a tape recording of Rivera ordering his men not to break the cease-fire.

Adams said that after the attack on the village, 18 members of the visiting group tried to travel in a small boat across rivers and a lake. He said they were caught by the Nicaraguan military planes, which fired on their boat. He said everyone in the boat jumped into the water, but the planes "started targeting the exposed people in the water."

He said eight Indian fighters were wounded and three—the youngest 14 years old—drowned or died of their wounds. Adams said Means pulled two of the wounded men out of the water.

Adams and Means said Rivera's rebel group escorted them from village to village, liading from the government forces until they were able to sip past two military gunboats in the dugout canoe and travel to San Andres.

# Chartier escapes from Nicaragua

By Earl Fowler of the Star-Phoenix

Clem Chartier has escaped from Nicaragua and is on his way home.

The 40-year-old Metis lawyer from Saskatoon escaped Thursday to the tiny Colombian island of San Andres in the Caribbean Sea, about 200 kilometres off the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua.

Chartier, president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, said he was safe but exhausted after a harrowing 22-hour boat ride. Yvon Turcotte, a consul at the Canadian embassy in Bogota, Colombia, said in a telephone interview.

Greg Cooney, first secretary at the Canadian embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica, said Chartier intends to pick up his possessions in San Jose before flying back to Canada.

In an interview from Washington, D. C., Armstrong Wiggins, a Miskito Indian leader from Nicaragua, said Chartier and the 10 men who joined him in the escape were resting under the care of Red Cross officials in San Andres. Chartier could not be reached at any of the island's hotels.

Turcotte, who spoke in Chartier Friday morning by phone, said three of the Miskato Indians with whom he was traveiling were injured, two of them seriously.

Wiggins said the most seriously injured was David Rodriguez, a guerilla fighter who toured Canada on a speaking tour last year for Misurasata, a rebet organization of Miskito, Sumo and Rama tribes living in eastern Nicatagua.

Wiggins said the three were injured in ground fighting with Nicaraguan government troops. He said Rodriguez nearly died, but is now in hospital and apparently out of danger.

Wiggins said Russel Means, leader of the American Indian Movement and one of Chartier's companions, was slightly injured by shrapnel last weekend when Nicaraguan planes bombed a village held by the Indian rebels.

Nicaragua has denied Indian allegations that the raid left four dead and 15 wounded.

Turcotte said Chartler told him the escape boat left the Nicaraguan coast near Bluefields. "I believe the original idea was to go either to (San) Andres or along the coast alternatively to Costa Rica. But he (Chartler) mentioned that they decided to go straight cast into international waters when they saw (Nicaraguan coast guard people.

They arrived kind of as refugees in Colombian territory, out of much lick, I believe, said Turcotte. They had little gasoline, and they had no (radio) contact.

Wiggins said the II travelled in a "very small dug-out, cance-style boat with an out board motor rigged up on the back."

Unaware of the escape, Associated Press reported Friday that Nicaragua's Interior Ministry had issued a statement asking Chartier and three of his companions to report to the nearest government authority. The statement assured their safe transport out of the country

Chartier entered Nicaragua illegally in January from Costa Rica, after the Sandinists government refused to allow him to visit Indians along the Atlantic coast. The three Americans who entered with him — Hank Adams director of the Survival of American Indian Association, Means, and freelance journalis Bob Martin — escaped in the same boat.

Chartier had been trying to negotiate a set tlement between the Nicaraguan governmen and coastal Indians, who want guarantees o land rights and self-government.

The Saskatoon Star Phoenix, February 8, 1986

# Indians seek arms set

Miskito Indians opposed to the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua are seeking arms from foreign native groups, says the Canadian president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Clem Chartier said that although there now appears to be a military standoff in the region of northeastern Nicaragua largely controlled by the Indians, at least 8,000 more "Miskito fighters" could be armed with help from the outside world. Chartier was among a group of Canadian and American Indian activists who slipped into Nicaragua last month to tour Miskito villages near the country's northern border with Honduras.

The Ottawa Citizen, February 15, 1986

## U.S. Indian Says Sandinistas Bomb Villages

#### By STEPHEN KINZER

Special to The New York Times

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Feb. 10 -Three North American Indian activists denounced the Nicaraguan Government today and said they would step up their activities against it.

The three activists, who said they had just concluded a monthlong clandestine trip through eastern Nicaragua, said at a news conference that the Sandinistas were systematically bombing Indian villages in the Atlantic Coast region.

The activists, who made their trip with Brooklyn Rivera, a leader of Miskito Indian rebels, said they had held

public meetings in several villages and had heard accounts of executions, torture and other abuses by Government forces.

Sandinista military officers have said Government bombing is limited in scale and aimed exclusively at military targets.

#### U.S. Aid Sought for Miskito

One of the activists, Russell Means, a Lakota Sioux who is a leader of the American Indian Movement, said he would return to the United States and begin a campaign to persuade the American Government to aid the Miskito rebel forces. "For the first time in its history," Mr. Means said, "the United States could ally itself with an Indian cause."

The United States has provided millions of dollars to some anti-Sandinista groups, but Mr. Rivera said his followers had not received any of that aid.

Sandinista leaders, notably Interior Minister Tomás Borge, who controls Government policy toward the Atlantic Coast region, have said they are seeking reconciliation with the Miskito and other Indians who live there. The Government leaders say that Mr. Rivera, who supports armed rebels, is an obstacle to peace.

Miskito groups have been fighting

#### UESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1986

the Sandinista Government since as early as 1980, the year after it came to power. Talks between the Government and Mr. Rivera broke down last May.

#### Sandinistas Are Denounced

At a news conference today, Mr. Rivera said recent bombings near Indian villages "reveal the true face of the Sandinistas as enemies of peace.'

Mr. Rivera said the purposes of his trip into Nicaragua with three foreign supporters were to gather facts about events on the Atlantic Coast and to show the solidarity of Indians from North America with the Miskito rebellion. In addition to Mr. Means, Mr. Rivera was accompanied on the trek by the Indian activists Hank Adams of Olympia, Wash., and Clem Chartier, a Canadian who heads the World Council of Indigenous People. A freelance jour- suffered a superficial abdomen wound'

nalist from New Mexico, Bob Martin, was also on the trip.

The group set out secretly from Costa Rica on Jan. 7, protected by fighters from Misurasata, the Indian rebel group of which Mr. Rivera is the principal leader. The men said they visited nine Indian villages and met with representatives from 19 others.

They said that on Jan. 21, near the village of Layasiksa, Sandinista, planes located and bombed them. They fled and spent what Mr. Rivera called "15 terrible days" eluding Sandinista troops. They finally boarded a boat and made a 24-hour trip to the island of San Andres, which is Colombian territory. They arrived there last Thursday.

The five men escaped serious injury in the days they said they were pursued by Government troops, but Mr. Means

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when a bomb exploded near him.

After the breakdown of talks between the Government and Mr. Rivera, Sandinista leaders took steps designed to win support from Miskito Indians. They allowed thousands of Indians who had been evacuated from villages along the Coco River to return home, and pledged to support autonomy for the coast region, the key demand of the Misurasata organization.

Some Indians, notably the Sandinstaappointed governor of the region and the region's representative in the National Assembly, have supported the Government efforts. But Mr. Rivera and the three North American Indians who traveled with him dismissed the Sandinista initiatives as insincere.

# Metis leader willing to meet Sandinistas

By Florence Loyle of the Star-Phoenix

Clem Chartier arrived back in Saskatoon on Wednesday night, 22 days after narrowly escaping with his life from Nicaragua.

But he says he's prepared to go back if the Sandinista government is willing to meet with him.

The 40-year-old Metis president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) entered the country lilegally in early January on an invitation by Misurisata lead-

Misurisata is an organization representing the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Indians, and others of mixed ancestry, in eastern Nicaragus. It accuses the Sandinistas of repression, but are in turn accused by the government of suppporting the U.S.-backed Contras.

Chartier was in the coastal community of Puerta Cabezas Dec. 20-30 as a guest of the Sandinista government. His intention was to visit coastal Indian communities, but the military would not allow him to leave Puerta Cabezas except for one day when they accompanied him to two Indian communities, he said in an interview at the airport.

The government told him it could not guarantee his safety if he visited the area and would not allow him or anyone else to travel

there, he said.

"I was offered the opportunity (to visit the area) by the Indian people themselves. I had only one day to make up my mind and I went without consulting the rest of the executive council.

While in Indian-controlled territory he visited nine communities and met with leaders from 19 oth-

"I was basically told about some of the things which have happened to the Indians since they came into conflict with the Sandinistas in 1981. They described things such as massacres. executions, forture, jailings and disappearances.

Chartier visited and took pictures of a mass grave which, he was told, contained the bodies of Indians killed by government troops. He was also given the names of 13 Indian leaders who were machine-gunned by the Sandinistas July 8, 1982

Prior to the 1979 revolution by

the governing Sandinista National Liberation Front which overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza, the Indian people were in isolation and basically left to continue their way of life, he said.

"With the success of the revolution, the government did want to bring in social changes. However the changes the government wanted were not what the Indian people wanted, so there was a conflict in ideology," he said.

His and his companions' escape was the result of what he called the courageous action of residents of a coastal village who sneaked them by a Sandinista outpost guarding the mouth of a river which river, he didn't know.

'The whole community pitched in and we were able to get out into open waters and fortunately evade the coast guard on about 11 occasions before getting into international waters.

At the time he thought he would not make it out alive, he said.

The group tried to get to Hondu-ras and then Costa Rica but was forced to head into international waters. They arrived in San Andres, Colombia, 22 hours later and remained there for four days and then were able to get a flight to Costa Rica, which he left Tuesday morning.

Asked if he would go back to Nicaragua, Chartier said he would if President Daniel Ortega would meet with him to discuss the is-

"We would still like to see the Sandinistas sit down and come to a peaceful agreement with the Indian people and have an open mind to a true indigenous automony and the recognition of land rights."

He said he has called for an emergency meeting of the WCIP in Geneva Feb. 22 to discuss policy in terms of dealing with the Sandinista government and the Misurisata organization.

Asked if he was aware of reports that his position as president of the council was in jeopardy because of his actions, he said he had not been told of anything in that regard and he was still president.

He said he will spend the next few days resting before leaving for Ottawa on Sunday. Then it is off to Washington, D.C., and Ge-

The Star Phoenix, February 13, 1986

# 'Costa Rica is heading for fascist dictatorship'

Good news in Costa Rica" said your Feb. I editorial, a commentary on the recent elections in that country. The optimistic tone of the article belies the resulty of political resulties of the country. In fact, Costa Rica is heading for a facist dictatoriship

I have just returned from that part of the world as a member of the international Peace Mirch in Central America. Last Dec. 15, I was at Toruma, the youth hostel in San Jeec, when the Costa Rica Libre, a violent right-wing group, attacked the peace marchers and the local supporters, injuring several, one serious, who were with

This incident ence and for all destroyed the might that Costa Rica is

a neutral or peacuful country.

Since 1979, when the Sandinistan took control of Nicaragua from the Somora regime, there has been a concerned attempt, with the encouragement and direct belp of the U.S., to destablise and overthrow the present government in Nicaragua.

The U.S. government finances and supplies the Contra bases in Costa Rica along the Nicaraguan border, from where attacks are made into Nicaragua.

In 1985, there were four attacks on border pairols, 15 illingar mearsions, 73 violations of air space and 10 attacks by sea from the Boy of Salmas on the Pacific side.

In general, the overall policy of the U.S. is to strengthen its presence in the country. Both parties in the recent elections vied with each other to please the U.S., thereby getting the economic-military failout that would result.

The minister of the interior under the regime of President Monge is a co-founder of Costa Rica Libre. That government supported this group. There is no assurance that this situation will change since the same National Liberation Party will be in power when the new president. Oscar Arias Sanciez, takes over in May of this year.

The press in Conta Rich is controlled by the government or interests that support it. It is right-wing and conservative.

For many months before our ar-

rival in the country, there was a amear campaign against the peace march. We were called Communists and revolutionaries whereas our only arms were peace bunners and cries for human rights in a part of the world where violence is an everyday occurrence.

You jamp too quickly to an optimatic outlook on post-election. Costa Rica, it would be better to do a harder analysis of the political situation in that country or at least wait until the new regime gives clearer signs that it is really moving in the direction of true democtary.

> GERRY PASCAL Vertice

The Montreal Gazette, February 20, 1986

THE WASHINGTON POST

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 1985 A19

#### Russell Means

## The Real Freedom Fighters in Nicaragua

The United States in following the logic of self-defeat in Nicaragua. Recently, while traveling clandestinely in that country. I feed-teed that one force, without any outside support whatsoever, but sugged a five-year, armed resistance against the Marcist led government. It is made up of American Inflans righting under the fainner of an organization known as Misurasara.

The Reagan administration claims its objective in Central America is the transformation of overthrow of the Sandmista government. Yet it evertexts its material support to the contras, an odd assortment of supposed "feedom fighters" winging an immacressadi governile war against Managas from Honduras. Such a policy is noncease in terms of both strategic military and economic planning, virtually guaranteeing that the use of American troops will eventually be required to change the course of the Sandmista register.

The reason for this odd situation is that the remeaser fighters inside Nicaragus are American Incluses of the Miskins, Suma and Rama nations on the Atlantic coast. Rallying behind their representative politico-military organization, Miscrasata and enlisting allies from the region's Creole and Ladino communities, the lodies are struggling for preservation of their own nationomy and self-determination. Hence, the stands of the State Department have deemed Maurasata unacceptable.

The insignitude of the error involved in this position—which is manifestly more anti-lodian than anticommunit—is readily evident. While the Reagais-backed control units are collapsing in the field, Missimula has managed to secure the bulk of the transmission Atlantic coast fedian territory against ground invasion by Sandansta.

I personally witnessed the massive hidian support to Misurasata, which allows it to main-

rain 2,000 to 3,000 warriors on the basis of materials captured from the Nigaragoun army. I I witnessed firsthand the fact that the Iralian control not only the land within their territory but also the rivers and logistics all along the Atlantic Count.

I also experienced fronthand the nature of Managua's response to the effectiveless of Indian rematance. Unable to maneuver on the ground within Indian territory, they have resorted to air strikes and belienger; associate on villages and other civilian targets, as well as attempting a blockade by sen. I have seen the mass graves that result and have documented accounts from 28 different villages concerning the Sandinista program of torture and execution attended to terrorize the fudinish into submission to centralized rule. This policy of terror has backfired on Managus.

The level of Indian resistance is such that with proper material support Misozasuta could immendiately field at least 15,000 warriors and fully liberate Indian recritories—about a third of Nicaragua—in a matter of months. In a moeting such me on March 3, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Ellist Abrania agreed that Misorasuta is a mojor factor in anti-Sandmiata resistance, but suggested the Indians aboud abandon their own agenda and merge with the contrat as a prerequisite to receiving any sort of American support.

Specifically, Abrams feet at appropriate that Minutasata put itself under Kram, a tiny "Incian" contra greup Sined in Hordiura and urable to show support of any kind from the Inflate communities of Nicaragua, It is interceting to note that, while II S. State Department primites Kinan as a "beginning local whose," so does Maragua, a situation that auggests the lengths to whith Washington is prepared to go to avoid the emergence of any

true expression of Indian sovereignty in this

My response to Abrama is that no might political strings were attached to congressional aboration of \$27 million in humanistrient aid has year. It is presently this sort of maintagnithat model the Indian resistance to Sandmitta policies in the first place. There is no reason to expect them to be more willing to accept such behavior from Washington than from Minagua, If by some fluke the contrast were after to unsent the Sandiniana temporary, they too would have to deal with Indian rights to autonomy and self-determination in the Atlantic cases!

There has been a lot of tall lately about "being an the right side of history" where Nicaragua is concernical Indeed, a crusprouds has been reached. America now has the opportunity to cross-over from the side of history that has been marked by the general to be the been marked by the general to be the history that has been marked by the six and which is evident today in the loss may forced relocation of 10,000 traditional Novoyos from their Arisona homeland, the maillar forced relocation of the James Bay Croe in classic, the shangbur of the before people in Flanguage, the occinations of the latinus of Braul and Gustemala, and the sentiteressing wastere directed at the Indiana of Naraguage.

The affectative is to remain on the side of history marked by the fluoresem world view, to must that Indians are inherently subordinate to man-leading, and that they are altimately expendable peoples.

A decision to remain on this latter side of factory will not only be oursely wrong, but, for some politically, economically and militarily involvable as well. It carries with it a greatly inversed the bood that direct U.S. military intercepted the bood that direct U.S. military interception will be inconsury to effect change.



A-11/4/11/19/34

A Middle wither spendy ground.

in Managea. The side offer option will be to admit, once and the all the to United States preferal any European actual form of preferance as Managea Learned one to the true exercise of Indian succeedingly.

I will put it clearly, frame as a chance that must be made by Ressall Resons or the American people. They must decide subther the continued suppressions of least rights a worth the risk of another Version types quagrant, with at the bounds and form at each tile ever talls, or whether the cree tools among these copy that notions of tree in and democracy must never by a selection of the continued of the copy must never by a selection on

The nester is a house of the American Indian Movement

## The Washington Post

MARCH 13, 1986

## Nicaraguan Indians: There Is U.S. Support

Russell Means argues Jopeet, March 111 that the United States has not supported the Indons in Nacaragua in their fight against communist oppression and mass shaughter. He is wrong.

The fact is that we have supported over a thousand Indian resistance forces represented by Kisan, and we are ready to support all groups that are willing to fight for democracy against the Nicaraguan communists, including those Indians represented by Brooklyn Rivera and Misurasata.

Our policy toward all the resistance groups in Nicaragua is the same. We will support resistance organizations that meet three basic conditions:

 They must be committed, in both word and deed, to a democratic outcome in Nicaragna.

They must be prepared to cooperate with other groups fighting in the common struggle.

 They must adhere to internationally recognized rules of warfare and work to prevent all forms of human rights abuses.

Last Friday, in a meeting with the resistance leaders Alfonso Robelo, Adolfo Calero and Eden Pastora, Secretary of State George Shultz made clear our willingness to support groups that accept these commitments. Earlier in the week, I held meetings with both Mr. Meaus and Mr. Rivera and delivered the same message to them.

Mr. Means claims that I told him Misurasata would have to "alsandon their own agenda" and "merge" with the other resistance groups as a prerequisite to receiving American support. I said nothing of the kind. The United States is not asking the Indians represented by Mr. Rivera to subordinate themselves to any other organization. We ask only that they be prepared to cooperate in a common struggle for democracy and independence in Nicaragua. I have no doubt that they will do so. They need help, and we are going to help them.

Last month, the Nicaraguan communists made a determined effort to kill
both Russell Means and Brooklyn Rivera
when these men made a daring journey
to visit Indian villages on the Atlantic
coast of Nicaragua. During that attack,
two of Mr. Means' companions were
seriously injured. The United States paid
for the evacuation and medical care of
both men. That was just a small symbol
of our commitment to helping the members of Misurasata in their struggle
actinst Sandinista brutality.

I do agree with Mr. Means, however, that much more needs to be done to help all those who are now fighting and dying for their freedom and independence from communist tyranny. Mr. Means just recently experienced firsthand what so many in this country continue to deny: that the Nicaraguan communists have resorted to the most brutal methods to subjugate the entire population of Nicaragua, including the Indians.

As Mr. Means has written, torture,

mass executions and assaults on Indian villages by Soviet helicopter grandings are now the standard instruments of communist repression in Nicaragua, All the victims of these attacks need our support if they are to have any chance of defending themselves. But one point should be clear to everyone, including Mr. Means: There will be no support for any resistance force in Nicaragua if Congress does not approve President Reagan's request for aid to the freedom lighters.

ELLIOTT ABRAMS
Assessed Secretary of State
Perinter-American Affairs
Washington

The Washington Post, March 13, 1986

# Wind STULL THE ANOTHER AND SPEAKER

March 21, 1986

Volume 4 No. 2

## Clem chastized

#### By Anne Georg

Clem Chartier has been writually simpped of all but his title as president of the World Council of Indigen ous Peoples (WCIP)

Chartier was releved of his responsibilities by the Executive Council of WCIP in Geneva, Switzerland in an emergency meeting March 6 to 8 called specifically to discuss the issue. The Executive Council was reacting to Chartier's illegal entrance into Nicaragua in January.

Chartier admis to being somewhat shocked at the negative maction he received from the council. Quite frankly, he says he expected them to be fully supportive of his clandestine activity intended to promote the rights of indigenous people. He says he had no qualins about entering Nicaragga without a visa.

"I have been hearing people for years now stating that Indian nations and people are a sovereign people. On this particular trip I was invited by the leader of three Indian nations and I accompanied him throdgh their methods of transportation. So I did not go through with a government passport. But I did go into Indian communities along the Atlantic coast at the invitation of the leader of these three Indian nations."

While visiting the villages, Chartier collected information from Indian people who spoke freely to him about their concerns. Only days before his underground expedition, Charter had been in Nicaragua officially. He says he was allowed to visit only two Indian communities for one day, accompanied by three government officials and 200 soldiers. His decision to re-enter Nicaragua with Brooklyn Rivera, leader of the political Indian organization Misurasata, was in keeping with WCIP's mandate to protect and promote indigenous selfdetermination acording to Chartier.

But the majority of the WCIP Executive Council believes Chartier has put the WCIP in joopardy both politically and economically. "...politically that people are labelling us as Contras and also that the Nicareguan government may not continue to invite us to take some kind of role in the resolution of the conflict between them and the Indian people: economically, as one of them (Exec utive Council member) so eloquently stated, that organizations in South and Central America are underdeveloped and unforfunately they are 'milliong the same cow' the Sandinis ta's are and the cow might not like what I did to the Sandinista's," Chartier et kollains.

Chartier has brought to light the abuses of the Sandinista government against Nicaraguan Indians that have been acknowledged by Anniesty International. While visiting the Indian VII-lages of Nicaragua's east coast he heard stories about the rape, marder and torture of Indians by the Sandinista soliders.

When the popular 1979 Sandinista revolution swept Nicaragua, the isolated east coast Indians were told that they were free. They were encouraged to adopt policies of the new government. In 1980 they were given a seat in the state advisory body. Indian languages were taught in schools as part of a literacy campaign implemented by the Sandinistas.

But in 1981, when the Sandinista government obtained Indian plans to negotiate Aboriginal land claims and self-determination, they interpreted it as counter revolutionary and arrested 30 Indian leaders. Several days later, while



CLEM CHARTIER
...stripped of power

Indian people were celebrating the end of the first phase of the literacy campaign, security forces arrived to arrest more leaders. Fighting erupted, people were killed and armed struggle was born. Soon after, Indian communities were forcibly relocated to fracture any resistance to government policies. Homes and farmlands were destroxed.

In 1984, Sandinista President Daniel Ortega met with Rivera and the two agreed to initiate peace talks. Although talks have since been stalked, there is relative calm between the Misurasata and Sandinista security forces, Indiana are being resettled in their homelands. But random outbursts do occur.

Chartier says that towards the end of his stay in Nicaragua, the airforce began rocketting and machine gunning a village he was in Chartier suspects the artillery was aimed at his group.

He says the Nicaraguan Indian people are being abandoned for political reasons. They are being overlooked because many left wing-oriented funding organizations will not accept that they are resisting the leftist Sandinista government.

"There are funding agencies that are leftist and

are full supporters of the Sandinists government. By strong persuasive terms nology they have made it known that if the Council doesn't do anything about my activities and continues supporting me in my stand against the Nicaraguan government on this particular issue, they'll cut off the funds."

As president of WCIP, Chartier has visited Nicaragua on several occasions. to mediate talks between the Sandinista government and the Misurasata. The group is recognized by the government as being independent of the Contras and therefore pegotiations are possible between them. Nonetheless, Chartier says that the Council of Indians of South America is fighting to get rid of him to wipe out any association the WCIP may have with the Contras. and to prove to funding agencies they disapprove of his actions in Nicaragua.

of his actions in Procaragiua.

Chartier's duties as president will be kept on hold
until the next General
Assembly of the WCIP. At
the earliest it will be held at
the end of this year. Until
then Chartier will continue
to pursue issues of concern
to him on a personal basis.
He will not resign his presidency because of controversy.

"If I resign, I'm admitting that I'm wrong," he says:

## **NATIONAL EDITION**

# The Globe and Mail

TACHI WAR BU AZZIS ACARMOA S NATIONAL NEW PAPETI MHONDAY, MARCH DA, TIBE

# Leader of native group ousted over contra visit

BY BRIAN MARACLE Special to The Globe and Mail OTTAWA

An international organization representing native people has ousted its president, a Canadian Métis, for making a clandeatine visit to Nicaragua.

The World Council of Indigenous People stripped presidential powers from Clem Chartier for tarnishing the diplomatic image the council wants to project. Mr. Chartier, 40, the former chairman of the Métis National Council, said the WCIP has bowed to government pressure and economic "blackmail" from international and agencies.

Mr. Chartier, a spokesman for the Metra in the constitutional talks, said he snesked into Nicaragua in January to four Miskito Indian villages. The four was aimed at learning first-hand about Sandinista oppression of Indian people, Mr. Chartier and

He travelled with Brooklyn Rivera, Rossell Means and 80 armed troops. Mr. Rivera is a leader of Misurisatia, an organization of Nicaraguan Indians that is at war with the Sandinistas. Mr. Means is the militant leader of the American Indian Movement.

The executive body of the WCIP, meeting in Geneva three weeks ago, asked Mr. Chartier to resign. He refused and the WCIP stripped him of his powers and authority.

Canadian native leaders concurred in the decision to oust Mr. Chartier, a Saskatchewan-born lawyer The WCIP removed Mr. Chartier because his actions tainted the image of the international body, said Georges Erasmus, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

"Up to now, all our main strength has been in statesmanship and playing a democratic, d'plomatic role. The kind of actions taken by Clem take us into another arena. It's taken us a long time to be recognized by world nations and it's not the time to change our policy," Mr. Erasmus said.

Mr. Chartier was elected WCIP president in September, 1984. He argued that the organization's mandate is to act not "as a neutral body between indigenous movements and governments but as advocates... whether they are in armed struggle or not."

The WCIP's presidential election and annual meeting are scheduled to take place later this year in South America.

## IDA funding source of problem says Chartier

SASKATOON (CP) — Clem Chartier says Ottawa and other funding agencies resent his criticism of the Nicaraguan government and are at the root of his troubles with an international organization representing native people.

The Saskatoon-based Metis leader said Monday the big fear of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples is that the Canadian International Development Agency will cut off its support.

The council executive voted earlier this month in Geneva to suspend the 40-year-old lawyer's duties and responsibilities as president on the grounds that an unauthorized visit he and two Indian leaders from the United States made to Nicaragua in January was harmful and inappropriate.

Chartier said the executive is worried the Canadian government, which has provided 90 per cent of the council's funding through grants from the development agency, "may not look favorably upon the kind of action I took."

He said if the development agency decides not to renew its contract with the council, to which it provided \$1 million in the last two years, the blow would be staggering to the 11-year-old body.

The Globe and Mail, March 24, 1986

Prince Albert Daily Herald, March 26, 1986

# Chartier ties' censure to fear of Ottawa

By Earl Fowler of the Star-Phoenix

Clem Chartier says fears that Ottawa and other funding agencies resent his criticism of the Nicaraguan government are at the root of his troubles within an international organization representing native people.

The big fear of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), of which Chartier remains president, is that the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will cut off its support, the Saskatoon Metis leader said

Monday.

The council executive voted earlier this month in Geneva to suspend the 40-year-old lawyer's "duties and responsibilities" as president, on the grounds that Chartier's clandestine visit to Nicaragua in January was harmful and inappropriate. But contrary to some media reports, Chartier did not lose his job altogether.

Chartier and two high-profile Indian leaders from the United States documented many instances of oppression against coastal Indians while in Nicaragua, and have been highly critical of the Sandinista government since their daring escape to a Colombian island in the Caribbean Sea on Feb. 6.

He said the WCIP executive is worried that the Canadian government, which has provided 90 per cent of the WCIP's funding through grants from CIDA, "may not look favorably upon the kind of action I took." Chartier said a WCIP official told him that the Montreal-based Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace has indicated it may withdraw its support of the council because of the covert trip.

If CIDA decides not to renew its contract with the WCIP, to which it provided \$1 million in the last two years, the blow would be staggering to the 11-year-old body, which strives to represent 60 million native people in 28 countries, he added.

Chartier said he thinks the fear that CIDA will end its funding this summer, when the contract expires, is specious.

"It's not a real fear as far as I'm concerned because the Canadian government is not going to take that kind of stand with respect to developmental aid. This is a different political question."

He said the WCIP has used most of the CIDA money to finance development projects in Latin America.

CIDA was evaluating the effectiveness of these programs when the news broke about the illegal trip, which was not sanctioned by the WCIP executive.

Chartier said he will retain his position at least until the next presidential election, expected later this year in Argentina.

"I was asked to resign and I said: 'No, I'm not going to resign for something that I believe is right and proper for me and the council to do."

Chartier said he gave up his salary as president a year ago because of the WCIP's financial straits.

Chartier said he intends to find an apartment in Saskatoon, "and I've got to find some employment."

# Chartier blamed for death of Nicaraguan Miskito Indian

By Gary Taljit of the Star-Phoenix

The death of a civilian was the price of Clem Chartier's visit to Nicaragua, an audience at the Frances Morrison Library was told Monday.

Chartier, a Metis lawyer from Saskatoon who is president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), said he escaped from Nicaragua in February after entering the country illegally to investigate claims by one of that country's native people, the Miskito, of genocide by the Sandinista government.

According to Armando Rojas, a Miskito lawyer and spokesman, Chartier made "a big political mistake" and misrepresented the situation in Nicaragua to Canadians.

The Miskitos are an Indian tribe concentrated in the northern part of Nicaragua.

They began fighting the Sandinista government in 1979 after the Somoza regime was overthrown. This was because they were being treated unfairly by the Sandinistas, who forced them to relocate to other parts of the country where some were killed, said Chartier.

But Rojas said Chartier's version is not true. The Sandinistas made a commitment to the Miskitos that they would be allowed to resettle their former land and they are attempting to forge an agreement that would see indigenous people get local self-government, he added.

Rojas appeared at a meeting sponsored by the Nicaragua Support Committee and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.

Chartier's decision to support a Miskito leader fighting against the government resulted in Sandinista troops firing on and killing a Miskito Indian, Rojas said.

"The military response only took place because Chartier was heading with rebels to take over a village. The Sandinistas gave their word they would attack only if they were attacked first."

The majority of Miskitos are unopposed to the Sandinistas, despite Chartier's reports to the contrary, Rojas said.

The Saskatoon Star Phoenix, March 25, 1986

#### Monday, January 27, 1986

Now about 10:30 a.m., back on other side for past three and one-half hours. Had a good breakfast and bath, also washed some clothes. A lot of oranges and grapefruit in this community. As well, surrounding communities and this one butchered two cows to feed us. At 3 p.m. yesterday, tried until 5:30 p.m. to contact reporter. However, office couldn't locate one. Brooklyn suggested they try Tico Times in morning, Kathleen. Crossed back over and had supper and visited David and other three wounded. Also met doctor; he wants to get out with us.

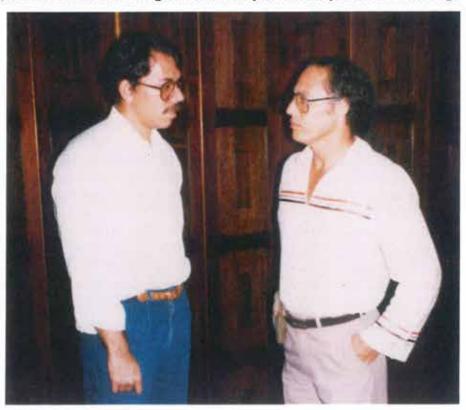
C.C:

About 2:30 on Monday. We're just informed that Tico Times reporters aren't available until six o'clock tomorrow morning so I'm not sure what the next step is going to be.

Went to bed last night at about 9 p.m. Hadn't slept for two days. Problem is no blanket, haven't used one for past one and one-half weeks. No protection from the mosquitoes or the cold. Have only one pair shorts and socks, one t-shirt, one borrowed camouflage shirt and two pairs of blue jeans. Two weeks ago

lost first pair of shorts, week later one sock and day of attack used my ribbon shirt (brown) and third sock for bandages. Realized later was same shirt worn in June when met Ortega and Borge for first time - IRONIC.

After the breakdown of the peace talks in Colombia on May 26, 1985 the WCIP Commission felt that we should meet as quickly as possible with the SANDINISTA government, after having a meeting with MISURASATA who encouraged us to seek the re-opening of the talks.



▲ President Ortega and Clément Chartier, June 1985.

On June 8, 1985 I and Vice-President Donald Rojas met with President Ortega and called upon his government to agree to the re-opening of the talks with a view to arriving at a peaceful solution based on the recognition of Indian rights to land and autonomy within the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state of Nicaragua. At our meeting, Mr. Ortega, while appearing to be open to that prospect, indicated that the National Directorate (the nine revolutionary Commandantes that run the country. These include the two Ortega brothers, along with Commandante Carrion who lead the government delegation at the four rounds of peace talks and Commandante Borge) had just replaced Carrion and that we would have to pursue this initiative with Commandante Borge.

Mr. Borge was also placed in charge of the government's National Autonomy Commission for the Atlantic Coast, along with responsibility for the war on the Atlantic Coast. Mr. Borge is also the last living founding member of the SANDINISTA movement and in his capacity as Minister of the Interior is also in command of the police and security service. Basically, Mr. Borge is one of, if not the most powerful man in Nicaragua.

The National Autonomy Commission was established in response to the aspirations of the Indian communities for autonomy rights as proposed by their resistance. Its creation was announced during the opening round of the peace talks in December 1984. It was apparent at that time that the government took this measure in order to control the direction and content of the autonomy being sought by the Indian peoples and their resistance movement. This manoeuver also brought the government's intention to negotiate in good faith into question.

Also, this a.m., while establishing radio contact with San Jose and confirming Tico Times reporter information, Kathleen and Julia Meeks for p.m. contact, Manco mentioned that when we get out we'll have to visit a doctor for examination, because mentally we were not prepared for what we went through. This got me thinking about last night, woke up and was trying to get out through window. Was latched shut, otherwise, six to seven feet drop. My analysis is that I have been physically and mentally exhausted. Physically, escaping the plane attacks and rescues were strenuous. Then the next day's walking and canoe rides, with very little sleep because of above problems cited, contributed to my exhaustion. Two nights in a row as we were paddling and driving on river had to keep myself from falling asleep because would doze off and feel like was falling overboard. Also, began hallucinating because of the exhaustion. Yesterday's physical exhaustion was exacerbated by the news yesterday of the death of Small Pico and recovery of body of fighter from the lagoon. However, feeling much better today. Waiting to see how we'll execute escape plan revealed to us yesterday. Should also mention that my body, especially my legs, are covered with a lot of bites, welts, sores and scabs. Hank's body is covered with scores of bites or sores which have little puss-centres.

NOTE: Also, during radio contact at 5:00 p.m. yesterday, message given to contact WCIP Ottawa to get notice and telexes of protest from national organizations and regional members and also press Canadian government and national press on this situation.

NOTE: At meeting two nights ago, three witnesses not taped basically represented three communities near Auka and stated in a general sense the following: Witness 1: After bombing attack villagers lived in bush for one and one half years and suffered a lot of hardship. Witness 2: man who said opening prayer and said there is only one recognized and legitimate organization representing the Indian peoples - MISURASATA. Witness 3: thanked the North American representatives and said he never thought they would get this kind of support which is very badly needed.

5:30 p.m. - Back to the village. San Jose informed us that reporter not available until 6 a.m. tomorrow, so at very least all four of us sent messages via San Jose office.

Been informed that we mobilize this evening for a long canoe ride: approximately twelve hours. Just informed by Brooklyn that Bilwi radio monitored and heard contents of National Direction's press communique. Essentially, that Brooklyn and MISURASATA still insisting on having talks outside of country with advisors and government observers and Indian organizations and government not willing, therefore, MISURASATA is opting for war. That MISURASATA was concentrating its forces south of Bilwi for a planned attack and occupation of Bilwi. Also, speedboats bringing supplies and arms so government struck first.



#### Tuesday, January 28, 1986

Left Auka by canoe brigade at 7:30 p.m. and reached Walpasiksa river system, camp for day at 5:30 a.m. Now about 7 a.m. We were able to get our wire service report out to San Jose, Katlyn Randall, who will transmit it to Associated Press and also to her United Press International contacts. Brooklyn was reported as lost in the region.

Tuesday, February 28th, transmission being made, six in the morning, to San Jose, Costa Rica. Bob has just started talking to a reporter by field radio.

B.M:

Of course we are in Nicaragua.

Kathleen (Tico Times reporter): Could you tell me what's happening then?

B.M:

Yes, Kathleen, I am a stringer for Associated Press out of New Mexico and I have written a story here which I would like to dictate to you which

is completely self-explanatory. Over.

K:

Could you repeat that?

B.M:

Okay, I am a television reporter from New Mexico, a television reporter from New Mexico. I write for Associated Press occasionally. I write for Associated Press occasionally, and I have a story here I would like to dictate to you. I have a story, I would like to dictate, which will explain

everything. It will explain everything. Over.

K:

Just a minute okay? Okay, start dictating.

B.M:

Okay, it's rather lengthy. Do you have a tape recorder handy by any

chance.

K:

Yes I do, I'm taping.

B.M:

Okay, very good. I'll start from the top. I'll read it one sentence at a time

and then stop at the end of the sentence.

Here we go, over.

A Nicaraguan Indian group says it confirmed today that American Indian activist Russell Means was among those wounded last week, when a group of North American Indians was caught in a Sandinista bombing attack on a remote Miskitu Indian village. Over.

K:

Repeat after bombing attack please.

B.M:

Repeating after a bombing attack. Sandinista bombing attack on a remote Miskitu Indian village, a remote Miskitu Indian village.

K:

Okay.

B.M:

Continuing with second sentence now.

The Indian resistance group, Misurasata, says, three guards with Means were killed and five others have been wounded. Over.

K:

How many killed? Please repeat?

B.M:

Three killed, three killed, over.

K:

Okay, continue read you.

B.M:

Okay, three killed and five others wounded, continuing now. Two Nicaraguan civilians were also seriously wounded. Over.

Misurasata says it believes the bombing specifically targeted the North American group in what they call an unprovoked violation of a standing cease-fire. Over

K:

Please repeat after the bombing.

B.M:

Repeating after the bombing. Uhm, it believes the bombing specifically targeted the North American group in what they call an unprovoked violation of a standing ceasefire.

K:

Is that "specifically targeted"?

B.M:

That is correct, affirmative, over.

K:

...Repeat please?

B.M:

An unprovoked violation of a standing ceasefire.

K:

Okay, continue

B.M:

The resistance organization says the group was targeted because Indian leader, Brooklyn Rivera, was escorting the North Americans on a secret fact-finding tour, gathering evidence of Sandinista mistreatment

of Nicaraguan Indians. Over.

The Sandinista government continues to prohibit the media and Indian rights groups, like the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, from

access to most of the Indian region. Over.

K:

Repeat after Indigenous People.

B.M:

Okay, from access to most of the Indian region. Over.

K:

Could you repeat that again? Please repeat after Indigenous people?

B.M:

Understand. From access to most of the Indian region. Over.

K:

From access to most of the Atlantic region? Is that correct?

B.M:

That's affirmative, correct.

B.M. to inquiry:

She said Atlantic region, which is close enough.

K:

Please pass it to the radio operator.

B.M:

Standby, standby.

Radio operators have an exchange in Miskitu.

B.M:

Okay, this is Bob, I am back on again Kathleen.

K:

Repeat after most of.

B.M:

Most of the Indian region. Over.

K:

Please repeat after Indigenous people from access.

B.M:

Okay, Indigenous people from access to most of the Indian region.

K:

East of the Indian region?

B.M:

That's correct. Affirmative. Over.

K:

East of the Indian region?

B.M:

Correct. Affirmative. Over. Do you want me to continue?

K:

Please repeat after to most of the E. R.

B.M:

Access to most of the Indian region. Over.

K:

Continue. Over.

B.M:

The WCIP, whose President is with the Rivera party, says it has been working for more than a year on verification of alleged atrocities and getting the Sandinista government to end military actions in the Indian region. Over.

K:

Please repeat. Over

B.M:

Okay, from the top of the sentence, top of the sentence. The WCIP, whose President is with the Rivera party, break.

K:

Please repeat W spelling again, please.

B.M:

Okay, phonetically the spelling of the abbreviation is as follows. This is phonetically. The Whiskey, Charley, India, Papa. Over.

K:

Are you giving me a name? Please repeat.

B.M:

Negative. That is phonetically. That is phonetically. The WCIP, W as in Whiskey, C as in Charley, I as in India, P as in Papa.

K:

Okay, WCIP is with the Rivera party? Is that correct?

B.M:

Yes, the WCIP whose President is with the Rivera party. Over.

K: WCIP's President is with the Rivera party. Over.

B.M: Says it has been working for more than a year. Over.

K: Continue. Over.

B.M: For more than a year on verification of alleged atrocities and.

Over...Are you still there Kathleen.

K: Please continue.

B.M: Okay, verification of alleged atrocities and getting the Sandinista

government to end military actions in the Indian region. Over.

K: Please repeat after alleged atrocities. Over.

B.M: Alleged atrocities and getting the Sandinista government to cease

military actions in the Indian region. Over.

K: Okay, continue. Over.

B.M: Misurasata has been engaged in a five year armed struggle of its own,

seeking autonomy for tribes in eastern Nicaragua. Over.

K: Repeat after seeking autonomy, please. Over.

B.M: Seeking autonomy for tribes in eastern Nicaragua. Over.

K: Please repeat for?

B.M: For Indian tribes in Eastern Nicaragua. Over.

K: Repeat after "autonomy for" again please.

B.M: Okay, autonomy for tribes, I'll spell it. T as in Tango, R as in Romeo, I as

in India, Bas in Boy, Eas in Edgar, Sas in Sierra.

K: Okay, over.

B.M: Okay. In Eastern Nicaragua. Over.

Russell Means, of the American Indian Movement, AIM, was reportedly grazed by shrapnel from one of more than thirty rockets fired on the village of Layasiksa. Over.

K:

Please repeat from after "from one of more than ..." Over.

B.M:

From one of more than thirty rockets fired on the village of Layasiksa, spelling to follow. Over.

K:

On the village of, please repeat.

B.M:

Layasiksa. Spelling as follows: L as in Lima, A as in Alpha, Y as in Yankee, A as in Alpha, S as in Sierra, I for India, K for Kilo, S for Sierra, A for Alpha. Over.

K:

Okay, continue. Over.

B.M:

Other members of the party who were not wounded include the President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, Clem Chartier, do you need a spelling?

K:

Please repeat Layasiksa.

B.M:

Okay, Layasiksa. Other members of the party who were not wounded. Over.

K:

Okay, continue. Over.

B.M:

Include the President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, Over.

K:

Okay, continue. Over.

B.M:

Clem Chartier. Spelling as follows: Clem, C for Charley, L for Lima, E for Edgar, M for Michael. Chartier, C for Charley, H for Hotel, A for Alpha, R for Romeo, T for Tango, I for India, E for Edgar, R for Romeo, Over.

K:

Please repeat the spelling. Over.

B.M: Repeating spelling. Clem Chartier. Clem, C for Charley, L for Lima, E for

Edgar, M for Mike. C, or excuse me, Chartier, Chartier, spelling C for Charley, H for Hotel, A for Alpha, R for Romeo, T for Tango, I for India, E

for Edgar, R for Romeo, Over.

K: Chartier? C for Charley, H for Hotel?

B.M: That is correct. Affirmative. Correct. Affirmative.

K: Okay, continue. Over.

B.M: of Ottawa, Canada.

B.M: The Director of the Survival of American Indians Association, Over.

K: Continue. Over.

B.M: Hank Adams, do you need a spelling? Over.

K: Continue as to Hank Adams.

B.M: of Olympia, Washington, Over.

K: Continue, Over.

B.M: and a television journalist from the United States,

K: Continue after from the United States.

B.M: Bob Martin of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Over.

K: That's Bob Martin, of Albuquerque, New Mexico? Is that correct? Over.

B.M: That is correct. Over.

K: Okay, continue.

B.M: Misurasata, which has it political offices in San Jose, Costa Rica, Over.

K: Continue. Over.

B.M: Has asked the American and Canadian Embassies there, Over.

K: Has asked the American and Canadian Embassies there, is that

correct?

B.M: Correct. Over.

K: Please repeat after political offices in San Jose, Costa Rica. Over.

B.M: Costa Rica, has asked the American and Canadian Embassies there.

Over.

K: Okay, continue. Over.

B.M: to request that Nicaragua cease hostilities in the Indian region and

allow the group to leave. Over.

K: Okay, continue.

B.M: Misurasata says that, while radio communications with the North

American group remain intermittent, at last report, Over.

K: Okay, continue. Over.

B.M: the group was continuing to elude pursuing Sandinista forces. Over.

K: Please repeat after last report. Over.

B.M: last report the group was continuing to elude pursuing Sandinista

forces. Over.

K: Okay, please continue on.

B.M: That's it Kathleen, that's all I've written right now.

K: Can you tell me how many North American Indians are with Russell

Means, please.

B.M: All of them are listed in the copy. There are a total of three, including

Russell Means.

K: And how large is the group with Brooklyn? How many men does

Brooklyn have with him? Over.

B.M: At the moment I cannot answer that.

K: Can you tell me if you are with him or not?

B.M: I cannot tell you that either right now. I can tell you that we have seen

several hundred Indian Misurasata warriors during our visit.

K: Can you repeat that, you have seen several hundred Misurasata

warriors, is that correct?

B.M: That is correct. That is correct. And we have visited more than a dozen

villages in the Indian region.

K: You said Russell Means was lightly wounded. Can you elaborate on

that please?

B.M: He received a superficial flesh wound in the abdomen, a superficial

flesh wound in the abdomen.

K: Okay, that's it?

B.M: I'm sorry. Repeat please.

K: Can you tell me what do you want me do with your copy please?

B.M: Kathleen, could you call that in to Associated Press? You may of course

use it at your discretion, for your publication and the information which you gotten from us and anything else you wish to ask at this time. This will be our last radio communication. You are free to use it as you desire, but I would appreciate it if you would call AP in Washington and feed them the copy as we gave it to you. They can verify my status by

calling the Albuquerque AP bureau.

K: Please repeat. Call the Albuquerque news, is that correct?

B.M: No, negative. Call this copy first to Washington.

K: I'm not reading you. Call in copy to Washington. Is that correct?

B.M: That's affirmative. That would be, do you have the ability to do that?

K: You want me to call in the copy to Associated Press in Washington. Is

this correct?

B.M: That is correct, that is correct. Affirmative, affirmative. They can verify

my reporter status with the Albuquerque office of Associated Press.

Over.

K: Okay, over.

Continuing on tonight for another ten hours or so. Hank and patient's canoe (Imyula) not arrived yet, may have gotten lost. They arrived about mid-afternoon said that they stopped earlier for a rest. Left camp at 5:30 p.m., arriving at a stopping place where supper had been prepared by an advance party. There for approximately one and one-half hours.

### Wednesday, January 29, 1986

At 5:30 a.m., arrived at another jungle area with just enough room for hammocks, place is covered with tree roots. At 10:00 a.m., the doctor treated the two wounded, no painkillers, groans and yelling when squeezing legs to get out infection fluids. Slept that night in canoe, had Kuyu's blanket (poncho liner) so had a good sleep.

#### Thursday, January 30, 1986

Left this camp at approximately 5 p.m. to move to a better spot. On way had to hide in river bush overhang three times, first 5:20 p.m., two push and pull planes, then ten minutes later Aeronica and fifteen minutes later FAS (Sandinista Air Force) warplane. Set up camp at about 6:30 p.m., another wet place but better. Now have a better idea of how fighters live in the bush; hoards of mosquitoes, biting flies and gnats. Also, main staple is rice, rice and more rice. Only slept about fifteen minutes last night, too cold and mosquitoes, etc. Also, 2:30 p.m., now have heard patrol planes this a.m. and currently have over last fifteen minutes heard what appears to be five bomb explosions. On Tuesday evening on river, about 5:45 p.m. heard what appeared to be one bomb. Fighters figure this bombing is around Lapan area, that there is fighting going on. Bombing still happening, 2:45 p.m. and plane currently flying by. Also informed that our boat wasn't allowed to pass Waunta by village leaders as it would be heard by soldiers, may have to move it to this river system by portaging; it's still in the Layasiksa area. Appears there were eight bomb explosions (500 pound) over twenty-minute period.

3:30 p.m. - informed by San Jose that there is heavy fighting going on at Rio Coco and Lapan/Yulu areas between Resistance and SANDINISTAS.

#### Friday, January 31, 1986

Approximately 7 a.m. Had Brooklyn's hammock and poncho liner, best sleep so far yet, only woke up once. Yesterday, fighters caught forty-two fish, so we had a big supper. Villagers bringing only small amounts because we don't want to attract attention and lose our planned escape route (exit) that we have been working on for the past nine days. Informed that boat is now ready and in place, but that SANDINISTAS have moved closer to mouth of exit, villagers will check this out.

With the start of the repression against the Indian peoples the SANDINISTA government, in order to cover up the atrocities committed and to justify their actions, began an international campaign which stated that the Indian peoples were being manipulated by the USA/CIA to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution. However, beginning in 1984 the government in response to international pressure changed its attitude, stating that they had made mistakes and agreed to enter into peace talks with MISURASATA. The government further acknowledged that MISURASATA was not part of the Contras.

However, with the breakdown of the peace talks in 1985 and with this visit to the Indian villages, the government while hoping their autonomy project will succeed, began to spread misinformation to the national and international press that MISURASATA for the first time was meeting with the Contras in the Indian villages: in this case at Layasiksa. This was for the purpose of discrediting the Indian resistance movement MISURASATA, using the U.S. aggression as justification for their continued repression against the Indian peoples and their continued refusal to agree to the re-opening of the peace talks.

Imyula's further information (he arrived back this a.m., three hours by canoe, left yesterday afternoon for intelligence gathering) is that SANDINISTAS are using planes and helicopters for assault on resistance at Lapan. Also, just before falling asleep last night, informed by Brooklyn that just heard on transistor radio that Foreign Ministry of SANDINISTAS issued communique to foreign press to the following effect: that Brooklyn and his (international) supporters are on an international campaign to discredit the SANDINISTA government, saying that government has initiated new series of attacks on Indian communities. They don't understand why Brooklyn and North American delegation went clandestinely, because government has always said Brooklyn is free to visit with international presence and that international organizations are free to visit Indian communities anytime they want.

Also, that we are in a war zone so government can't be responsible if anything happens to Brooklyn or the North American Indian delegation. Also, Means announced on December 27th, that he is joining the counter-revolution and they now know he is with Brooklyn, therefore, this will contribute to bringing more war and destruction and killing.

Also, that Brooklyn is visiting fighters and villagers, therefore, means that he is rejecting government's peace plan and is opting for war.

#### ANALYSIS:

- 1. International pressure must be mounting or escalating, forcing official government response.
- Government trying to set in motion acceptance that we might be killed, because now is a war situation, thereby leaving it open to continue hunting us down, their original action starting with unprovoked and cowardly attack at Layasiksa.

NOTE: Resistance fighters taking action in several places to relieve pressure on our party and facilitate our escape. Also, fighters are vowing that the SANDINISTAS will pay for this cowardly attack at Layasiksa, but are first concerned with our safety, then SANDINISTAS beware.

4:00 p.m. - Villager back about one and one-half hours ago, brought some drink, bread, and tins of Russian pate (sandwich spread). Imyula briefed us just now on information from villager. SANDINISTAS met villagers and informed them that Brooklyn came with 4 Americans to make war. That MISURASATA made attacks first, so SANDINISTAS struck back at Layasiksa. That if Brooklyn and Americans get out, they'll be back and cause more trouble and war, therefore, SANDINISTAS have to kill Brooklyn and Americans. So, villagers must inform if they see or hear of Brooklyn's whereabouts. This confirms my earlier assertions to the effect that SANDINISTAS can't allow us to escape and inform the world of the atrocities they have committed.

After the SANDINISTA troops invaded Layasiksa, some of Bob Martin's abandoned equipment and backpack were found. In the backpack were Bob's daily notes which he had forgotten to remove. The notes contained a significant amount of information, including accounts of the repression relayed to us, thus enabling the SANDINISTAS to know how much information we were able to obtain and from whom and where. This find was confirmed in the New York Times by their reporter who was flown to Layasiksa by the government in order to see the so-called evidence which proved that the CIA had been in Layasiksa with Brooklyn and MISURASATA. The reporter was able to briefly review the notes and use a quote in his article, basically describing our apprehension of a pending SANDINISTA attack.

Imuyla also informed us that now rather than going to the boat at Waunta tonight, we will just move camp and they'll be bringing the boat near here so motor can be fixed, spare parts in Walpasiksa. The second motor on a separate boat was damaged in the first attack. We need two motors in order to guarantee safe passage by sea. Imyula explained that escape by land was virtually impossible because of the amount of walking and the wounded. Also, KISAN offered help to escape by land, but the political implications for MISURASATA are too high, as KISAN would take full credit and publicity.

Also, three days ago San Jose (Marcos) said they would send a rescue boat, but put on hold because SANDINISTAS are controlling bars and patrolling by air and sea. Some vague and, I suppose, wishful thinking about rescue by helicopter.

### Saturday, February 1, 1986

Twelfth day of escape. Left our camp by Walpasiksa at 5:00 p.m., few minutes later, had to hide in canoe in river growth, FAS (San. Air Force) plane passed overhead but high altitude. Arrived at new camp at 10:00 p.m. appears was more than just moving camp. Slept in my own hammock, however, had four empty food sacks which I used as blanket, not cold, but were some mosquitoes. Hearing planes for past few days, is now 9:00 a.m. and four planes have passed nearby, probably closer to coast. Boat is apparently nearby, still waiting for motor part. Camp is near village of Walpasiksa on the Supa river, an area where people from Walpasiksa come and work the land.

Now 3:00 p.m. By 2:00 p.m. total of six planes heard. Now radio contact being made with San Jose. Bob, Russell and Hank appear to be getting desperate, especially Bob. From this A.M.'s radio contact, informed that members of Hank's organization and Russell's brother arrived in San Jose. Russell sending message to brother asking him to enlist Jesse Jackson and also for Bill to go to Managua and demand cessation of attacks and safe passage (Brooklyn's response: Are we begging the SANDINISTAS?). Hank's message is to the United States Embassy in San Jose to send a helicopter and he'll pay the costs, gave their names and passport numbers, I didn't give name. As well, they'd like to take up KISAN's offer.

Brooklyn mentioned to me that the messages are meaningless and that they are getting desperate, but agreed with me that psychologically it's good to let the messages go. Fighters especially notice Bob's condition.

4:30 p.m. - Bilwi radio just read off communique of Jose Gonzales, first in Spanish, now in Miskitu. Essentially stated a number of points and regarding bombing said on January 21st unknown aircraft flying around Kukalaya and Layasiksa, FAS (San. Air Force) went to investigate and was attacked by two speedboats of FDN (Contras) which were in lagoon at Layasiksa. So FAS (San. Air Force) counterattacked for defensive purposes and protection of communities and believe several Contras were killed. They will continue protecting the villages, etc. Also, about one hour earlier, Bilwi radio repeated the Foreign Minister's communique of two nights ago, regarding Brooklyn's rejection of peace and autonomy, international campaign, Means and December 27th statement of 100 warriors, here illegally and in war zone where war is organized and supported by CIA/USA and can't guarantee safety of North Americans, etc. Couldn't make radio contact with San Jose this afternoon.

#### Sunday, February 2, 1986

Day 13. Luck finally ran out, had rain last night, however, was relatively soft rain for several hours, didn't get wet, had my blanket of sacks and rubber suit covering me, although hammock sitting crooked and hard to sleep, didn't fall asleep until after the rain started, close to 12 a.m. About 7 p.m. last night, Lobo and others returned with a load of sugarcane and they had also shot two wild pigs. At 8:30 a.m. had pig and duzen. This a.m. still not able to reach San Jose, can receive but not transmit, batteries are too weak, try again at 3 p.m.

Bob quite dejected. Also, further discussion of group last night, more description of SANDINISTAS approach to villagers. They brought that Russian meat tins and when people complained about high cost of living, lack of salt and medicines, SANDINISTAS said they could send for a helicopter immediately if they were informed where Brooklyn was, would bring food and medicine.

Also, that if Brooklyn and group not killed then would be escalation of war and SANDINISTAS would be too busy protecting the villages to be able to continue or to bring food and medicines. Also SANDINISTAS said they believe we're in the northern part, near Sandy Bay, but if villagers find out any news to let them know immediately. Also, upon reflection, communique (nine points) of Sub-Commandante Jose Gonzales (Ministry of the Interior - MINT) listed a number of so-called attacks. Including, actions by KISAN, all in 1986 and where we were involved they didn't mention Brooklyn or MISURASATA, just saying unknown forces, FDN contras organized by USA. Also, about 8 p.m. another communique by Gonzales saying they are still willing to continue with KISAN members in Yulu.

It is clear that communiques for international purpose and national (Bilwi - Atlantic Coast) purpose are taking different approaches. At noon, we changed camp sites about half-hour down river. Bob felt moved was because village people warned of planes. Brooklyn says no such problem and currently not sure how long we'll be here.

NOTE: SANDINISTA attack happened two days after MISURASATA commandantes and Brooklyn had asked Means to their meeting and informed him that American Indian warriors (100) are not required but that aid should be in supplies.

NOTE: SANDINISTAS also want to kill Brooklyn as explained to village leaders because warriors will give up and come out of the bush if they have no international support and supplies. They feel with Brooklyn gone, the resistance will fold. Also, villagers had written letters to SANDINISTAS asking them to remove troops, officials also responded by saying if Brooklyn captured/killed then no further need for soldiers there.

#### Monday, February 3, 1986

Arias wins election in Costa Rica, good for MISURASATA. 6 p.m. last night, Brooklyn informed me that SANDINISTAS have bombed Kuamwatla and coastal area, therefore, that option of escape is out. Imyula found boat, gas lines missing, Lobo sent on mission to return with boatsmen and boat. Also, Imyula stated that had to go in hiding as plane was searching/circling that area. This a.m. after radio contact with "Tuntin", Brooklyn informed us that SANDINISTAS not only bombing Kuamwatla and area (Sunday), also bombing Wawa (Saturday).

Oscar Arias was the presidential candidate representing the party that formed the government. The policy of the government prohibited the operation of the FDN (Contras) within Costa Rican territory. It was felt that Arias' government would continue that policy. Otherwise Contra (FDN) involvement in Costa Rica would create problems for MISURASATA, as they are constantly persecuted by the FDN who are based in Honduras.

Still sticking to Plan A, to go out somewhere between Walpasiksa and Haulover and head north. Can't walk out because some members of party not able to and because of wounded. Brooklyn also informed us that SANDINISTAS have moved troops by helicopter to Kisuta. It is apparent that they are concentrating their efforts on killing us, at great expense, coast guard patrolling waters by Costa Rican waters and planes and helicopters flying, small craft in lagoons where there are troops. Imyula and Diplo sent on a mission this a.m. More pig meals today, plus sugarcane. Didn't sleep well last night, mosquitoes and light rain all night, then fifteen-minute downpour at daybreak. 2 p.m. and camp still damp. Also, villager (leader) arrived. Got his testimony on tape.

Cries of pain.

C.C:

The sounds you just heard were David. It's now Wednesday, January 29th. It's 10:00 a.m. and the Doctor is changing the wounds on the wounded.

Today, February 3rd, one of the village leaders from Walpasiksa is with us and he has some information that is pertinent to our situation.

B.R. interpreting:

Fifteen Sandinista soldiers and officers went to our villages, village of Walpasiksa on Saturday, February 1st. And they had a meeting with the people. They start to explain how the group arrived in the coastal area, that we entered through one bar and then visit Kuamwatla and then Prinzapolka and later travel by the sea again and arrived to Waunta and spent a few days and meet with the people, then we visit Layasiksa.

Brooklyn is visiting the region with other, four Americans and he is preaching more war to the people and bringing more suffering and bloodshed to the people. Because of that, the people are now facing all these problems.

And Brooklyn is promoting war, more war. And he is rejecting the government's peace proposal. And because of that we are persecuting him and we will be persecuting all over the region, until we will capture him. Because we will not allow him back to leave the country. And we will do whatever is possible until we will capture Brooklyn and the group.

So we are asking to the villagers to help us to find Brooklyn and the group. And we ask to the villagers, when they will find out where Brooklyn is, just communicate right away to the military, in the villages and then we can send soldiers to that area, in order to capture. And this is a special demand of this government to all the Indian people in these villages.

And their caution to the people are: "We are talking clearly to you the villagers. If any ones of you will help to this group and Brooklyn to hide, or to avoid our capture and help them to feed - then we will never forgive you, just will execute you right away if we know that some of you are helping this group".

And also they demand to the villagers to get together all around the government and take open arms to fight against the warriors and try to wipe out them, kill all the warriors and this group and then we will be free, our country will be free and all our needs will be, get it. Otherwise, there will be more suffering if we fail to eliminate this group, and the problem with Brooklyn.

Also, they are saying that the government are ready to provide supplies, food, medicines and money to all the villages. But the government is concerned that these supplies and resources will be given to the warriors and to this group. And because of that, the government still have these resources in their hands. And asking to the people to get together around the government and help to find or search this group and to fight against the warriors. Then the government will be giving all these supplies and money to the villagers.

And we, as a leader, have been learning that all these threats are truethe government people are practising them at the present time. For instance, in all our villages, there is a shortage of everything. We don't see any basic needs or basic things that we need for our people. The government stopped sending things like salt and others for the villages that we don't produce there. And also they stopped all our people that went to Puerto Cabezas during these days. They are almost in prison in town. They cannot come back in these days. And our people are really suffering. Because of that, we are asking to our leader to do whatever is possible for these difficult situations that we are facing.

We feel that with this new year, the situation is getting worse than before last year, because they start with their new escalation of repression against our communities. They start to capture and to bomb and to kill again our people and we are really concerned about this new escalation of violence and we don't know what will be the future. But we see that all the villages are occupied militarily and we don't have a chance even to mobilize freely in order to get our subsistence in our villages.

Since three days ago, the air force is bombing Wawa community and around the area. All the jungle, savannas or the coastal area. The aviation are bombing indiscriminately to the people. And we have learned that just two days ago they shot, the aviation, to one motor with civilians. And we know that they kill all the people who were traveling in this boat. And also, the leaders of this community, Wawa, was captured and up to the date, we don't know about the fate of the leader, if he is still alive or was killed, or in prison. Gedna Allan.

Three of the villages, Lapan, Layasiksa and Kukulaya - all the Indians had to fled from their villages and hide in the bush because the Sandinista aviation were bombing these villages. And we hear that several people have been killed, including children and elders. Because of that, the people are in the bush. These villages are occupied militarily at the present time. And our people are still in the bush hiding because some of them tried to return to their village but the soldiers captured them and sent to Puerto Cabezas, Bilwi. Because of that, our people are afraid to return to their villages. And of course, they are suffering a lots, you know, lack of food and medicine, and there is lots of illness and sickness in the bush and they are starving in this condition.

Of course, this is nothing new for the Miskitu people since we have been experiencing this cruel reality since many years ago. The Sandinistas committed many atrocities against our people. They executed, they captured, they imprisoned, they beat and tortured and many of our people are still handicapped and still sick because of this mistreatment. But now, our people are decided to continue facing this situation and never give up from their resistance at the present time.

The community of Walpasiksa has about six hundred inhabitants and in 1982, the Sandinista sent four hundred soldiers in this community and they invaded the.....

END OF TAPE ELEVEN SIDE TWO

\* Last tape of trip has been lost.

Also, now 4 p.m., further information that SANDINISTAS are confiscating motors and gas from villagers. Also arrested a villager who had a little bit of gas for his power-saw, taken to prison in Bilwi. SANDINISTAS know we're short of gas and are cutting off all sources. Currently we have one and one-half drums (55 gallons each) with potential of eighteen gallons more. On tape there is testimony that SANDINISTAS sunk motor boat on way to Bilwi, everyone killed, not known how many. Also, village leader (not on tape) mentioned that Hazel Lau has stated that SANDINISTAS will be bombing for six days this week and also that people shouldn't move around, e.g. go fishing etc., this was communicated to all government-delegated people in villages. Brooklyn not sure if she is just cautioning the people or if she is involved in his capture, e.g. if Brooklyn not turned over will be six more days of bombing.

Clear that SANDINISTAS are bombing and terrorizing potential areas we could be and where we have been. Will be trying for Wednesday escape.

Approximately 4:30 p.m. Jose David Zuniga, FSLN party representative in Bilwi, giving long speech mentions for first time have evidence that MISURASATA is allowing FDN into Indian communities, that MISURASATA was meeting with FDN to attack government, that two speedboats attacked FAS so they fought back. Also, all forces and SANDINISTA people along with military and MINT, by plane, helicopter, and marine are searching down the group. The members of the group will never be forgotten and must be caught (three gringos). That Brooklyn has in December/January been organizing for war, that he rejects ceasefire and talks in Managua and isn't consulting the people on autonomy. Also says they are now organizing a peace march to denounce this war preparation and telling villagers to only give food to fighters in talks, not those not.

Also not to allow fighters in communities, otherwise, everyone will be bombed. Also challenged fighters to come out of villages and fight the people of Nicaragua in the open. Also Brooklyn informed us that village leaders are going to organize an activity at the church the night we exit, that they will turn on a generator for lights, which runs very loud and that we could then slip out unheard.

Also, leaders, after our escape will be leaving for the bush because of certain reprisal. Already repression against leaders, for example, leader of Wawa already arrested. At meeting in Layasiksa, he and seven others expressed fear or apprehension of that happening and we were going to publish their names with human rights organizations.

Watson Chow (Lazaro), "Radioman"

#### Tuesday, February 4, 1986

Day 15: Lobo, Lazaro and Relampago returned about 6:30 p.m. with boat, however, no motormen. Imyula and Diplo hopefully will bring them today. Should be moving to coast tonight and slip out into the ocean Wednesday evening. Another night of basically no sleep, too many mosquitos.

New communique read on Bilwi radio ordering several villages, basically Wawa to Kuamwatla, to go to Puerto Cabezas and register their outboard motors. Mid-afternoon, two villagers arrive, also mechanic and Eustace are at the boat. We are informed that Auka and Mango have been bombed on Saturday, and Auka invaded by 100 SANDINISTAS. Also, elders of Walpasiksa are concerned about Brooklyn's whereabouts and safety, because of security reasons, village leaders, haven't even informed the elders of our whereabouts. Elders are saving we must find him (Brooklyn) and

if necessary fight to protect our leader. Spoke to the two village leaders and have taped statement from one of them, both have suffered repression together and related atrocities, seven youth mass grave. Six of them are Lobo's cousins.

Motor has been fixed, Eustace is here, we have eighty-five gallons of gas, possibly just enough to make it to Honduras. Approximately 5 p.m. breaking camp moving closer to bar for departure tomorrow night. Eustace related his experience, attended meeting with SANDINISTAS, caught a ride in their boat and assured them that if saw the hunted party would turn them in. Just fourteen days ago, Eustace was a SANDINISTA target in the lagoon! This meeting took place in Waunta and the SANDINISTAS said wanted Brooklyn and the rest of the group otherwise war and suffering will continue. However, says no direct threats were made to the villagers at that particular meeting. Confirmed that there was bombing at Waunta area and that planes still fly around the village every now and then. Also, stated that fortunately, the carburetor wasn't damaged, only a plastic bulb-type filter on the new motor so both 55s working fine, as long as have enough gas, no problem reaching Honduras, as long as make the bar and evade coast guard.

### Wednesday, February 5, 1986

Day 16: Left camp last night at 5:30 p.m. using the big canoe (boat) and one motor, running slow (two and one-half hours) to area one-half mile from Walpasiksa, same area we were in five to six days ago. Heard the surf pounding most of the night, a very welcome sound. Also, reminded Bob to monitor radio station Bilwi when we were on the river (Supa then Walpasiksa) and as he turned it on Jose David Zuniga speech was being played for the second day in a row, about 6:30 p.m., got most of it on tape.

The speech is full of lies and of course, is for their propaganda purposes and attempts to confuse the Indian communities and peoples. Moved camp at 6 a.m. a few hundred yards down narrow river in more dense jungle-growth and now boat and motors are camouflaged.

Patients (wounded) are still in the boat. It is now about 8 a.m. The wounded had been in their little canoe for about a week except for the third and fourth of February where at yesterday's camp a shelter had been constructed for them; slept there two nights. Problem is need for flexibility and rapid movement. Also, this a.m. could hear the SANDINISTAS target practicing. We will now be in this spot until late afternoon/early evening and then move towards the bar and exit in the dark. Most of the folks are hanging around in hammocks, I'm remaining on the boat with Eustace.



### Thursday, February 6, 1986

At 8:30 a.m., Miskut and I were listening to the FSLN/Zuniga speech and afterwards he said its very important that we get out the truth to the world. That the resistance is in need of equipment, munitions, arms, heavy artillery against the planes. That the world cannot deny that they have the right to fight for their rights in face of what the SANDINISTAS have done to them.

That it is the Indian peoples who want peace, but are in a resistance against government aggression. If the SANDINISTAS really want peace and are willing to stop their aggression, all they have to do is accept the proposal put forward by the people through their leader Brooklyn Rivera. Also, he related to me that he witnessed a massacre at the Rio Coco (Cabo Gracias A Dios), and that there were numerous massacres along the Rio Coco. Some people were tied in their homes then burned alive. Also, people were drowned or drowned while trying to escape. Doesn't know how many, however, bodies would surface in different places. As well, on the forced march to the relocation camps, the elderly incapable of walking were shot by the soldiers.

Village leaders then arrived with some coffee and bread for us. We can't make a fire or use two-way radio, because we are too close to the SANDINISTAS. Haven't had radio contact with San Jose since Saturday, four days now, they must be worried. Approximately 10:30 a.m. chopper just passed by, fighters scrambled for their weapons, nothing happened.

Today is a day of heightened feelings and great expectations of successful send-off, however, at any minute, anything could go wrong. Yesterday, because of this I wrote a four-page letter to Canada outlining some of the testimony and the past fifteen days' pursuit and SANDINISTAS' lies. Gave it to Brooklyn, to give to one of the commanders. If for one reason or another, we don't make it, hopefully the letter will. Its now about 10:45 a.m. and the village leaders are leaving. Everything should now be put in place for tonight: they also brought five gallons of gas so far today.



### San Andres, Colombia

San Andres, Colombia. At about 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday last villager showed up to give last up-dated information to Brooklyn. Fighters had already met, so they then made their final briefing. At about 5 p.m. some fighters started to mobilize. Brooklyn got the four guests together and told us to listen closely. Stated that everything was in place for tonight and that we were attempting to leave no matter what happens, even if we have to fight to get through. That we, the five of us, would walk to the last point in the bar and get in the boat there as it will have passed a lot of the fire (gun) area. That it would be dark, no one is to talk: walk and run if necessary. That each one of us must begin thinking of reaching and getting into the boat, not to worry about anyone else, just "get in the boat", "get in the boat" and think of nothing

else. Especially if the battle is going on.

Each of us having one fighter to escort us, I had Diplo assigned to me. That we had to make sure we reached the boat together, if for any reason, any reason at all, someone doesn't make it then the boat will leave without them, because escape has to be made immediately with those who arrive first. A situation of emergency and need for rapid action. Also, that village was ready to put escape plan into place. We all said we understood and began to mentally and physically prepare ourselves, tying boots securely, glasses tied on, dark clothes. Also, must be empty-handed, everything to stay in boat, all or nothing attempt at escape.

At 5:30 - 5:45 p.m. started moving the boat toward the river from a small creek where we spent the night and day in two locations on tree roots and boat under branches and trees which covered the creek, also camouflaged quite well and after helicopter fly by, only wounded could stay in boat. At about 6:15 - 6:30 p.m. started paddling into river, only one- quarter to one-half mile to village and bar. Fighters came and plan changed.





Everyone now to stay in the boat, instructed to lay on boat floor and not make a sound. Brooklyn and Imyula paddling, extra paddle, so was helping paddle from front with Brooklyn. After about fifteen minutes was instructed to give paddle to Eustace, the head of motormen. Also, other two motormen, Eddy and Mauricio, refused to come back with us so Commander Imyula was pressed into service, so had two motormen.

Under ordinary circumstances three motormen are required, two to operate the two outboard motors while the third one bails out the water that splashes into the boat (33 foot dugout canoe). Two of the three motormen that came with us decided that they couldn't carry on any further because they had narrowly escaped with their lives on two previous occasions in addition to this one. However, Eustace, the head of the motormen, did not let that stop his continued participation. Fortunately, one of the MISURASATA commanders, Imyula, had experience with motors so he volunteered to go back with us.





The motors which powered our dug-out canoe. Top photo is a close-up of bullet damage.

A few minutes later, three villagers came to the boat and took over the paddling, everyone else got on the floor. After a while, could hear the village, narrow river, heard the people at the church singing loudly (at 5:30 bells had rang, could hear from our camp). At any moment shooting could take place. At places Eustace had said river only about 50 - 75 yards wide. Then heard more village noise, and then saw about five, what I thought were flares, to be followed by SANDINISTA machine guns, mortars and grenades. All this time we were staring straight up into starry sky, on a clear and calm night. Then villagers started poling, surf pounding now and boat starting to bob in the water, good sign, encouraging but mental tension very heightened.

All this time, several canoe loads of resistance fighters were escorting the boat ready to try and protect us. The villagers paddled and poled close to shore opposite village and SANDINISTA post. Then reached the last point where we were supposed to have walked to. More villagers; brought bread, water and more gas. Also informed Brooklyn that helicopter had gone to Layasiksa and rounded-up twenty-nine youth and transported them to Bilwi, not certain of what is happening to them. Then some farewells with villagers and warriors. Should be noted that just before dark, several canoe loads of villagers left in view of soldiers, to bar area to fish, so soldiers knew villagers were around mouth of river leading to the sea (called bars), so any noise would be viewed to being made by villagers.

Also, Brooklyn thought the flashes were fireworks, Imyula later said that they were tracer bullets shot off by a SANDINISTA to contribute to noise being made. Still not sure what it was. Also, as we passed village and church, Brooklyn said "look Clem, the village". I was able to take a peek over the side of the boat. Village was dark, however at church, lights were on and people inside and outside of church, appeared to be a fire outside as well, and people moving around. Could hear the people singing. As well, as we



were reaching the village, could hear the generator which was being used to light the church and coverup noises from the river and bar. Then the villagers in our boat pushed us away from the shore, motors were started up, villagers jumped into their canoes and we started moving out. Were moving slowly so soldiers wouldn't hear the motors, however, ready to open them up and make a run for it if soldiers opened fire. Got out without incident. Left the bar into open sea at approximately 7:30 p.m. At the front Brooklyn mentioned we still had options; Honduras, Costa Rica or San Andres. That villages down the coast, Sandy Bay Sirpi, etc., had a drum of gas for us at a cay and had been waiting for us for the past two to three days so could get to Costa Rica, however, at daybreak would still be in Nicaragua side, not yet to Costa Rica border. So we decided to head to Honduras, which was closest. Only had 95 - 105 gallons of gas. Motors each use 6 gallons per hour, therefore, only had twelve gallons per hour. After about one hour from bar encountered three coast-guard cutters, first one alone, then two which seemed to be closing in on us, did evasion, had both motors wide open, first half to one hour running slow so motors not heard. Because of so much coast-guard, Brooklyn gave orders to change heading for international waters and getting away from potential detection by coast guard or aviation in the morning. Decision to head toward San Andres. Within view of coast guard search lights approximately eleven times. At 5:30 a.m. of day seventeen of escape, in the daybreak, we spotted one light which then appeared to be a fishing boat, then another fishing boat. I thought (we thought) we were at least 100 miles out in international waters having run about eight hours at full speed, then Eustace spotted two islands which were identified as Corn Islands, Nicaragua, which are about twenty-four miles off the coast and several hours south of the point where we left. We basically traveled south/east rather than east because our compass was not functional. So we quickly had to change course and run towards the east to slightly north. Eustace was able to take a visual bearing towards San Andres. We weren't sure about gas, but felt only chance was to get out to sea as far as possible and possibly run into a ship.

Running full-speed for two to three hours then boat front started splitting and taking on water, besides the waves splashing in. Constant bailing by the four North Americans. Also, (during the night) I was at front with Brooklyn watching out for coast guard. Brooklyn got cold so went under plastic and for next three to four hours I kept guard, only one coast guard after that period. Constant splashing lashing our bodies and eyes, very painful and cold. Also, hitting the waves was very jolting to the body and at times quite painful. At about 1:30 p.m., after we had been running about half-speed with two motors for two to three hours, started having problems with motors, power packs burning out. Finally, could only run with one motor, half speed, assuming we were on course. We started planning alternatives.

Bob and Eustace were talking about having to rig up a sail after burning up one more tank of gas (5 gallons) and not sighting San Andres. The idea was then to sail all night to the south and then use what was left of gas, about 40 gallons, to drive west to hopefully the Costa Rican coast. I wasn't very pleased about this alternative, because we could just as easily end up back on the Nicaraguan coast. Also, prevailing winds would take us right back to Nicaragua if we had no alternative but to drift. Eustace mentioned we should start thinking of rigging up a sail, Bob started looking for material, poles and two-by-four railing on boat. In meantime, we were drifting for about twenty to thirty minutes while motors were being repaired, the power packs.

I mentioned to Bob that we should leave it to Eustace to begin making the sail, etc., so we don't create any hassles, he agreed. Brooklyn got involved in discussion and said that we have to keep heading east using up all our gas and hope we will run into somebody friendly, we have to stay in a safe place, not take a chance on returning to or near Nicaraguan water, because of air force and coast guard. Must take our chance out in open sea. I agreed and felt very elated about this decision. Even as it was, I had an uneasy feeling that search planes of SANDINISTAS could show up at any time, even if we were in international waters, particularly if they heard us leave the bar, which is possible, because of the coast guard activity that we encountered.

Motor fixed and we continued our eastern run, half-speed. A few minutes later, for a second time, once a few minutes earlier, while we were drifting, I held Bob's hand while he stood on boat sideboards to keep his balance and examine horizon. First time nothing. About twenty minutes, second time, bouncing too much to stand in same place, so moved down to stand on barrel, laying flat. After three minutes, and after I said, may as well forget it, Bob said, one more scan then stated "Maybe, maybe, maybe that's land over there" squeezing my hand harder with excitement. At front, Brooklyn jumped up on bow and excited, confirmed, "yes, that has to be land". Everyone yelling and cheering ecstatically. Five minutes later, started eating a few more buns and tortillas, what was left, we had a little bit before (each one bun) and drank more water. Also, they ate our one sugarcane while I was bailing and didn't want to chew



sugarcane at same time. Feeling very excited, however, still apprehensive that SANDINISTA planes could show up and get us because they can't afford to let us escape.

We finally reached shore at 6:30 Colombia time (5:30 p.m. Nicaragua time), after 22 hours at sea. Also, day before had one bun and a bit of coffee, couldn't chance making fire, etc. Police arrived quickly at beach-site and took wounded to hospital. Two hospitalized and two walking wounded treated and sent to police station where rest of us taken. They took one pistol and one M-14 rifle, said would return them. At first, some overtones of possible incarceration and hassles, but Brooklyn and I kept dropping names



Norman Molina (Yull) from Big Sandy Bay

of President and External Affairs Minister and Brooklyn ,the Governor of San Andres. Also Red Cross brought us some dry clothes and somebody gave us Pepsi and crackers. At police station about four hours while they tried to straighten everything out and contact central government. They also kept my film and cassettes and camera, but later gave me back my notes and said would return rest of stuff later and gave me this paper I'm writing on. At 11-11:30 p.m., took us to a small/cheap hotel, rather than jail cells, no water, so ten minutes later said would move down the street to another. Went to resort hotel, Cacique Tone. Here we were in a plush hotel, with some guests in the lobby, unkempt, some wet, and barefoot, being checked-in by the police and civil-clothed government authorities.

Showered and put on Red Cross clothes. Coffee brought, then meals of chicken or meat and cokes and more coffee. Then a good night's sleep after watching English-spoken news on US channel CNN. Tried making a collect call to Claudia, but was later told must wait until 8 a.m., woke up just before 8 and put in the call. Explained safety, etc., to Claudia and she will inform everyone I'm okay. Much interest and concern, people, family and press. Also not sure if contras or SANDINISTAS after us. She'll phone Andres, WCIP.

Because of the misinformation spread by the SANDINISTAS since the start of the repression in 1981, and the blind support and echo of the support groups internationally, the people outside of Nicaragua generally blame the Contras for any reported atrocities. In this case, internationally, many people were not sure who was persecuting our group. Additionally, upon my return to Canada, many SANDINISTA supporters continued to maintain that the planes that attacked us belonged to the Contras.

While this was a case of continuing repression by the SANDINISTAS, it is also true that on other occasions and on a continuing basis, MISURASATA is indeed subjected to persecution and harassment by the FDN (contras), with the complicity of the CIA and the Honduran army.







Clem in Red Cross supplied clothes with David.

MISURASATA is not allowed into Honduran territory to visit their people in the refugee camps and when attempts are made to visit, the MISURASATA leaders are arrested at the airport and subsequently deported.

An exception was made in mid-1986 when Mr. Rivera was finally allowed into the country, however not without great difficulty. The previous policy has since been followed with a MISURASATA political leader being detained in mid-December, 1986 and deported, although his travel documents were in order.

Because MISURASATA maintains its policy of seeking the re-opening of the peace talks and the potential for a co-existence with the SANDINISTA government based on the recognition of land and self-government rights within the sovereignty of the state of Nicaragua, the CIA and the Contras view Mr. Rivera and MISURASATA as a threat.

There have been plots of assassination by the CIA against Mr. Rivera, however, none have been successfully put into place to date. As a consequence, Mr. Rivera faces repression and possible death from both sides, neither of which has exhibited any real concern about the recognition of legitimate Indian rights.

Coffee brought to room and then breakfast, ham and eggs, more coffee and hot chocolate and juice. Then Admiral came and explained we are all at perfect liberty and that they would assist us in getting flights out. Also, will return our stuff but would like a copy, so because of lack of time to duplicate, could we send them copies, we agreed. They also agreed (they met us four separately) that Brooklyn could fly out and they would reprovision the boat to continue to Costa Rica. The two in hospital would be staying about one month. Treated very well by the authorities and they're interested in getting more information from us later on.

NOTE: Once we were underway at sea, after deciding on Honduras, Brooklyn said he hadn't told us everything. The last report from villager included information that five SANDINISTA officials were at the village and stated that they had the great leader pinpointed to the area and that they would be getting us. That several hundred SANDINISTAS backed up by helicopter and dogs, would be making a sweep from Waunta. They felt sure that their dragnet would capture us soon. This is why we had no alternative but to leave that night, otherwise, escape route would be completely sealed and movement of escape hampered by physical condition of some of us and by presence of the wounded. Over past few days, as reports came in, could see them moving closer from the three sides with bombings of villages and, of course, that helicopter that flew by close to our camp. This, of course, coupled with statements and FSLN speech that they are after our heads and wouldn't leave alive. Unfortunately, because of lack of tapes, and FSLN speech recorded in three segments, Bob missed three to five minutes including statement that they were after our heads and were using everyone to hunt us down, including more lies about the Layasiksa events. (Approximately 11:00 a.m., day after the 17th and last day of our escape).

February 8, 1986

## Statement by David Rodriguez

### San Andres, Colombia

Translated from Spanish

I would like to offer greetings to all our brothers from the Métis Nation and to all our Indigenous brothers of Canada. I would like to bring to your attention an article that our brother Kevin Daniels wrote, with false information he supposedly obtained. I believe the Indigenous struggle can only be lead by Indigenous peoples, and not those foreign ideas coming from other parts of the world, that interfere with the struggles of our peoples. I believe we are conscious of the fact that we are an Indigenous people, and that as such, we identify ourselves all over the world. I participated in the International (Indigenous) Youth Conference in Canada (Batoche Centenary), in July and August, and I witnessed support coming from many other people interested in our struggle. However, I saw that our fellow Kevin Daniels has different school of thought (ideological tendency), which is dire, and suggested to him that he rectify his ideas a bit, ideas he painted to us.

To all Métis people, to all our Indigenous brothers in Canada, we send you a warm fraternal greeting and we ask you again to support us in our struggle and to give us your endorsement and the will to keep on fighting for our peoples. Only an Indian can save an Indian. As such, Indian brothers do not falter; the struggle is ours, and the victory is that of all Indian peoples. Brothers, thank you very much and accept sincere greetings on behalf of your brother, David Rodriguez.

#### Thank you.



▲ Batoche Centenary, 1985. David Rodriguez in centre of photo.



# Transcript of Press Conference Brooklyn Rivera Addressing Press Translated from Spanish

··· treatment given by the Sandinista regime to the MISURASATA Indigenous people. Two: confirm the supposed change in the pacification policy of the FSLN towards Indigenous Peoples. Three: express international solidarity for the MISURASATA people. The first fifteen days of the tour went normally; visiting around ten Indigenous communities south and west of Bilwi, Puerto Cabezas, living with thousands of Indigenous people in the communities and liberated areas under the protection and guidance of a mobile group of Indigenous resistance warriors.

During this time, the delegation received various testimonials as proofs and denunciations of the atrocities committed by the Frente Sandinista against the Miskitu, Sumu and Rama peoples. Between January 21 and February 6, the international delegation went through parts of the tragedy that took place: bombing, military persecution, etc. that our people had to suffer through at the hands of the Frente Sandinista regime for the past five years.

On that first day, January 21st, the delegation was attacked three times by the Sandinista air force, by way of indiscriminate bombing with rockets in the community of Layasiksa, 35 miles south of Bilwi, in the lagoon and close to the community. The consequences were painful: three deaths, seven injured civilians and escorts of the delegation, partial destruction of Layasiksa and the massive exodus of the community in the mountains.

The following days were focused on secret escapes and organization of the escape of the delegation. The regime launched a tenacious military persecution campaign against the delegation having received the order of not letting the members get out of Nicaragua alive. And so they mobilized their criminal air force to bomb different areas of the region on the daily and their navy to permanently block the bars and coastline. Their repressive military occupation activities in the communities and their dark security forces aiming at terrorising those communities through propaganda and radio broadcastings launched an intense intimidation campaign with threats and calumnies so that the communities would not support the delegation or the Indigenous resistance.

By shamelessly claiming that the delegation knew a lot about the current situation, that it would create an international problem and that the delegation was comprised of foreigners that were intruding in the internal affairs of the country, the government was definitely working to annihilate the group and myself. But the delegation managed to escape with the support of the communities and after three days of constant persecution by the navy forces, after a night and day, we managed to reach the island of San

Andrés, in Colombia. The delegation was able to escape unharmed after living this terrible 15 days adventure

But the repression had increased in the entire region against the Indigenous civilians of the communities. While the delegation was still in Indigenous territory, the Wawa community and its surroundings were bombed – a boat carrying civilians sunk – the community of Kuamwatla and its surroundings were also bombed, so was Kukalaya, etc. Hundreds of Indigenous peoples from various communities such as Layasiksa, Kukalaya, [unclear] and Lapan took refuge in the mountains.

It is urgent that an international pressure be made so that the regime stops to increase its repressive activities against Indigenous peoples. Without a doubt, the rise of criminality shows that the regime is unveiling its real image, that of an enemy of peace. It is a despotic regime that only creates its repressive methods of violence and ethnocide to enslave or exterminate a people. There is no hope for peace with people who only promote lies, atrocities and negation of Indian peoples' rights. In the same fashion, this new and old escalation clearly reconfirms the systematic ethnocide plan against the Indian peoples. There is no doubt that the regime, with its terror tool called the Ministry of the Interior led by Tomas Borges, insists on a war, promoting the systematic extermination of Indian peoples.

The military invasion and occupation of the communities, the implementation of terror and the massive detention of Indigenous individuals reveal the harmful policy against Indigenous peoples. More, these criminal actions against the delegation and the communities unveil the tactical plans based on political moves that the regime pushed on the community. They nevertheless claim that there is a ceasefire-that there is a dialogue process, that there is an autonomy process, all that to mislead the international opinion and create a favourable environment for the increase of criminal activities against Indigenous communities.

Today, this criminal regime, using the words peace, dialogue and autonomy, is pushing its sophisticated ethnocide plan against our people. Facing this crude situation of violence and tragedy for our brothers, MISURASATA is urgently calling upon the allied democratic governments and human rights organizations to urge the Sandinista regime to stop its attacks against our peoples.

To continue, our brother Indigenous leaders that have accompanied us in this odyssey will say a few words, on their own behalf and in the name of their organization. First, Clem Chartier, president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, then Russell Means from the American Indian Movement and finally, Hank Adams, from Survival of American Indians Association.

# Transcript of Press Conference Clem Chartier Addressing Press

Good morning members of the press. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples is an international organization with consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The WCIP represents the interests of over 100 million Indigenous peoples, currently living within 31 countries of the world. North, South and Central America, Northern Europe, and the Pacific. Our headquarters is based in Canada, with an office located in Geneva, Switzerland.

During the past 15 months the WCIP through myself, its president, my name is Clem Chartier, and Commission on the Reunification of the Miskitu Family, has been actively involved in seeking a resolution to the conflict between the Government of Nicaragua and the Indian Nations of Eastern Nicaragua represented by MISURASATA. This includes some 25 official meetings with MISURASATA leader Brooklyn Rivera and some 12 official meetings with Commandantes Luis Carion, Daniel Ortega, Thomas Borge. This includes 7 meetings with Commandante Borge since June of 1985 until December 19, 1985, and the specific purpose of those meetings was to try to get the Government of Nicaragua to reopen the peace talks, which they and not MISURASATA were at fault for having broken.



Press Conference in San Jose, Costa Rica, February 1986. Left to right: Hank Adams, Russell Means, Brooklyn Rivera, and Clem Chartier. In front of Chartier is his hand-written journal, testimony cassettes, film canisters, and shrapnel collected at Layasiksa.

The World Council has also been present at the four rounds of peace talks, between MISURASATA and the Nicaraguan Government. We were there as observers along with the Governments of Colombia, Mexico, Sweden, France, Holland, and Canada.

After the December 19, 1985 meeting with Borge, I was a guest of the government at Puerto Cabezas on the Atlantic Coast from Dec. 20th to the 30th, 1985. The purpose of that visit was to visit and travel to the Indian communities, particularly those along the Rio Coco. This was where the people in 1981 were forcefully removed by the military forces. That trip was almost a total failure. I was not allowed by the military to leave Puerto Cabezas, except for one day, in which I accompanied the government military to two nearby Indian villages, Krukira and Kamla, where they conducted public meetings. Otherwise, I only experienced the feeling that Puerto Cabezas was a militarily occupied community, and its inhabitants, totally controlled. Their discontent with this situation was blatantly obvious and many secretly made this known to me.

Upon my return to Costa Rica on December 31, 1985, in a meeting with MISURASATA, I was invited to accompany leader Rivera on a 10 to 14 day visit to their communities, a trip scheduled to depart within two days. This opportunity to attempt to seek the truth from the community peoples themselves, is rare. So, because previous attempts were frustrated by the government, I saw that as a responsible world leader, I had no option but to accept this invitation. I am also a member of the World Council's Commission on Nicaragua, and thus equipped myself with recording and photographic supplies, so that an official record could be kept of this fact finding mission.

Our delegation traveled to nine Indian villages as well as received visits from leaders from 19 other Indian communities. At public meetings, attended by between 100 to 400 members of the small communities, testimony was freely and openly given. Numerous personal and eye witness accounts were related to the delegation, including mass executions, disappearances, rapes, torture, jailings, theft and destruction of personal property, destruction of crops and fruit trees, and the slaughter of all livestocks, including cows, horses, pigs and chickens. Testimony was also given about bombings, followed by invasion and repression. Numerous accounts were also given of the necessity of the villagers to flee and hide in the jungle, anywhere from one month to one and a half years; coupled with starvation, misery, and death. The people also testified that they didn't receive and still continue to be denied medical aid or any form of humanitarian assistance.

A common thread throughout all these meetings were numerous expressions which reflected the deeply ingrained institutionalized terror experienced by the communities. Despite all of this or perhaps because of it, the resolve of the people to resist the Sandinistas is unshakable and their commitment to the struggle and support to the warriors is overwhelmingly strong. This was confirmed by the courageous acts of the village leaders and their communities and individuals. These courageous acts and self sacrifice made it possible for our delegation to escape after a sixteen day intensive manhunt by the Sandinista forces. The Indian peoples at all levels are part of the resistance. MISURASATA and the people are one and the same. Through collective and self-sacrificing acts, in face of government bombings, our escape was made possible. There can be no greater expression of the resolve of a people to stand up to a government which is attempting to destroy them as a distinct people.

The time has now come where the international community, including governments, non-government organizations, churches, and human rights and aid agencies, must decide if they are going to continue supporting a government that is systematically repressing Indigenous peoples. They must decide whether they are going to place ideology before our rights and our lives.

The government of Nicaragua can no longer be romanticized as the popular revolutionary government of 1979. Government policies can and do change, we all know that. Alternatively, the true face of governments will eventually be exposed. In the case of the Sandinistas, the racist and genocidal practices are still well hidden with access to the affected areas being restricted, and I want to make this very clear, the hands of President Ortega are just as bloody as those of Pinochet or past President Lucas Garcia of Guatemala. Mr. Ortega and Thomas Borge must stand before the conscience of the world, and must be tried for the numerous massacres perpetrated against the Miskitu, Sumu and Rama peoples, along with the current, the current, wave of repression sweeping across the Indian communities of the Atlantic coast.

I just want to mention for the Costa Rican press, that I suffered the gassing and the stoning of the peace march when they arrived here, ...and I want to say that when I went to Nicaragua, I was terribly disappointed that the members of the peace march not once, at least not in the public media, raised the issue of the government's treatment and repression against the Indian peoples and nations of Nicaragua. As well during my ten day stay in Puerta Cabezas, while these same people were in Nicaragua, not one came to the Atlantic coast. I was hoping that at least there, I would have a chance to sit down and talk to them, and hopefully explain what was happening, but no, nobody came. And I would think that if the Sandinistas feel that they have nothing to hide, then they should allow an international fact-finding mission into the affected area. I would think, just off hand, that it could be composed of Amnesty International, Survival International, the World Council of Churches, the International Red Cross, the Council of Indians of South America, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, and hopefully one or two members of the International Press. Again, if they have nothing to hide, they will allow and facilitate the travel of a fact-finding mission. We have nothing to hide, and we hope that this takes place.

And I just want to conclude by stating, as I mentioned earlier, I am a member of the Commission on the Reunification of the Miskitu Family. I have testimony. I have tape recordings, live tape recordings at public meetings. I have photos. I have notes which I kept a daily journal of, and as well, I have two pieces of paper given to me by village leaders and elders, in their own writing. This one contains an incident in Yulu of July 8, 1982. They have given me a list of 13 people that were mass-executed, by machine gun firing of the Sandinista government. Another community elder and leader gave me this list of ten people that are currently listed as disappeared and missing. So as I say, the Sandinista government's hands are just as bloody as any other repressive regime, anywhere in this world. Thank you.

# Transcript of Press Conference Russell Means Addressing Press

After completing a year long investigation of the Sandinista Indian policies in collusion with the Survival of the American Indian Association last November, leaders of the American Indian Movement concluded that we would have to document the continuing atrocities of the Sandinista Marxist government being perpetuated against the Indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua.

The American Indian Movement accepted the invitation of MISURASATA to visit the Miskitu villages in Zelaya Norte zone of Nicaragua. We entered Miskitu territory on January 8, 1986. Upon our arrival at the first Indian village, we began the documentation of the Sandinista Marxist atrocities against the Miskitu Indians that began in 1980 and continue to today.

Indian policy of the Sandinista government can only be described as a Cambodian Pol Pot policy of extermination. The Sandinista government is guilty of every crime known to civilized people and has violated every law and convention of civilized nations and international organizations. These crimes of genocide continue as the only Sandinista policy of the Atlantic Coast. After documenting evidence of these human rights violations from elders, leaders and the people of more then 21 villages, we also witnessed the absolute resistance struggle of the people. And that is under the leadership of MISURASATA.

The people have waged a five year armed resistance struggle without any aid from the international community. The warriors, fighters of MISURASATA have secured the rivers and the jungles for their people. The resistance struggle of the villagers and MISURASATA military have the Sandinista army afraid to confront them in the bush. The only recourse for the Sandinista army is to bomb Indian villages indiscriminately and then invade the villages with hundreds of troops carried by their Soviet helicopters. But because of the Miskitu warriors and fighters, and the village resistance, the Sandinista army then only become prisoners of that occupied village and are absolutely afraid to pursue and engage with MISURASATA military out in the bush.

# Transcript of Press Conference Hank Adams Addressing Press

I am Hank Adams, and I am the national director of Survival of American Indians Association, which is based at Olympia, Washington, in the United States, and is recognized nationally in that country as the oldest activist Indian organisation in America. I personally have spent more then a quarter of a century of my 42 years of life in fighting for Indian rights and trying to define issues that affect Indian people, and to find solutions working with organisations, communities and local and national governments to resolve problems.

I must say that in the last month of my life, I have found in the Indian people of Nicaragua, of the Atlantic Coast, one of the greatest causes for pride amongst the people anywhere on this globe. This both precedes the bombing of ourselves on January 21<sup>st</sup> and in the actions of the Indian people of the Atlantic Coast after the bombing in saving our lives through 16 days of an intensive manhunt by the largest standing military force in Central America, that, and also in enabling a final day escape from that manhunt and the forces of the Sandinista government.

I say that the actions of the Indian people in their willingness to sacrifice themselves, in their willingness to stand up to the threats directed at them of summary execution if they helped us escape or if we escape at all, these are some of the most memorable moments of my life and make me again, thoroughly proud of being an Indian in the most Indian way that Brooklyn Rivera's people showed themselves to be over this past month. I would add as they have shown themselves to be over the entire period since the July 1979 victory, as it is called, of the Sandinista revolution. Whatever transformation has occurred since that day, a transformation that has created a communist hell in Nicaragua, a communist hell of inhumanity and heartless horrors on the Atlantic Coast that can be evidenced in any number of manifest ways from the bombing craters of the 500 pound bombs, the 250 pound bombs, that pepper the countryside around these little villages.

You have this country calling itself a nation of poets, a nation of poets that pleads poverty before the world, but it is a nation that rains bombs down on little villages, that throws 500 pound bombs, 14 of them, against a community that only has 39 families, like Kukalaya. And you go there, and you find those craters, and you find the people who have lived through that and who live through the threat of those bombers coming again every day, the bombers which we saw and experienced some of their fire on January 21", and the bombers that we heard day after day in the days following January 21".

We saw this nation of poets tear the flesh from Indian children, Indian boys and men, teared away by the pounds with their rockets, with several other people that escaped with us, the 11 people who in this 24 hour period broke out of the interior into the coast and fought through gun ships, or travelled through a gun ship blockade to get to safety in San Andres, Colombia. This is the nation of poets that takes their rockets and you see it with your eyes.

We were all in a boat when 3 planes dive bombed us, shooting rockets and machine guns. The boat escaped, contrary to their report in one of their national newspapers. The boat escaped because those airplanes then started trying to kill each exposed person in the water and forgot about the boat. Then they fired those rockets that just torn away arms, tearing away thighs, tearing away hips and go to San Andres and you can see how that nation of poets tears away flesh of its people by the pound.

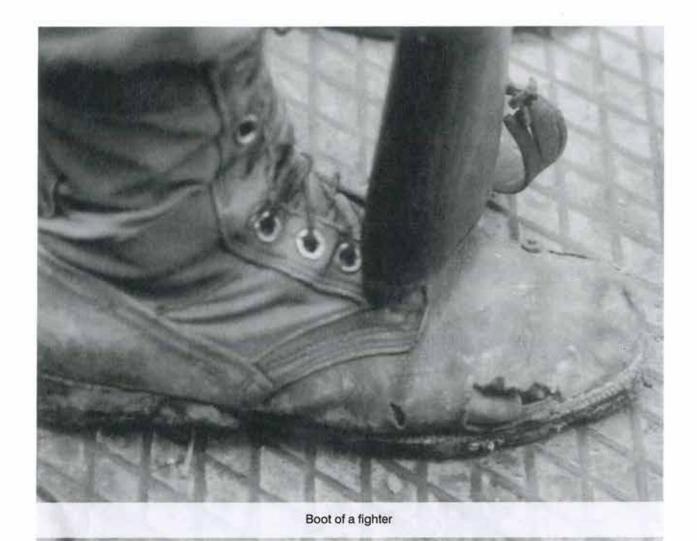
In the days preceding January 21<sup>st</sup>, we did make this tour of villages and had the testimony given to us that Clem has referred to and a great amount or a great deal of abundance more than his summary and you find that virtually no village on the Atlantic Coast has escaped these attacks and invasions at one time or another by the Sandinistas. And it is not just 1981 and 1982, its 1983, 1984, 1985 and now in 1986, they have reverted to the high levels of attacks and invasions that were experienced by the people in late 1981 and early 1982.

Part of my purpose in going to Nicaragua is because most of the people who I have worked with over the past quarter century in the peace movement in the USA, on civil liberty issues, in church activities, in reformation of church commitments to poor people, to justice in the USA and in other areas of international relations, these people that I work with are all in bed with the Sandinistas. All in bed with the nine Somozas that replaced Anastasia Somoza. These people are blinded by this nation of poets because they hear the poetry and they don't see the terror, don't see the flesh ripped away, don't see the families that have members disappeared, grandmothers as old as 80 being beaten with 2 by 4s by members of this largest military force in Central America, the Sandinista army.

And so part of why I came is to help restore some moral code, some moral conscience to the people that I have been working with for the last 2 decades. I also came to help educate my government, the Ronald Regan administration and the Congress of the United States who are largely acting in a vacuum of correct information relative to the Atlantic Coast and the Indian people and what has happened to them, not only by as a result of the action of the Sandinista, but by the omission of the world community and the United States to act to prevent a Pol Pot type genocide, or even more correctly, a Jewish style holocaust happening on the Atlantic Coast.

I say Jewish type because the offence of the Jew in Europe in World War Two and pre-World War Two was being Jewish. On the Atlantic Coast, the offence of the people is being Indian or Creole and that is why the attacks are made, that is why the killing occurs. That is why no Indian village has escaped the tyranny and the invasions of the Sandinistas.

What am I going to do? I am returning to the United States and going to spend a good deal of time in Washington DC trying to secure some changes in policy by the US administration to try to get some conscionable actions on behalf of the people of Nicaragua by the US Congress and the very first thing that I am attempting to do is to secure a national commitment to some kind of prayer vigil for the villages on the Atlantic Coast; the villages that were being bombed daily after the 21<sup>st</sup> and perhaps are still being bombed after our escape on the 5<sup>st</sup> or the 6<sup>st</sup> of February.



### **Conclusion of Journal**

Thile this journal of events based on a short period of time does not address the many complex issues at play within the Nicaragua/Indian Nations conflict, which is itself affected by the Nicaraguan/U.S.A. and Contra power conflict, it should nevertheless contribute to the necessity of addressing the crisis faced by the Indian peoples within the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua (Yapti Tasba/La Mosquitia).

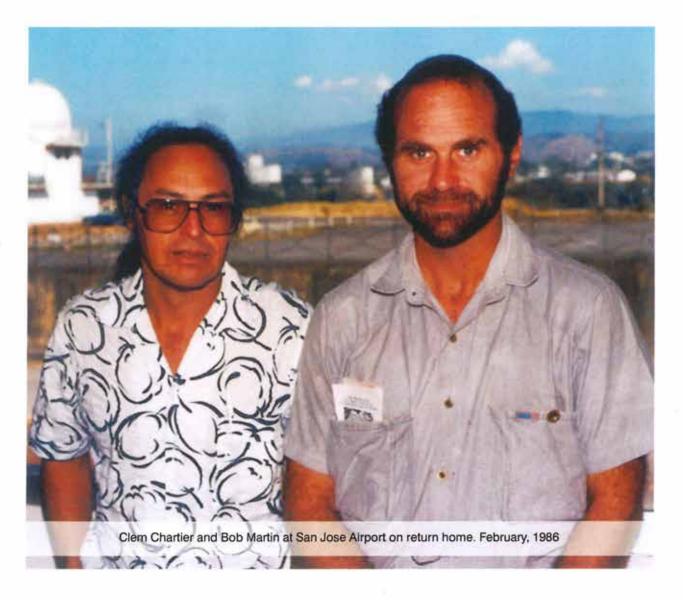
While the United States of America, through the Contras, is attempting to forcefully remove the leftist-leaning SANDINISTA government in Nicaragua, the Indian Nations are engaged in a struggle limited to the preservation of their identity and rights to land and self-government. The legitimate organization of

the Indian peoples, MISURASATA, has made it abundantly clear that they are willing to co-exist with the SANDINISTA revolutionary government. This decision has been consistently adhered to, although the Indian peoples and communities are suffering the worst form of aggression ever experienced during their entire existence.

Due to this repression, the Indian peoples through their organization, MISURASATA, will not give up its armed resistance until the government in a serious way recognizes and guarantees their rights to land and autonomy (self-government). In the meantime, the Indian peoples and communities are not accepting the governments' pretensions of unilaterally imposing its concept of autonomy which is meant to control the Indian peoples and destroy their nationhood and traditional governmental practices.



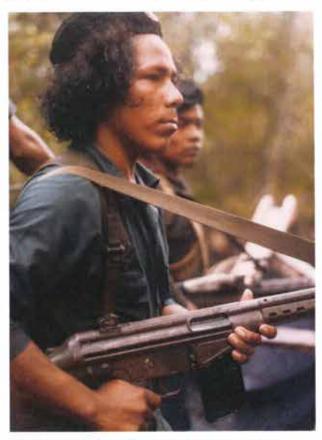
It is therefore in the interests of all concerned parties to seek a resolution to this conflict. While many international organizations support land and self-government rights in other regions of the world, these same organizations deny it to the Indian peoples and nations within Nicaragua. Why? Do the illegal acts of the United States of America and their Contra allies, including their gross human rights violations, justify the illegal acts and the massive repression that the SANDINISTAS have unleashed upon the Indian peoples?



Those persons and organizations who truly believe in Indian rights specifically or human rights generally, should not continue blaming the victim. They must start lobbying the SANDINISTA government to abandon its unilateral action on autonomy and recognize, through peace talks with MISURASATA, the legitimate and historic Indian rights to land and autonomy, including the form and substance of that autonomy.

It is only by means of this approach that a peaceful and lasting solution to the current conflict will be achieved and the 1979 revolution become more meaningful. Particularly more meaningful to Indigenous nations and peoples in countries where popular revolutionary movements are currently taking place.

A failure of the SANDINISTA revolutionary process to accommodate legitimate Indian rights and ideology, surely will send a clear signal to Indigenous peoples and nations everywhere that popular revolutionary movements are not an answer to the fulfilment of their aspirations for the recognition and practice of Indigenous ideology and rights in political co-existence with non-indigenous peoples who possess their own ideologies and forms of government.







▲ The future

### **PART THREE:**

## **Toward Self-Determination**

### Consequences

Following our nearly fatal escape to the island of San Andres (Colombia) and upon our arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica, with emotions running high from my experience, I made strong statements on behalf of WCIP, denouncing the barbaric acts of aggression by the Sandinista government of Nicaragua against the Indian peoples of Yapti Tasba. At the same time, I had already begun to get mixed messages from the WCIP's two vice-presidents (Donald Rojas Morato and Hayden Burgess) and detected a sense of apprehension on their part as to potential repercussions that might be visited upon the organization as a result of my actions. Within the week, they began a process to undermine my leadership and silence me.

The WCIP as a whole had abandoned whatever militancy it had exhibited under its founding president George Manuel. Earlier in 1985, while in Guatemala monitoring the occupation of the national cathedral in Guatemala City by a large group of Indian people that was meant to focus international attention on the issue of the "disappeared" in advance of national elections, I had confronted the failure of WCIP to adopt a more active stance in support of Indigenous peoples. In my frustration with the organization I was leading, I had written:

... Are we nothing but a paper organization, not even a paper tiger. Are we all talk and no action?

The WCIP set an Executive Council meeting for March 6-8, 1986 in Geneva, Switzerland to follow the session of the UN Human Rights Commission which I had planned to attend in order to make an intervention on the situation of the Indian peoples in Nicaragua. Upon arrival at the UN office in Geneva to register for my intervention, I was informed that the WCIP office had sent a letter seeking to bar my appearance before the Commission. I insisted that I was the President and was going to participate and that no one had the legal or moral authority to prevent me from so doing. I received my credentials and made the intervention on March 3, 1986 before the Human Rights Commission, exposing the aggression of the Nicaraguan government against the Indian peoples in that country (see Appendix B for intervention).

At the subsequent WCIP Executive Council meeting, I was asked to resign and, when I refused, the Council exercised its authority under the WCIP Constitution and redefined the President's responsibilities and duties to "nothing". All Council members, with the exception of Métis National Council representative, Mr. Sam Sinclair, voted in support of this extreme measure. At the same time, the WCIP Constitution did not provide for my removal as President.

While the Assembly of First Nations did not have a representative present, its National Chief at the time gave his support for the action of the Executive Council on the grounds that I had violated the sovereignty of the state of Nicaragua, a position totally inconsistent with that of many First Nations' leaders within Canada who declare sovereign Indian rights. The leader of the Council of Indians of South America (CISA) stated that if I had escaped without all the negative publicity and with the photos and testimony in hand, I would have been a hero. However he concluded, with the international press alleging that I was supporting the Contras and linked to the CIA, I had become a threat to the well-being of WCIP member organizations, particularly to the funding they received from sources that also supported the Sandinista government.

In fact, despite U. S. efforts to exploit Sandinista repression of Indian communities to justify its support for the Contras, MISURASATA had consistently asserted its independence from the CIA-backed Contras and remained committed to seeking a solution to the conflict with the Nicaraguan government based on respect for the fundamental Indian rights to land and autonomy. The CIA did support armed Indian groups such as MISURA and KISAN, a group based in Honduras headed by Stedman Fogoth, but these factions did not represent nor have the support of the Indian communities within Yapti Tasba. With the CIA and the Contras making it impossible for Rivera and MISURASATA to operate in refugee camps in Honduras, these factions were able to gain through coercion some support from among the large numbers of Indians from Nicaragua who had crossed the Rio Coco River to seek refuge in these camps. After the initial denial of the legitimacy of MISURASATA, the U.S. government in 1986 changed its policy, making MISURASATA eligible for \$5 million out of the \$100 million package the Reagan Administration was preparing to faciliate the overthrow of the Sandinista government. This allocation was no longer conditional upon MISURASATA complying with the previous U.S. position that any group receiving funds must join UNO, the Contra umbrella organization. Nevertheless, MISURASATA's refusal to join forces with the Contras or allow themselves to be manipulated by the CIA-and, undoubtedly its willingness to pursue a negotiated solution with the Sandinistas—led to its funds being blocked by the CIA and the Contras and to its continued inability to operate in Honduras where it wanted to involve the refugees in a potential peace process. According to MISURASATA, it spent a lot of time, energy and resources defending its integrity in face of Contra and CIA actions against the organization including plans to assassinate Rivera and other MISURASATA leaders.

In his candid assessment of the situation, the leader of the Council of Indians of South America (CISA) summed up quite well the underlying reason for my de facto ouster as WCIP leader. He stated that we and the Sandinistas were "milking the same cow" and that even if all the Indians in Nicaragua were killed, there was nothing we could do about it. Money and grants, tragically, meant more than Indian lives!

### Aftermath

Following my escape from Yapti Tasba in February 1986, the Nicaraguan government persisted in its refusal to resume peace talks with MISURASATA. It chose to continue pushing its "autonomy" process and to make overtures to both the Indian military commanders within Yapti Tasba and to the Indian peoples who had been forcibly relocated to labour camps in Nicaragua. Since the previous summer, the government had been allowing the latter groups to return to their home areas and had kept its troops away. In late March 1986 however, the Sandinistas in order to prevent the Indian warriors from becoming entrenched among this population, launched military action on the ground and in the air against two re-established communities, driving an estimated 12,000 Indian people along the Rio Coco across the river into Honduras to seek refuge. By the end of 1986, many of the Indian villagers would be able to return to the Nicaraguan side of the river as the government again withdrew its troops, giving the people a new sense of freedom.

In an interview I conducted with Brooklyn Rivera in January 1987, he outlined what he saw as a basic three-pronged approach the Sandinistas had applied to the conflict in addition to the overall economic pressure exerted on the Indian communities. The first prong was a form of psychological warfare of intimidation and harassment of the villagers. The government displayed the power of its aerial machinery and heavy weaponry in an attempt to intimidate the villagers and the fighters. The message was basically that the government was a powerful one which had the ability to destroy them if it so desired.

The second prong was the government's autonomy legislation for the Atlantic Coast scheduled for March 1987 and the attempted dialogue with the fighters in the field. The government had been intensively promoting this autonomy plan in the villages through various meetings and assemblies, putting pressure on the villagers to accept the plan and to bring the fighters into it. The government also offered amnesty, supplies, money and salaries to those fighters who gave up the struggle. It had also invited international guests, including Indigenous organizations and peoples, to the unveiling of its autonomy legislation. At a government sponsored conference on Indian rights in Managua in July 1986, delegations from Indian organizations including the International Indian Treaty Council had generally been supportive of the government's actions, perhaps based on their ignorance of the real Indian struggle occurring in the country, or simply by turning a blind eye.

The third prong was military. While pursuing the "hearts and minds" of the Indians in the Rio Coco area, the government continued to exert military pressure in other areas of Yapti Tasba through aerial attacks, invasion and occupation of villages, arrests, intimidation and torture. One such assault by Sandinista Special Forces on a MISURASATA stronghold in the Prinsapolka River region in mid-February 1987 involved attack helicopters, push-pull aircraft and speedy watercraft mounted with machine guns. Numerous village leaders were arrested and in the first assault at least ten MISURASATA fighters were killed. Many villagers also had to flee to the jungle. These attacks were calculated to contain resistance to the government's autonomy plan for the Atlantic Coast about to be unveiled the following month. (See Appendix A for complete interview)

Having been abandoned by the WCIP, I nevertheless continued my political activity during 1986/87 with the encouragement and support of many, including George Manuel, the founding President of the WCIP who wrote to me and said:

"I am impressed by your recent involvement in Nicaragua .... When I was president I entered Chile on false pretences to investigate the Mapuche situation. I was escorted out of the country by military police. In Argentina with members of the executive council I was prepared to defy the military authorities and visit the Indian villages near Resistencia. Only our fears for the safety of the Argentinian Mapuche who were with us made me decide not to go. After I became ambassador for the World Council I crossed from Mexico into Guatemala by walking through the jungle. You are doing the kind of work that I tried to do when I was able to travel. You have my full support."

My work included a speaking tour across the western United States in May 1987. In July, with the guidance of George Manuel, I organized an international Indigenous peoples' rights seminar in Vancouver, B.C. during the first International Indigenous Education Conference from which I was excluded by the WCIP Executive and conference organizers.



▲ Clem speaking at the General Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, July, 1987.

In the meantime, a general assembly of MISURASATA along with the other Indian organizations took place in June 1987 at Rus Rus, Honduras. There was a consensus, particularly on the part of the elders, that there must only be one recognized spokesperson/organization for the Indian movement and a decision was taken that MISURASATA would incorporate the other organizations. To reflect this new development, its name was changed to "YATAMA". the acronym for "Yapti Tasba Masraka Nani Aslatatanka", Miskitu meaning "Children of Mother Earth". Rivera was retained as the leader (Taupla in Miskitu).



Clem with newly elected WCIP President Jorge Valiente and Vice-President Noelí Pocatarra, December 1993.

In July 1987, still officially President of the WCIP, I attended a seminar put on by the WCIP in Ollantaytambo, Peru where I received considerable support from Indian leaders from various countries in South America. A few days later, I gave my final report to the WCIP General Assembly in Lima, Peru. My report, as well as my presence, was well received but I did not seek re-election. This brought my active participation within the WCIP to an end until December 1993 when I was elected to one of the two positions of Vice-President at the General Assembly held in Guatemala, a position I would hold until the WCIP ceased to function in 1996

#### for lack of financial support.

### Yapti Tasba Revisited

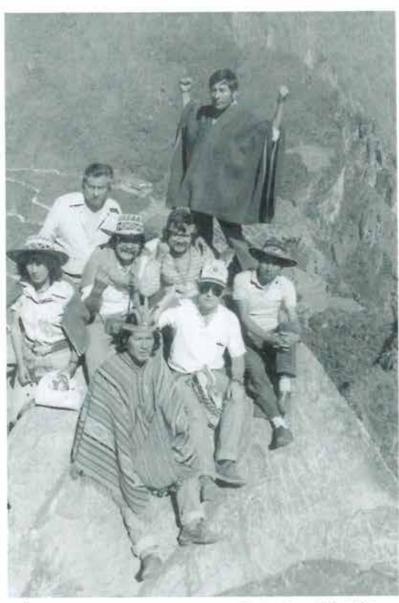
In February 1988, Brooklyn Rivera informed me that the Nicaraguan government had agreed to peace talks. He was allowed to travel to the Atlantic Coast to consult his people based on an Accord signed with the Sandinistas on February 2, 1988 which included the creation of a Commission of Reconciliation to assist in this process. (See Appendix D for Accord) The Sandinistas had also agreed to a pre-condition that YATAMA could bring in advisers of its choice and, on that basis, Rivera wished me to participate. Seeing this as a good opportunity to continue contributing to the peace process, I accepted the invitation without hesitation.

Upon my arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica, Rivera informed me that I would have to wait before carrying on to Managua as Commandante Borge had just vehemently declared that "Clem Chartier was not welcome", that I was an "enemigo de Nicaragua" (enemy of Nicaragua). Later, however, with the

arrival of the YATAMA delegation in Managua and its insistence that Borge stand by his assurances on advisers, I was instructed to fly to Managua which I did. Upon my arrival at the talks, Borge and I exchanged a few words and then business proceeded as usual.

Following discussions in Managua, a military transport plane flew the YATAMA delegation to Bluefields in the southern part of the Atlantic Coast. The plane left late at night under cover of darkness and flew a circuitous route so as to avoid potential Contra ground-to-air missiles, a flight I dubbed the "redeve special" as some of those missiles at that time were known as the redeve stinger. Community meetings were held in Bluefields and surrounding villages of Sandy Bay Sirpi, Karawala, Kara, Tasbapaunie and Pearl Lagoon and later the delegation was flown to Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas).

Upon arrival in Bilwi, ground transportation was secured and a visit was made to Yulu for the purpose of meeting the townspeople and Kisan por la Paz fighters who still had a ceasefire agreement with the government. Before leaving however, Commanders



▲ Clem with Indian Leaders, Machu Pichu, Peru, July 1987

"Serpiente", Juan Salgado and "Plaisni", Uriel Vanegas met with Brooklyn. They affirmed that they were still supportive of the Indian rights struggle and wished to be part of the delegation. Since I last saw them in Yulu in January 1986, Kisan por la Paz also openly operated in Bilwi. Their agreement enabled them to operate in both the Yulu and Bilwi areas. A day trip was made to Yulu where Brooklyn met with the community members, the fighters and then with the commanders. A group of 30 fighters also drove in from Sukatpin to join Brooklyn and the other fighters in their meeting.

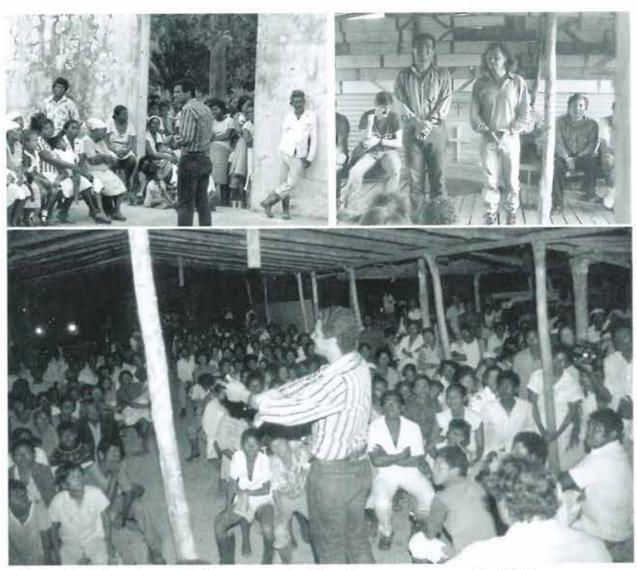
We were then told that we could not get water transportation to go to the Prinzapolka area, so it was decided to proceed to the Rio Coco (Wangi) area. The delegation (YATAMA and the Reconciliation Commission) was then told that it was too dangerous to travel to that region, and would be permitted only if the Sandinista army formed an escort for the group. The government maintained that there were YATAMA fighters in the area and that the delegation would be endangered. Brooklyn responded that he had instructed them to be in the area to ensure that both they and villagers were consulted on the peace process and that if the Sandinista army was present, it would offer a military target and endanger the delegation. He counter proposed that an escort made up of Kisan por la Paz replace a Sandinista escort and that the delegation as a whole travel in civilian clothes and vehicles. After a lengthy consultation, the government official returned and confirmed that this would be acceptable. The issue had been that Kisan under the agreement was not allowed to travel outside of the Yulu/Bilwi ceasefire area but was allowed to do so on this one occasion.

The delegation traveled to Wasla, Kum, Bilwaskarma, Sowpuka and Waspam where Brooklyn consulted the people about the autonomy process and land rights. We also heard a lot of testimony about the repression inflicted by the Sandinistas and the current conditions the people were facing in trying to rebuild their communities and accommodate the returnees.

We arrived back in Bilwi after midnight and the next morning we were able to secure boats to take us to a number of villages south of Bilwi. We first travelled to Wawa where I met one of the fighters who had been with us at Walpasiksa in 1986. From there, early the next morning we travelled along the coast, passing by Haulover, Waunta and Walpasiksa and arriving at Prinzapolka. Here I was pleased to meet



▲ Military plane and part of the delegation



▲ Brooklyn Rivera in consultation process about the autonomy process and land rights

Miskut (Ramon Fenly), one of the fighters I had befriended in 1986. From here we proceeded back to Walpasiksa where I had a chance to thank the villagers for having protected us and saving our lives in February 1986. Here is what I have in my notes from that encounter:

"Expressed thanks to the people, said waited 2 years for this opportunity. That all I remember is the stars, the singing and lights at the church. That a part of me will always remain in the community, as they had saved our lives. That I will continue doing what I can to help the situation and that they have good leadership. That I hope to return again someday."

From here we passed by Waunta and arrived at Haulover. Here I was met by Orlando Budier who I had met in 1986 at Kukalaya and Johnny who I had met in Bilwi in December 1985. Also met up with the radioman, Lazaro, who's father, Lorenzo Chow, was one of the Walpasiksa men who poled us out to the bar on our escape in 1986.

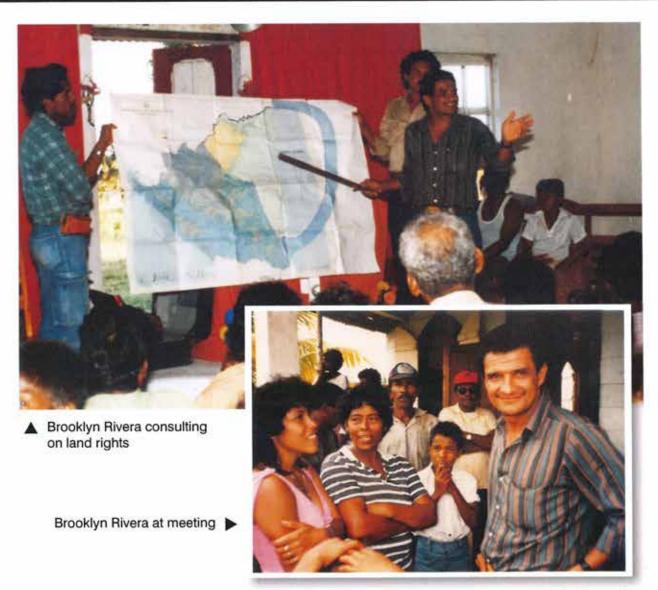
Before returning to Managua for further discussions with Commandante Borge, a major meeting was planned with the Indian people from in and around Bilwi. Government functionaries such as Mirna Cunningham and Hazel Law tried to dissuade the people from participating. Government troops used military tactics to intimidate the community, firing their machine guns at 2 a.m. the day of the rally near the facility where the YATAMA delegation was



Brooklyn Rivera with fighters in Prinzapolka. Miskut (Ramon Fenly) is on the right.



▲ Thanking the villagers at Walpasiksa, two years later.



staying. During the opening prayer at the rally, the military nearby on the coast opened fire from their anti-aircraft guns, cannon and other types of heavy artillery. Obviously intended to make people flee the meeting, the Sandinistas later attempted to justify their action as defensive, based on reports spread by government officials including Law and Cunningham that YATAMA troops were invading the town or that United States-backed Contras were attacking Rivera because of his engagement with the Sandinista government.

The day prior to the meeting a group of "turbas" also attacked the hotel where the YATAMA delegation was staying, throwing rocks at the building and banging on the doors to gain entry. Within minutes several hundred Indians showed up to protect the delegation. This group stayed all day and night until it



▲ March

was time to march to the stadium for the rally. They were joined by hundreds more and the march of over 2,000 Indians was quite spectacular, although the marchers were followed by about 60 turbas who were menacing the marchers with two-by-fours (2"x4" boards about 4-5 feet long) and iron rods, while using megaphones and yelling anti-Indian slogans

The turbas continued their attempts to disrupt the meeting throughout Rivera's speech by yelling slogans and banging their clubs against wooden poles and the tin roof of the stadium, and pointing out individuals in the crowd, uttering threats, while menacingly swinging their clubs in their direction.



▲ Community leaders that I had met on previous trip in 1986

At the end of the rally, as the people were leaving, the turbas attacked the crowd but as they were significantly outnumbered, could not get at the YATAMA delegation. They were however able to get at two of the Conciliation Commission members who were inside a pick-up truck. Every piece of glass on the truck was shattered and the driver who had been video-taping the march and rally was struck on the head with a huge rock but was able to keep the truck moving. In the meantime, the turbas were trying to grab the camera, while attempting to pull the second person out of the truck. That person was from the Mennonite Central Committee from the United States. The turbas in their frenzied state only saw him as a "North American" and wanted to drag him out and beat him. It didn't matter at that point that he was a member of the Conciliation Commission engaged in an honest effort to help find a solution to the conflict between their people and the Indian peoples of the Atlantic Coast.

Upon returning to Managua, Rivera met with Borge two more times and they agreed that the talks must continue, even though both found the incidents at Bilwi lamentable. A jointly signed press communiqué was issued calling for the next round of talks to take place as soon as possible, with a tentative verbal agreement that these talks would take place in April. Borge also expressed an interest in joining Rivera at the next meetings in Bilwi and Bluefields.

Following the release of the communique, the YATAMA delegation returned to San Jose, Costa Rica, and a few days later I returned to Canada. (See Appendix E for map of communities visited in 1988 and Appendix F for maps used in 1986 - Indigenous villages visited and escape route.)

This March 1988 visit by YATAMA to Nicaragua set in place a process which eventually led to a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict, the re-establishment of YATAMA within Nicaragua and the passage of an autonomy statute by the Nicaraguan government, paving the way for an election in February 1990 of a regional government.

This process coincided days later with the broader peace initiative within Nicaragua which included the signing of a ceasefire between the Sandinistas and the Contras. This led to a democratic and open political process which witnessed the establishment of the National Opposition Union (UNO) as the main political opposition party to the FSLN.

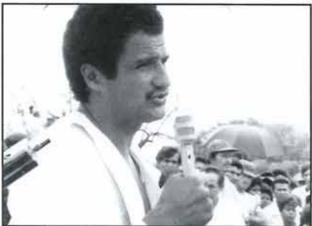
The national elections in Nicaragua in February 1990 saw the defeat of the Sandinista government and the election of Violetta Chamorro, the leader of UNO as the new president. President Chamorro appointed Mr. Rivera head of an Institute for the Atlantic Coast, at the level of a minister. He informed me that he advised Chamorro not to make it a ministry in order to enable the autonomy process to work and that he accepted the appointment because he felt he would be in position to help strengthen the autonomy statute and secure Indian rights. Also, as head of the Institute, he would have a significant role to play in the rebuilding of the Indian communities and the implementation of the new autonomy infrastructure, alongside YATAMA candidates who now formed the majority of the Cabinet of the new autonomous regional government.

On May 4, 1990, I had the opportunity to attend the inauguration of this newly elected regional government. Prior to the swearing-in of its members, Rivera addressed a crowd of several thousand Indians in the nearby plaza. This turnout to hear their leader (Taupla) was truly a fitting conclusion to a long and hazardous struggle. While these electoral and governance developments marked a peaceful resolution to the conflict, they did not resolve the main issues of Indian autonomy and a land base. They did, however, create the space for the rebuilding and resettlement of the villages and an environment more conducive to promoting peaceful coexistence and the assertion of Indian rights.



Clem with two community leaders previously met in 1986. Orlando Budier on right.







Top: Members of the newly elected regional government (RAAN).

Above Left: Brooklyn Rivera speaking to the crowd.

Above Right: New Head of the regional government, Commander 'Plaisni", Uriel Vanegas.

### Métis and Miskitu

In October 2003, I was elected President of the Métis National Council (MNC), the representative body of the Métis Nation within Canada. As MNC President, I participated in a visit to Yapti Tasba in June 2006 organized by my office for the purpose of forging a partnership between the MNC and the Association de Mujeres Indigenas de la Costa Atlantica (AMICA), an Indian women's organization from the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua to carry out a public health education project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This was my first time back to the Atlantic Coast since the



Brooklyn Rivera speaking to several thousand Indians

May 1990 inauguration. Our visit included several villages along the Rio Coco where the need for assistance was pronounced, including several of the villages I had visited in March 1988 with Rivera.

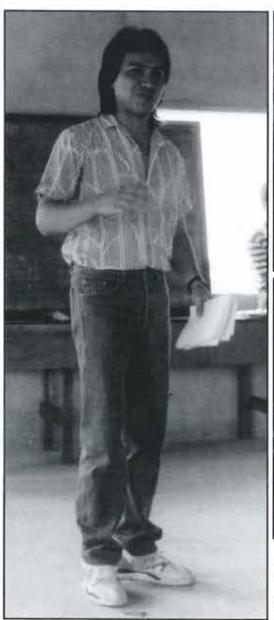
Accompanying me was Professor Frank Tough of the University of Alberta who had been engaged for many years in historical research on the dispossession of the Métis from the land as a result of Canadian government policies. While in Bilwi, we had the opportunity to address a group of law students at the Bluefields Indigenous Community University (BICU). I spoke briefly about my experience in the Indian struggle in Nicaragua and Professor Tough gave a talk on the situation of the Métis Nation in Canada.

As I was sitting there, I realized how young the students were and how they likely had no understanding or appreciation of the struggle their parents and communities went through during the 1980s. At that moment, I realized that it was my responsibility to provide to them the materials I had collected during my trips to their homeland, in particular my journal and transcripts of the testimony recorded during the January/February 1986 trip, as well as the numerous photos taken on that and other trips. It is their right to know what their people went through, not to judge others but simply to know that part of their history.

I also had an opportunity to meet Brooklyn Rivera and some of the regional government members. Rivera informed me of his candidacy in the upcoming national election along with a colleague from the Creole community in the southern part of the Atlantic Coast and that the Sandinista Party had agreed not to run any candidates in those two ridings in order to enhance YATAMA's prospects. When I mentioned to him my idea of publishing my journal of the January/February 1986 trip along with the photos and testimony, he stated that publishing it was necessary and encouraged me to do so.

While the decision of Rivera to act in concert with the Sandinistas in the national election was not universally embraced by all of the Indian peoples because of the past repression, the leadership of YATAMA at all levels felt that their chances of securing further Indian rights were better through a Sandinista government than the other parties. Moreover, Daniel Ortega had apologized for the Sandinistas' past actions, acknowledging that they were wrong in so doing.

This decision was not taken lightly and was based on positive actions by the Sandinista Party (FSLN) and in particular by its leader Daniel Ortega. Rivera informed me that YATAMA lobbied the Sandinistas as the opposition party to support legislation dealing with the demarcation and certification of Indian lands, and through this lobbying effort the Sandinista Party was instrumental in getting it passed. Law 445 as it is known establishes the procedures and institutions for the demarcation of Indian lands and communities. It also established a National Commission on Demarcation and Certification in 2006 to







Left: Jim Anaya conducting a workshop for YATAMA members elected to the regional government in 1990. Top and Above Right: Cultural entertainment after the inauguration ceremony in 1990.

deal with the demarcation and certification of the Indian lands. Coupled with this, the FSLN entered into a 13 point written agreement with YATAMA. These points included territorial demarcation under Law 445 and reforming the autonomy statute, Law 28.

The FSLN had also entered into alliances with several other small parties, and in the 2006 national election won a minority of assembly seats, 38 of 91. Rivera won his seat. Running for the national presidency, Ortega garnered 38% of the vote, meeting the minimum requirement of 35%, and was declared the duly elected President. He however, heads up a minority government.

The National Assembly from amongst its own members elects a Directive Board, which in turn appoints elected members to 15 Permanent Assembly Commissions. Appointments are said to be based on a member's qualifications. Rivera was appointed to the Commission on Ethnic Affairs, Autonomous Regions and Indigenous Communities. He was also elected President of the Commission for a two year term and was subsequently re-elected to a second term. This Commission has a majority from the alliance between the FSLN, YATAMA and other smaller parties so Rivera has majority support on the Commission for his work. Rivera is also a member of the National Commission on Demarcation and Certification, and has a mandate from the Nicaraguan government to oversee the work of the National Commission.

While it is true that the previous government started the process of demarcating the land, they declared that all of these lands were empty (devoid of title) and had to first be inscribed (titled) in the name of the State and then title granted to the Indian communities.

According to Rivera, the new government under Ortega rejected this position, stating that the land was in the ownership/hands of the Indigenous peoples and therefore could not be inscribed in the name of the State; the State could only recognize and inscribe or certify the Indigenous peoples' ownership, that is, the Indigenous peoples were here on these lands before the State was established.

According to Rivera, YATAMA was instrumental in educating Ortega on Indian rights and that he finally understood and supported the Indian position on rights, although his lawyers and the Supreme Court were telling him, "you can't give title to the Indigenous peoples unless it is first in the State's name". Ortega nevertheless imposed his will and gave orders to the lawyers of the State to make no objections to the inscription of title to the Indian communities.

Based on Law 445 there is a right to claim lands by one or a group of communities (villages). Currently each demarcated and titled territory has from 1 to 26 communities. In determining the extent of the territory, they look to communities which have been settled together for a long time and which have similar characteristics. For example, those clustered closely together on the coast are taken as one community.

In connection with governance, YATAMA has been forming Indigenous governments in all the territories being established. This is so for all those already demarcated and titled and also in the emerging ones. Law 445 also recognizes territorial government for these territories. The first level is communal authority in each village/community. This is basically the traditional authority which has been integrated into the new communal authority. The second level is an inter-community territorial council or authority which regulates common use of the land and resources within the territory.

Some of the new territories fall outside of the current autonomous regions including the first three territories established under the new law, within the province of Jinotega. Those three territories have been integrated into one government. Ortega has issued orders to recognize and transfer financial resources to it which enables 57 villages/communities to provide their own services. In addition, the national governmental institutions, such as health, education, etc, are providing services directly to this government and no longer through the province.

In total, 12 territories have been demarcated with certified title and have their own governments. There are 8 in the Northern Atlantic Region (RAAN), 2 in the Southern Atlantic Region (RAAS), and 2 in Jinotega province (sharing a third one with RAAN). In total the 12 territories have 15,322.08 square kilometers and contain 154 communities/villages with a total population of 71,432. All of these territories, except for the one in the RAAS are contiguous and form a significant land base covering the traditional homeland of the Indian nations of the Atlantic Coast region (Yapti Tasba). (See Appendix G for map of titled territories.)

YATAMA is looking to demarcate and certify title to 7 to 10 more territories by the end of 2010 which would finish the process. They are hoping to unify several territories, so that there may only be 7 to 8, as opposed to 10. The reason for this is that they would like to have some larger territories, particularly those which have more common characteristics. There are another 125-130 communities/villages remaining to be included in the process. (See Appendix H for map of territories yet to be titled.)

In territories where conflict over boundaries has surfaced, such conflict has been resolved by agreement between territories to joint use of disputed traditional use areas.

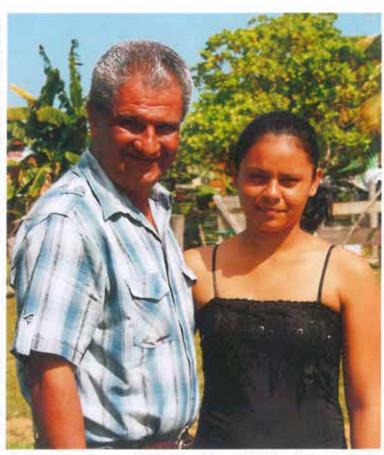
The YATAMA plan, after all of the territories have been set up, is to have a federation of all the territories and governments and to establish the mechanisms of autonomy. Within this framework, YATAMA is pushing for the reform of the autonomy statute, Law 28, going from public government to Indian government. According to Rivera, the FSLN has already accepted this proposition.

After the completion of the demarcation process, the land base of the Indian peoples within the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua will comprise two distinct land masses which will conform to their historic and traditional territories and their traditional governments. (See Appendix I for the end result of the demarcation process).

In connection to services provided by the Indigenous governments, as an interim measure because of lack of capacity, services will be from national government institutions. In the meantime, Indian people will be trained to take over the administration of these services. In due course, transfer payments for services will need to be established for the Indigenous governments.

In connection to the Awastigni case taken to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights by the Mayagnas (formerly referred to as Sumu Indians) and its positive ruling in 2001 recognizing and affirming the land rights of the Mayagnas, the Sandinista government on December 14, 2008 acted on the ruling. According to Rivera, the government's response was the establishment of the first Indian territories mentioned earlier, comprised of 73,394 acres and the establishment of its territorial government.

The struggle for Indian rights in Nicaragua was a long, painful and bitter one. Rivera is still the leader (Taupla) of his people, a position he has held since I first met him in the spring of 1981. His determination and dedication to his people has not waivered and is still very much in evidence. I spent December 21, 2009 to January 4, 2010 travelling with Rivera to Miskitu villages in Honduras and Nicaragua, having many discussions and observing him and

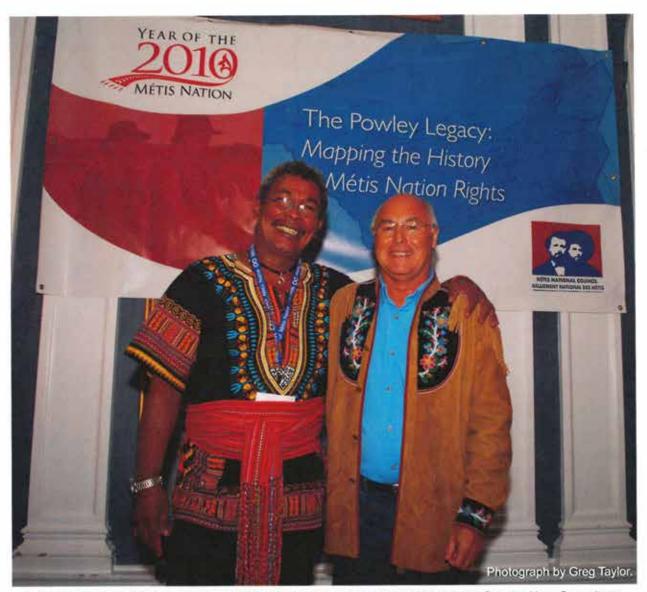


Honduras and Nicaragua, having many 🛕 Brooklyn Rivera with his daughter, Tininiska, January 2010

those around him at numerous community visits and meetings. He was always well received and happily embraced by the community members.

His last discussion with me was about "buen vivier". This he explained was a concept of prosperity, including the improvement of the living conditions of all the people and the development of identity. He believes that the Indian people must work out of poverty or impoverished conditions. Self-sufficiency, he believes, will follow after acquiring territory and self-government.

According to Rivera, under "buen vivier", everyone is equal.



▲ Salvador Fermin Chow and Clem. Salvador is wearing a sash presented to him by Senator Nora Cummings.

# Epilogue

It is my hope that by publishing this book the Canadian public can better understand the situation the Indian peoples in Nicaragua encountered in the crossfire between the Sandinista government and the US sponsored Contras. The geopolitical forces at play in Central America toward the end of the Cold War had a profound effect on Nicaragua and Guatemala and were in direct conflict with the rights of the Indigenous peoples living within those two countries. The attempted manipulation of the situation of the

Indians in Nicaragua by the CIA and the United States government was reflective of the past several decades of interference in the political affairs of the countries in South and Central America.

The conflict in Nicaragua also bore testimony as to whether a popular revolutionary movement turned government of the left was capable or even willing to provide space for the rights and existence of Indigenous peoples. This was being examined very carefully by the Indian leaders in Guatemala who were being lobbied to join the leftist guerilla movement bent on overthrowing the right-wing military dictatorship of that country which was propped up by the United States. During my presidency, the WCIP focused on this region and endeavoured to mediate conflicts and advance the rights of Indigenous peoples.

This Indigenous struggle for rights in Nicaragua is still not well known in Canada. Hopefully this publication will assist towards that end. As part of this education process, the progress with respect to the demarcation of their territories was shared with the Métis Nation by YATAMA representative, Salvador Fermin Chow at MNC's July 16-17, 2010 national conference "Year of the Métis Nation" marking the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Batoche and the execution of Métis leader, Louis Riel.

More importantly, it is my hope in publishing this book that the Indian youth of the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua, Yapti Tasba, will have an informed understanding of that part of their history and the sacrifices made on their behalf. This book is a tribute to all of those brave men and women of Yapti Tasba who sacrificed so much to defend their rights and preserve their dignity as a people, with a special acknowledgement and thanks to the people of Walpasiksa who put their lives on the line to make our escape possible.



A Brooklyn and Clem at Batoche, 1985

# APPENDIX A - Interview with Brooklyn Rivera

# Interview with Brooklyn Rivera General Coordinator of MISURASATA

by Clément (Clem) Chartier San Jose, Costa Rica April 30, 1986 and January 3, 1987

# PART 1, APRIL 30, 1986

CHARTIER: Mr. Rivera, to begin with, I would like to get your personal background: when were you born, where you were born and possibly your education, where you received your education, that sort of personal background.

RIVERA:

Yes, I was born in a little village called Lidaukra, located in the Big Sandy Bay area, which is about 30 miles North of Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi). I come from a small family composed of my mother, an older brother, and then my aunt and her children, possibly that's all the members of my family. I was born there the  $24^{\text{th}}$  of September, 1952 and I grew up my first eight years in this village, and at eight, I started to go to school in one of the villages of Sandy Bay called Ninayari. The first two years I just was attending for the purpose of getting milk from the distribution at the school. The following years from eight to fifteen I lived in another village, called Wawa, its south of Bilwi about twelve miles from there and I continued my school there until I was in the fifth grade.

Since my parents are just my mother, I didn't see my father until I was sixteen because they separated when I was a little child and well, my mother is very poor and she didn't have the resources it took to send me to school in Bilwi. I didn't have a chance to attend the school there. When I got off my fifth grade, I didn't have the chance to continue my schooling and I had to quit studying and start to dedicate to help my mother with fishing and catching shrimps in Wawa village. But I still had an interest to continue my schooling but there was no chance until 1969 when I met my father and he invited me to go to Managua since he was living there, with his family. I accepted and went with him to Managua and continued my study and the whole of high school I spend there and then my college I attend in Managua, so I lived there a total of eleven years, attending my school. I consider that I am one of a very few Miskitu person who are privileged to go to high school and to university.

CHARTIER: What did you study in Managua, at university?

RIVERA: Yes, I studied math and I have a degree in this subject at the National University of Nicaragua.

CHARTIER: While you were in Nicaragua University, I take it that the Sandinista revolution was going on at that time. Did you have any participation in that or were you able to at least observe what was happening?

RIVERA: When I was attending college in Managua, I began to rediscover my ethnic consciousness as an Indian person because I had suffered alienation during the years that I was attending my high school and I rediscovered that I was an Indian person and the situation of my people were very harsh, very difficult, sad and I decided to organize my fellow students at the University. It was during the 1970s, the second part of the decade. So myself and other Indian students, we created the first group at the University to organize ourselves and rediscover our consciousness about the situation, the reality of our people. With this group, we started to work with our people who were living in Managua, and even some of the students who were attending the high school in Managua. We start to work with them and you know, start to create more consciousness and awareness about the situation of our people.

By the vacations we were organizing trips to the Atlantic Coast, not just to go and spend our vacation but to go into the area visiting the villages and talk to the elders, talk to the other village leaders, expressing our concerns and our activities in Managua on behalf of our people. So that's the way we started to have contact with the people and their reality and I learned from them, both their suffering and their aspirations. Now, at the same time, at the University in Managua we start to have contact with the Ladino students who were involved with the Sandinista Front and participated in the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. By the time and during the insurrectional period, we cooperated with these people in Managua to organize the resistance. When Managua was seized by the people, the Sandinista Front, we participated there, organizing barricades and organizing strikes against the National Guard. I myself was also part of the teacher organization that was very belligerent against Somoza. We were working with the students in different high schools in Managua to organize different manifestations and strikes against the National Guard. So, I participated in all these movements against the Somoza dictatorship. But my main concern was about the situation of my people and their aspirations so I was discussing very deeply with the other students at the University about autonomy of the Indian people for the Atlantic Coast. At that time it was very hard for the dogmatic students at the University to understand but anyway we were publishing

some pamphlet or newsletter about the situation of our people, publishing some articles at the newspaper, La Prensa, which was at the time very opposed to the Somoza regime.

During one of my visits to my home village in Sandy Bay, I organized for the first time all the divers who were dedicating to catch lobster in the Miskitu cays and I led them to improve their working conditions and better prices for their lobsters at the companies they're in, in Puerto Cabezas and we published several reports in La Prensa denouncing all the inhumane conditions that these Indians were facing and that I'd help to get our people better prices for their lobsters and better materials to work the seas. So, those are some of the activities that I was involved in during the time that I was living in Managua as a student.

CHARTIER: When did you leave Managua? Was it in 1979 with the completion of the revolution or was there some point in time that you decided to dedicate your efforts full time on the Atlantic Coast? What happened at the time of the success of the revolution?

RIVERA:

Just a few months before the triumph our group was stranded and we decided to participate more directly with the fight against Somoza and the first thing we decided was to approach the ALPROMISU leadership, in some way to identify or to participate with the liberation movement against Somoza. We met several leaders in Managua who were fighting against Somoza. Then we decided to go to Puerto Cabezas and meet with ALPROMISU leaders, including Mildred Levy, Armando Rojas and others. explained what was happening and we believed it was necessary that we should be involved in some way in supporting the struggle against Somoza. But they were not ready to do that, even Armando who was the most educated and well-informed about what was happening, but he said no, we cannot do that. I said we have to do whatever possible to help the rest of Nicaragua to expel Somoza from the power. But even he wouldn't accompany us back to Managua and talk with some of the opposition leaders.

So we were upset and we decided to participate as persons. In this group we were there, persons like Hazel Law, Steadman Fagoth, Alphonso Smith, Marcos Hoppington, Railey Wilson, I and others. We were participating as I explained earlier, during the insurrection period.

Later on we decided to send Alphonso to Puerto Cabezas to try to organize some kind of resistance there and take over the town. And we sent Steadman Fagoth to Costa Rica to make contact with the highest level representative of the government, of the new government that they were trying to form at the time. Myself and Hazel and others stayed in Managua until the 19th of July. So after the triumph of the revolution we all got together and Steadman Fagoth had succeeded in talking to some of the Sandinista leaders in Costa Rica such as Daniel Ortega and Robelo who were part of the first Junta and other Sandinistas. They asked Steadman to go to the Atlantic Coast and try to force the National Guard to surrender themselves there. So Steadman went to Tegucigalpa (Honduras), then came back into the country clandestinely through Waspam. That was the same day that Somoza was overthrown. Alphonso was there in Puerto Cabezas and also participated with other people in the coast to take the town from the National Guard. They didn't fight in Puerto Cabezas, and all that region, but they surrendered themselves and gave up their guns.

After the triumph we met with the Government of Reconstruction in Managua. We met with Sergio Ramirez and Daniel Ortega and we explained the situation of our people and they asked us to go to the Atlantic Coast to work with the people, to organize the people. So we went there. I started to work with the people, but now as ALPROMISU. That is the first time that I went back to the region and stayed longer, for several months organizing the people because I was convinced that within this new process the people should organize very well and participate within this process promoting their own interests.

CHARTIER: I understand that Ortega came to the Atlantic Coast twice in 1979, once in July and then in November and that ALPROMISU was transformed into MISURASATA, with a change in leadership. What is your recollection of those activities?

### RIVERA:

When we were beginning to work with the people, we had problems with the Sandinista officers who were there at that time. They never worked there before, but after the triumph they were sent by the government in from the other area. And these people. they didn't know anything about the situation, the culture and language. They were very ignorant, but the Ladino people who live in Puerto Cabezas, who all identified with the past regime, with Somoza, and since they spoke the Spanish language, these Sandinista officers identified with their own people, Ladino people. These Ladinos started to misinform, gave all the wrong information about Indian people. That the Indians are separatists, racists and they are trying to create a new country. So the Sandinista officers were very scared about all these accusations against our people and when we started to work with the people, they felt that what we were doing was a threat and they started to capture us and put in prison for, just few days. That happened several times and we were forced to return to Managua to talk with the government and even sometimes get some power, some letters supporting our activity from the government. With that kind of paper we were allowed to work more freely.

Since many of the Sandinista leaders, they knew us very well, we were explaining what we were doing and we had some kind of support from them in Managua. But in the region other things were happening with these officers. But after a few months Daniel Ortega went to the region and asked for a meeting with the new leadership of ALPROMISU and we met with him and explained to him all the situation and what is the Indian interest and what we are trying to do. He explained to us that the Sandinista Front would not allow an independent organization just for the Indians because we should understand that now everyones are free citizens in the country and there is no need for a special organization for our people and we're no longer Indians, but are Nicaraguans. That we have been marginalized in the past but now the government will integrate all the people, Indians, to the mainstream of the national society and that we should work with the government. That our people should integrate in their mass organizations.

During the discussion he warned us that we should tell the people that this is the decision of the government. They won't allow us to continue with ALPROMISU. At that time we were preparing the celebration of the Fifth General Congress of ALPROMISU and we suggested to him that he should come to the meeting and tell the people himself, but we won't tell the people, our people that this is a decision of the government. So he was very upset with us and said, "Oh yes, I will come back and tell your people at this assembly that this is a decision of the Sandinista Front and that's it, you have to respect it".

He went back and during the General Assembly, the last day he did show up at the meeting and let me tell you that the people, all the people who were there, over 700 official delegates from the villages, Miskitu and Sumu people, they were already informed about the government's pretension of suppressing the Indian organization and they were very aware about what will be happening at this assembly. But all of them were very clear and decided that we wouldn't go back to our villages without the organization and obey our elders and the village leaders who were talking to us and said we don't worry much about this because we decided to die if it's necessary in this assembly, but we won't accept the government decision to suppress the organization. We cannot go back to our villages as slaves and that this is our determination.

But Daniel Ortega prior to attending the meetings, he talked with his people in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas) and I guess these people informed him about what the people, the Indians were so decided not to allow them to disband the organization. So he, at the assembly, he started to speak to the people very politically, beginning with the history of Sandino and what ever he was doing during the fight against the marines, the U.S. marines, in the 30s and tried to convince that the revolution, the struggle of Sandino and the revolution, are the same, that is, for the poor people and for all the Nicaraguans.

Some of the elders also had a chance to talk and explained how Sandino was operating among our people in the Coco River and how our people supported and how our people cooperated with him, hiding him from the National Guard and giving him food and

celebrating his presence and that our people have consciousness about Sandino's struggle. Well, he then started to test that if the grassroots person has consciousness about the organization and he demand to the delegates from the village to speak and not students like me and others. He demanded to hear from the elders, from the delegates who came to the assembly barefoot, those who didn't have chance to go to school and not from the educated Indians.

So at that moment, the founding members of ALPROMISU, all of them, they never had chance to go to school, they couldn't read and write and they were barefoot, all of them, they stood in a group and said "here we are. Here we are, the founders of ALPROMISU". Ortega was so surprised, and he asked "are you the founders? I heard that the students and the educated Indians have formed ALPROMISU". And these elders said "no, when we formed ALPROMISU we didn't see none of these students, none of these educated Indians, we did, because we are defending our rights, our land rights, our natural resources and our culture. Because Somoza government institutions were usurping all our land and our resources, our timbers and we had to fight and we did create this organization for that purpose". So, you know, he was so amazed. Then he said, "well, this is very good".

Later the other manoeuver that he did was he tried to divide the Sumu from the Miskitu people. He started to talk about the supposed oppression that the Sumu people suffered at the hands of the Miskitu in the past and how the Miskitu people took all the land from the Sumu and sold some of their members to the British. Such a thing, trying to create some kind of friction between the delegates there! Then he asked the Sumu people to talk about their feelings, what they think about this and if they really have consciousness about their unity with the Miskitu people and he demanded the Sumu elders who came from the villages, and those who didn't go to school, those were the ones to speak and not the educated students. So, a Sumu leader, Ronas Dolores, he was among the delegates and he spoke on behalf of all the Sumu delegates. Dolores was so brilliant with his message, so powerful and very convincing that Ortega couldn't do anything. He explained it by history, by tradition we are a common people with our brother the Miskitu and we know our situation. No one can tell us about the reality that we are living and of course we are part of the organization.

So finally when Daniel Ortega decided there was no way he could disband the organization because the people, the grassroots people, were so strong in their consciousness of the organization, finally he said, "well, you can continue with the organization but I suggest to include the Sandinista term within the name of the organization". The people said "we don't have problems with that. We support the revolution and we want to participate in this process and that's very good". And

everyone clapped their hands and were so enthusiastic and that's the way ALPROMISU transformed to MISURASATA, with the inclusion of the Sandinista term and the Rama group to the organization.

CHARTIER: Was that meeting in 1979?

RIVERA: That is correct, the Fifth General Assembly was from 8 to 11 November, 1979.

CHARTIER: And when Ortega spoke to you the first time on the Atlantic Coast, when was that?

RIVERA: That was a month before the Assembly, sometime in October.

CHARTIER: Was Ortega there in July of 79 as well or was...?

RIVERA: No, no.

CHARTIER: Those were the first two times?

RIVERA: That is the first time he went.

CHARTIER: What do you believe is or should be the basis of Indian politics and does this differ from

the ideologies of the non-Indian societies?

RIVERA:

I think our people, as a natural people, have a natural way of living, not by instructions of values or beliefs, but according to our own experience, what we have, a way of life and living it in harmony with nature and the earth. So this part is a set of values and beliefs which integrates the life of the Indian people and I think that this is what makes us different from the rest of the people. The non-Indians, what they have and what they do, they have learned from the other society or way of life, other values and they don't have nothing of their own society. Because of that I believe the Indian people have their own set of values and belief that we call philosophy or ideology. We practice this daily in our community, our society and we live in the natural way. I think this is the way that we succeeded surviving since many years ago and we still are here. Everything we do and live and practice in our society, I see quite different from what we see in other kinds of society, the White or the Ladinos. I have learned from my own experience since I have lived in both societies, of course, my own culture and then several years in Managua, that our people have all their way of life that makes them different than the rest of the Nicaraguans.

CHARTIER: Do you think that this is the basis from which the people had the strong resolve at the general assembly to face Daniel Ortega?

RIVERA:

That exactly, our people have a strong ethnic consciousness of their reality and their interests. That we know who we are and what our interests are and because of that, when we are facing a threat like the pretensions of the Sandinista government to dissolve the organization, at that time. Later on, when the government decided to face the situation using violent methods against our people, we organized our resistance to face this reality of threat. I think this is the strength of our culture and our Indian consciousness for freedom and the determination to continue to exist as what we are and that we resist any kind of imposition which will destroy our culture, our tradition. Our people, I think, are smart. They know what is good for them and remember the Indian people have been suffering hundreds of years since the European invasion. They know what is good and what is bad for their situation and I believe that when the people decide to do something it is because they are convinced, not because they have been manipulated or because they have been used by someone else. I'm very convinced that when my people decided to fight against the Sandinista it was not because of the decision of one person or one leader, just because collectively they were convinced.

When I was still inside Nicaragua, in 1981 after I had been released from the prison, when I was trying my best how to avoid violence by mediating the situation, trying to improve the relationship between the government and the people, our people were so convinced that the government didn't have good intentions toward them, since they were preparing to use their military solution. The people asked me, "Brooklyn, what are you doing here? We already decided to face the situation. We don't have no other alternative and if you stay here you will be caught in the middle and you will be the one who will die first in this struggle". That means, it is clear from the beginning what the people are doing and what they have been facing.

CHARTIER: MISURASATA had some, I understand, some positive actions with the government, but then, as you say, things got bad and the people decided to go into resistance. What would you say would be the positive things that happened between the Indian people and the government and what is your analysis of why things went wrong?

RIVERA:

Well, when we have transformed ALPROMISU to MISURASATA, we succeeded from the government's pretensions to suppress the organization, we start to work with the government in trying to develop the revolutionary task of the government for the region through MISURASATA. We used the organization as a vehicle to develop the different activities among the Indian people since we were the leaders and we knew how to work with the people, how to help them to realize according to their own interests and in that

effort we participated in some activities that the government asked us to do, like the literacy campaign in the Native language. We organized totally the activity from the very beginning. We created the textbooks, all the materials and we organized the teachers, all the students, all the programs. The government was just supporting the efforts of MISURASATA with some logistic and financial assistance, but the rest of the effort, MISURASATA was in charge. It was a very positive effort for the revolution and for the organization, to work together in helping Indian people to read and write.

The other program that we were involved in is the health program at the rural area. We helped the government with our health leaders, to get more training and work in all the campaigns for vaccinations in our health activities in the villages. The government institutions couldn't do anything in that area except if it was supported by MISURASATA. Because the Indian people were so conscious, you know, were so identified with their organization, if anything that the government wanted to do, the people said you have to work with MISURASATA and they have to support you, otherwise we cannot cooperate with you. And I think that is one of the reasons that the government feel jealous and upset. The Indians were demanding the government institutions to work with MISURASATA and not directly with the villages. Of course, the people were a little concerned that the government would start to create difficulties if they went directly through them.

The other thing we have done with the government, it's some different activity of cooperativism, is organizing the people to produce more for the government institutions that were organized to produce the rice, beans and cocoa and the bank can loan money through MISURASATA. The people were so enthusiastic and everything where the government was doing with MISURASATA, through MISURASATA, was very successful because the people were conscious that this was the way that they should work. But we have learned that the government had other intentions, that they were not so happy or satisfied to work with MISURASATA or work through MISURASATA. They felt that this was an obstacle. They wanted to have direct access to the people for their political purposes, to control the people and they started to create the mass organizations; the Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS), the Field Workers Associations (ATC), the farmer's organization, the worker's organization, the youth, the kids, the women's and they tried to force their introduction to the villages. Of course the people were scared and they said "we are not willing to accept this". The people rejected these organizations. The government was so upset with this. They were asking us to force the people to accept these mass organizations. Our response was "we cannot do that, because I don't think our people need this kind of organization. MISURASATA is their organization and you should respect, recognize, support and work with MISURASATA". That is one of the causes of the conflict, the conflict between the government mass organizations and the

communities and MISURASATA. The people were very jealous with their organization and didn't want the government organization operating in the communities.

The other thing, it's about the land rights. The government institutions like IRENA which is the Institute for the Natural Resources and Environment, and INRA, the National Institute for Agrarian Reform, they started to work in the region but they were trying to use the land of the people and the people were very jealous for their land. Then conflict arose between these institutions and the communities. We were saying that this is our land, but INRA and IRENA were saying "no, this is national land and we need to use it". So conflict began and all this was brought to MISURASATA to decide how to deal with it and after several conflicts the people, even with machetes were trying to fight against INRA and IRENA. Finally, the government invited us to go to a meeting to discuss about the land rights. We claimed our rights for the land and the government say "well, we don't want problems with your people but we don't know which is the area and the boundaries of your people's land, so please prepare a map with the boundaries and we will recognize it". But of course, they never did that because when we were ready to deliver all the documents and the map to the government containing the land rights, the government came with their repression against the leadership.

So we can explain the reason of the conflict between the government and the Indian people. It's clear this is because of the government pretension to control the Indian people, their land and their resources and they have rejected to work with the Indian organization. They never recognized MISURASATA as an Indian organization. They did in some way but not formally, even that they appointed one seat at the Council of State but that was in a very limited way. We had more grassroots support than many other organizations but they just gave us one seat. Other organizations were appointed to several seats. I think that by the time MISURASATA was getting more strength and more power, the government was very concerned about the organization. I remember once in a meeting with Jaime Wheelock, one of the nine ruling commanders who is the Minister of Agrarian Reform in October, I think 1980, he warned us that the problem is the Miskitu people, that we are very autonomous people and they really worry about the situation because they cannot allow two vanguards in Nicaragua since the Sandinista Front is the only vanguard. They see that MISURASATA is the vanguard in the Atlantic Coast of the Indian people. They cannot allow to continue what has been happening because MISURASATA is an obstacle and we have to subordinate ourselves under their plan and under their strategy and under their direction. Otherwise they will always consider us as separatist and racist until the leadership will accept to work under their control and under their direction. So, it was clear that the conflict was raised because the government was not ready to tolerate an independent people's organization within the revolutionary process. They were so rigid, forcing the people to work or to submit under

their control, but as you know, the Indian people by tradition, they're very strong against any kind of imposition by external forces. And even the government in this case, they became intruders or invaders from outside.

CHARTIER: What sort of repression have your people faced since the government took those measures to repress the Indian people?

#### RIVERA:

Well, several actions led to the direct confrontation between the government and the Indian people. I'll try to mention some of them. There was a conflict about the timbers. Several villages' timbers were used by the government sawmills and when they failed to pay and even that they agreed to compensation eighty percent of the usufruct of this timber, but they never fulfilled their promises and the people were very upset because the government was continuing using all the timbers and they didn't pay to the villages and the conflict started to arise because the people organized themselves with machetes and stopped the sawmill to operate in this area. One in Alamikamba; one in Sukatpin and the other in Rosita, etc.

The other conflict was about the mine workers. They were demanding better salaries and improvement of the condition of work and all of them were Miskitu people and organizing MISURASATA Labour Union and they were in some kind of strike demanding the government to accept these demands. The government was very upset and accused that these were organized by MISURASATA and they started to repress the people, fired hundreds of them and we had to negotiate with the government, trying to re-integrate all these workers. They were, the government was very mad against all these people.

The third actions were about one of the leader of the labour union of the fishermen who were killed by one of the soldiers in Puerto Cabezas. Our people were demanding the government to punish the person responsible for this killing and the government failed to do this and because of that, the tension increased in the people. They were very angry that this soldier was still free there, and the army didn't punish him.

The other actions, conflict of actions, was in Wangki River (Rio Coco/Coco River). Many of our people had to work in cooperative production of rice and beans. The government failed to lend or give money for the harvest of all this rice production and the people lost all their production. The bank, the government bank, was demanding the people to pay all the loans and they didn't have the money to do it, so that was the other element of the conflict. With all this conflict we went to Managua to talk with the commanders to explain what was happening in the Atlantic Coast, to ask them for some of their help to solve it, but they refused to meet us and then, by surprise, the security forces started to arrest all the Indian leaders, including myself.

CHARTIER: When was that?

RIVERA: That was in February 1981 when we were in Managua trying to meet with the

government leaders to explain this entire situation that had been happening.

CHARTIER: I understand that during the time that the leaders were arrested, there was an incident a

Prinsapolka which introduced arms into the conflict. Do you have any knowledge about

that incident?

RIVERA: Well, at that time I was in prison in Managua, but the same night of the incident in Prinsapolka, the security officer took me out for interrogation and he was very nervous and explained to me what happened and he accused me of being responsible for that

and explained to me what happened and he accused me of being responsible for that action and some of their people have been killed and there is now a group of fighters in the bush, trying to fight against the government and much bloodshed is going on there;

that "you're responsible for this incident, because these people had the arms from you,

from the amount that you had hidden in the jungle".

Later on I learned what really exactly happened. It's at the time the security forces were arresting all the main leaders in the region and most of the leaders were arrested. There were a few who were protected by the people, especially in Waspam, Wangki River. Those leaders were saved from detention. But one of the regional leaders, Elmer Prado. he was from Rosita region, and he was persecuted by the security. He went to Prinsapolka in order to avoid his capture, but the security forces during one night, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, when the brigadistas (literacy brigade members) were at the religious ceremony for the end of the literacy campaign in the church, eleven of the security members went to the church to try to capture Elmer Prado who was there inside the church at the service. The religious leader asked them, the soldiers, to wait until the service will be over but they didn't. They went right direct to Elmer and the head of the group catch Elmer and there was some kind of fight between these two persons and the rest of them they were just standing up inside. Another five of them (soldiers) went inside the church, others were outside. And the military had their arms and start to machine gun and wounded Elmer's hand and blood was there. That time there were many people inside the church and especially many young people who were a part of the literacy crusade. These young people, when they saw Elmer bleeding, they just jumped up and several of them took to the soldiers to start to fight inside there and those who were on the outside, when these incidents were happening, they start to machine gun blindly. Four of the civilians were killed right there. Many of the young people there start to get the arms from the hands of the soldiers and killed those five who were inside and some of them, of course, used knives and machetes that they had and they came outside and also had a fight with the rest of the military, and killed them. With those guns they went to the bush

because the next day more soldiers were coming from Puerto Cabezas. So, that was the first, the beginning of the bloodshed and the armed resistance between our people and the government.

CHARTIER: What kind of aggression did the people suffer at the hands of the government troops after that and, I guess, basically during the worst years?

#### RIVERA:

After this incident at Prinsapolka, the people were very scared. The people were very upset at what they (government) were doing. Even thousands of Indians they got together in Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi) and Waspam, in Bluefields, demanding the immediate release of their leaders. Believe me, it was something very impressive, all the people very peaceful, praying and fasting in the churches. They were spending days and nights and just in peaceful resistance against the government, demanding the freedom of all their leaders. And by the time the numbers were increasing, thousands of them and also everything in the region were getting cease of activities because the majority of the people are Indians and the rest also identified with the Indians. Even the Black Creoles and the Ladinos were supporting our people. The school, the activities in the government institutions, everything was closed. Nothing was happening there and because of that, the government created a so-called Commission of Peace in order to bring calm into the region. This group was integrated by the Moravian Church, the Evangelical Committee for Development Aid (CEPAD), and FSLN to negotiate with the government, trying to release all the Indian leaders. But the people were still in this peaceful resistance demanding the freedom of their leaders and then the government started to repress the people; those people who were being in a peaceful demonstration. They didn't want to go back to their communities until all the leaders were freed. The government were so upset and the security forces, police and the army organized the first massive aggression against these women, against old people and the churches in Waspam and Puerto Cabezas. They took militarily these places and beat the women, the kids, the old people, everyone and took them and expelled them violently. The people were very, very angry at this aggression that they suffered from the security forces and government. They went back to their villages with indignation and hardship.

Later the government started to get more ready to face militarily the situation. They brought more arms and the number of soldiers were increased. Thousands of soldiers were brought to this area and they were in much control of the people's movement from the villages to Bilwi and Bluefields and the mines. More people have learned that this was the way the government were trying to act against them and because of this, some of the young people, they decide to flee to Honduras. The first group were thirty-three of them but then we were still in prison, all the leadership. But when these young people saw their mothers, their grandmothers, their sisters were beated and repressed by the

soldiers, they were so angry they went to Honduras looking for arms and guns to come back and fight against the soldiers. These thirty-three young people were followed by several hundred later on and the number was increasing all the time because all the young people were deciding to go to Honduras. They thought they could find arms there. In time these people and some of the young people from the Sandinista army also defected with their equipment and went to the jungle and started to train their own people and organized the resistance.

During the end of the year, 1981 when many of our people were arrested in Waspam and Leimus, the border area with Honduras, and later on were executed by the soldiers, the groups of the resistance and people started to fight against the government soldiers and they did first in Wangki River area. Those villages were along the river where the Sandinista had their headquarters. The people have participated in these attacks. especially those family who were very angry against the government because of the killing of their relatives. They started to kill the soldiers in their communities and practically clean up all the presence of the soldiers in Wangki River. However, the government then sent thousands of soldiers by air, by river, by land in order to destroy the resistance in Wangki River. But our people decide to flee to Honduras because of the repression and thousands of them, they just crossed the river and hid in Honduran side and few of them, who still stayed in communities, the government forces forcibly, relocated them and created the so-called relocation camps, Tasba Pri. That way the government soldiers practically clean up all the villages along the Wangki River and they burn all the communities, destroying the houses and killing all livestock and fruit trees and crops, practically leaving in ashes, the communities.

The following months of that year, 1982, they continued their repression in other villages, in the interior of the region not in the border area and several other villages were destroyed like Prata, Seven Benk, Butara, etc. And that year led to a dark repression against Indian people. Thousands of them had been arrested and hundreds of them have been killed and dozens of disappearances and villages have been burnt. Thousands of Indians have been tortured and by the time, many more Indian women have been raped and the government tactic was to occupy militarily the communities and repress the people. From there they were operating with their counter-insurgency plan against the community and practically all the villages were converted to prison villages, with the soldiers present there and their repression plan. They were trying to force the people to their knees with the repression in order to submit under their ethnocide plan. This they have committed against the Indian.

**CHARTIER**: You've described generally what has been suffered by your people. What have you yourself personally suffered at the hands of the Sandinista government?

#### RIVERA:

Well, when first I have been arrested in February 1981 in Managua and I spend there for two weeks and during that time I have suffered physical and psychological harassment. I have been tortured by the security forces and very physical ill-treatment committed against me and different punishment and hunger and threat. After I have been released because of the people's demand, I constantly have been harassed by the security forces in Bilwi, saying that I was against the government especially after my visit to Honduras with a Commission. We went with the purpose to convince the youngsters who were there to return back. The security accused me that I went there to work in agreement with the counter-revolutionary and they start to pressure me more by the time. Once the Commander William Ramirez warned me saying that I have to renounce my position in the organization and work with the government otherwise they will not be responsible for my life and that there is no space for me to work politically inside Nicaragua except for if I work with the government or for the government in the region.

Then in exile I have suffered two bombing attacks from which I have escaped barely alive. One was during my visit to Nicaragua clandestinely in January 1985 after the first round of talks in Bogota, Colombia. I was visiting my people in order to explain to them the development of the talks and try to get more support from the people for this effort but the government soldiers discovered my presence and they sent their airplanes and their coastguard in the Rio Grande area. During this attack two of my followers were killed and several others were wounded. After several days siege, I was wounded by the impact of the bombing. I escaped from the area and then spent several days in hospital in Costa Rica.

The second time the government tried to kill me was in January 1986 when I was visiting the villages with an international group and the leaders including Clem Chartier, Russell Means and Hank Adams. This time the government also discovered our presence in one of the communities and they blocked our exit to the sea and they started to bomb us and in the following days they persecuted and tried to seize the group. Three of our followers, part of our bodyguards were killed during this attack. It was clear at this time the government were so decided to exterminate me and also the group. They mobilized thousands of soldiers and their coastguard, their airplanes, their helicopters, even their trained dogs, in order to capture, or to kill us. It's clear that their decision was to kill me because they consider I'm an obstacle to their interest in the region. They were saying that I was bringing more bloodshed and war into the region with my presence and with that excuse they have tried to kill me.

CHARTIER: I understand as well that you had difficulties in Honduras from the, I'm not sure from which quarters, but there as well you were persecuted?

#### RIVERA:

Yes, when I was forced to leave Nicaragua by the Sandinista regime, even that I didn't want to leave the country and my people, but I didn't have no choice because my life was in danger. I didn't have the chance to leave the country legally because the security forces were following me, and I had to leave clandestinely and went to Honduras because that's the only place that I had a chance to go. When I arrived there with other few leaders who remained in the country with me, we were arrested by the Honduran army in Puerto Lempira. I spent the first nine days there, isolated. Then I was taken to Tegucigalpa and the army put me under house arrest and I spent several months there until there were some problems among our people in La Mosquitia. They sent me to the region to try to help to unite the people. When I returned to the region and tried to help the new refugees that were coming from Nicaragua, I was arrested again and spent four days in Puerto Lempira. Later on, they sent me to Tegucigalpa with the instruction not to leave the house nor to try to go back to the region. That was the second time that I was in prison. The third time was when several months later, I tried to go back to La Mosquitia. That was in 82; the security arrested me in Tegucigalpa and finally they decided to expel me from the country. I was deported to this country, Costa Rica.

Also, before my third arrest, I was living in a house with some of our people in Tegucigalpa. One night the former Colonel of the National Guard of Somoza regime, he and another five national guards, well-armed, went to the house where I was and destroyed the door and got into the house and tried to arrest me and take me out with the decision to kill me, because they were accusing me that I was a Sandinista infiltrator, that I was against them, the Somocista, and that I was working against Steadman Fagoth. But at the time some of our people were there with me and they among them, one of the elders, Presciliano Mercado who lives now in New York City with his family. He intervened and defended me strongly, fought against these soldiers and said that they have to kill him first but they didn't allow them to take me with them. That's the reason, the National Guards of Somoza failed to take me out from the house and finally they threatened me and they said that they will return back. Of course after they left, I had to leave the house and hide there in the town, spending several weeks until I had a chance to leave the country. That's some of my experiences in Honduras.

CHARTIER: Even given all that has taken place against your people and yourself as a leader, you agreed and did in fact enter into four rounds of peace talks with the government, however they, I guess, came to an end May of 1985. What do you think the government has to do in order to show its good faith and what do you see as the cause of the failure of the first initiatives; those first four rounds of talks?

#### RIVERA:

Well, I think the government of Nicaragua, they have failed to make progress on the negotiations with MISURASATA because they have been using this negotiation as a tactical action and not necessarily as a strategical action to solve the problem with the Indian people. It's clear that they decided to work in this process of peace when they failed to defeat militarily the resistance and when there was heavy international pressure on the government to change their policy and improve the situation with the Indian people. They accepted, not because they were convinced of the need to solve the conflict in a just way, but only accepted to gain time and try to improve the situation according to their own good. Because of that, they never assumed any seriousness and good faith in order to make concrete advancement in the recognition of the Indian rights. They were testing the will of MISURASATA and were trying to learn some of our positions in order to manipulate according to their own way. We have learned that the government was trying just to gain time and improve their international image saying that they believe in peaceful negotiation but not because they were convinced that they made serious abuses and atrocities against the Indians and that they should recognize and solve this grievance of the Indians.

At the same time, they were trying to organize their outline of their solution. And also they were trying to get some political space inside Nicaragua with the Indian people so that they can destabilize the Indian resistance and also make some kind of advancement for their unilateral action. And, for that reason when they felt that they had some chance to operate by themselves with the exclusion of MISURASATA, they decided to do that and they forced the end of the negotiations. Later they started to work in the autonomy plan, which was the demand of the Indian people. Also MISURSATA were demanding the return of the displaced Indians and they allowed them, the Indians, to go back to their traditional communities. They started to approach the Indian fighters inside for dialogue with them and of course they were pushing for support to Misatan, tried to gain some space and support among the Indian people. They were so convinced that all these actions could work and can make progress and no need to continue the talks with MISURASATA. And until now where there's a clear evidence of their failures of all these maneuvers, especially with the return of the displaced Indians to their homeland. You know, all the maneuvers of the government were concentrating on this and they were preaching to the world the success of their effort to solve the Indian conflict, they were allowing the Indians to go back to their homeland and many people were convinced that this was true. We were saying and we were right at the time, that we were aware that all this unilateral action of the government will fail because there was no support by the people and by their organization, by the leadership.

One of the government's big mistakes that they have done in the past and are still doing, is they want to do by themselves. They think with a paternalistic mind that they think that they know and they have learned everything what is good for the Indians and they will do for the Indians, and that is a big mistake. The Indians are not in the situation that the

government will do for them. We are now conscious about what is good for us and since there is no base or foundation to support all these actions, look what happened. All the displaced Indians who have been resettled in their villages were forced by the repression to leave the country and now the villages are empty. The government is saying that this is a part of an action by KISAN to kidnap all the Indians to Honduras; but this is just an excuse. The reality is thousands of Indians there in Honduras are new refugees and it shows the failures of the government. Believe me, that now the government they don't believe in the autonomy plan, but still they are using it as a pretext to justify their failure. The only way they can succeed at solving the Indian conflict is to assume seriousness and negotiate in good faith with the legitimate Indian leadership and their organization.

To complete your question, I think the Indian leaders can consider, if the government is serious when we see some concrete action that they are not attacking the villages but are willing to act in good faith and in this particular case we are demanding the government to assume seriousness. What's that mean? That means they have to stop trying to impose their autonomy plan and negotiate directly with the people and with the MISURASATA leadership. If they said publicly, "we have failed and we need to negotiate with MISURSATA the autonomy plan, and we are inviting the organization to work in this effort," then there is a chance to work in that.

And also about the Indian land rights and natural resources, they have to negotiate with the right people, not trying to continue lying to themselves or lying to other people that they said, "well, they are the Indian representatives: Hazel Law, Armando Rojas and all the Misatan leaders." Because that is not true. Even if they continue promoting these persons, they don't represent the people and they don't have the support from the people. They can lie to the international opinion but they cannot deceive the Indian people because we know what exactly we want and who our leaders are and what the reality is. I think what they have to do is reconfirm MISURASATA as the Indian voice and Indian representative and then we can negotiate with them. The others, they're part of the situation but not part of the conflict. Hazel Law doesn't have any conflict with the government; she's part of the government. So how can they negotiate with Hazel Law or Armando Rojas? They're not part of the resistance, but they are part of the government. They are just themselves and I think they represent their own interests and not the people. You can agree with Armando Rojas but not with the people. So, I think the government has to be serious, and be serious whether if they want or not MISURASATA's part of the plan, they have to negotiate with MISURASATA. Also MISURASATA is demanding seriousness for some guarantee for our safety and for our political position.

The government should accept some International organizations and friendly governments to participate if they are serious, if they don't have nothing to hide, if they

don't play dirty games, if they are not trying to lie no more. I don't see that they can solve the problems with the excuse that this is an internal affair of Nicaragua. This posture doesn't help no one. I think if they accept the international participation, an agenda based on Indian rights and participation of Indian people of other countries, then we can consider that they are serious. Otherwise it's clear they just want to destroy MISURASATA politically and militarily.

Also, I have to add that they must demilitarize the Indian villages. If they say the Indians are not their enemy, the Indians are not fighting to overthrow the government, and the Indians are not part of the Contra revolution, why do they have to continue killing the Indians or attacking the Indian resistance? This resistance is a reality because the government forced its creation. They have to deal with it, but in a responsible way, and not just try to annihilate it, or to wipe it out and then impose what they want. The Indians can assume the commitment not to attack their headquarters in the town and their strategic positions in the region. If they withdraw their soldiers from the villages, then there will be some kind of positive step to make advancement in this direction. But while the people are suffering, are starving and repression is going on and more bloodshed and more killing, unnecessarily, how we can think about the possibility to make advancement in this? So, when I said we're demanding seriousness, I mean that kind of action the government will show that they are committed to work in a serious way with the Indian leadership.

CHARTIER: That's what the government must display. What is the MISURASATA leadership willing to do in order to show that you are in fact serious in finding or pursuing a political solution?

RIVERA:

Well, I think as we did in the past, when we saw that there was an opportunity to explore the possibility of peace, of a peaceful settlement, we even decided to separate our alliances with other organizations and dedicate totally to this peaceful effort and we have been working with the government exclusively in this purpose. I think we can, in this time, if they show all this effort also, we can perhaps try to present something more concretely in the discussion about Indian rights and also perhaps if the government will demilitarize the villages and stop their attack against the warriors, we can agree not to attack the government soldiers and try to have some kind of truce or ceasefire in fact and try to make advancement and even go to Nicaragua and negotiate there, with the government in the presence of our people.

CHARTIER: One final question with respect to the peace talks. There has been a lot of criticism both by the Nicaraguan government, and of course their supporters, about the role of the advisors that you're using. That the advisors are infiltrated by the CIA and in fact there is an accusation that you yourself are manipulated by the CIA or have CIA connections. What is your comment with respect to those kinds of accusations?

### RIVERA:

Well, I think these are not serious accusations. It's coming from the government and then repeated by their supporters and I think this is to discredit our leadership and also to hide the real reason of the breakdown of the talks. Of course we are clean in our consciousness and that this is a nonsense accusation. The advisors MISURASATA has are persons who are just concerned about the Indian rights and we know that they don't have any link with the U.S. government. If we know that anyone of them does, right away we will separate from the team, but I know all of them sympathize with the revolution in other aspects but they are very critical to their treatment of the Indians by the government and I think the government are very irresponsible with this kind of accusation against our organization. But anyway, I'm convinced that the problem is not the advisor but the problem is the government and their intransigent position to make up advancement in the negotiation. But if anyone has proof of the ties or link of some of these advisors with the CIA or the U.S. government policy, we asked them to present it. We can take any consideration to support that, but meanwhile we see that this is a nonsense accusation. We think that the government itself is not convinced with what they'e saying. Anyway we will do what is necessary in the future to improve the situation in that sense, but if there is a reason to do that.

CHARTIER: I understand that MISURASATA is currently working on a document outlining autonomy. How does this initiative differ from what the government of Nicaragua is doing and how are the communities or grassroots people that you represent involved in this process?

### RIVERA:

Well, yes we decided to work in a draft autonomy proposal for our people in order to materialize the aspiration of the people. The Indian warriors inside Nicaragua have been working with our people getting all the information and their concerns, their ideas about the Indian self-government rights. And then, we have worked here, the leaders, with all this information that we had from our people and prepared a first draft document, which contains the fundamental principles of the autonomy. Later, on the basis of these principles we started to prepare two documents or proposals. One is what we call the Treaty between the government of Nicaragua and the Indigenous people of the Atlantic Coast. This is for negotiation purposes. This document possibly limited the role and power of the government over the Atlantic region. The other one is the internal organization of the Indian self-government and this is to establish and organize the Indian self-government of the region. At the present time these documents are in the hands of our advisor team to examine the legal aspects and terminology of the content of the document. Of course when we will have all the comments from the advisors then we will

work again on that, then we will send it back to our people to consult with them inside Nicaragua and abroad in Honduras and Costa Rica. Then finally we will adopt it as an official proposal for the autonomy of our people.

CHARTIER: So basically it's still in the working stages and you're going to be doing more work than

that. That's correct?

RIVERA: That's exactly.

CHARTIER: In connection with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the WCIP, bearing in mind your past experience at the 1981 Third General Assembly in Australia and CORPI's past action with respect to MISURASATA and your invitation to the World Council in November 1984 to participate in the peace process, what is your current analysis of the recent developments within the Executive Council of the WCIP, as reflected by the

Executive Council meeting held in March of this year in Geneva, Switzerland?

RIVERA: Well, we had a very sad experience dealing with the leadership of WCIP. During the Third General Assembly I remember the Executive Council of CORPI refused to invite MISURASATA to this assembly in Australia, arguing that MISURASATA was not clear in their position; that we were in some way too close to the government and that they were still recognizing ALPROMISU at that time. But anyway, some of the WCIP leaders directly invited us and we attended this Assembly in Australia. I remember there in Canberra all the CORPI leaders met with us and they were some way concerned and upset with WCIP leaders that they invited us without their knowledge, but they finally accepted our presence. Now since we are in exile during the conflict I tried to contact some World Council leaders, among them Jose Carlos and others, CORPI leaders and all of them, but they just refused to talk to us or deal with us. They didn't even accept to hear us. We were forced to be separate from them. Then we have learned that we were expelled from the regional organization CORPI. So we didn't see any actions of

comprehension or support from WCIP during our resistance.

In '84 during the Fourth General Assembly there was a new leadership headed by your person which starts to change the WCIP position for MISURASATA. As you know we were very supportive also to the organization and we were recognizing the leadership of the WCIP even that we were not legally part of the organization. But we were convinced of the necessity to consolidate the international activities of the organization. But apart from your position we were not convinced from the rest of the leaders, that they were really convinced to support MISURASATA's struggle. As you remember several times we demanded the rest of the members to be more supportive to MISURASATA. But now, since they were so weak in their position and in some way, some of them are committed

with some leftist groups who have given them some money and others for their personal ambitions, they took as a pretext your trip to Nicaragua and made a decision to separate you from the WCIP leadership. I think this is the most inconceivable and irresponsible decision that they made. I'm not sure if they are convinced about the damage that they are committing against the Indian people with this kind of decision. inconceivable because there is no real reason for their decision. They are not serious with their argument and I'm really disappointed with this kind of people. I thought some of them were more serious in their position on behalf of Indian people. I say they are acting like non-Indian leaders, like other politicians just trying to satisfy the interest of the government and other forces and not caring about the Indian people. So it's sad. I think the Indian struggle, Indian interest, Indian organization and leadership it's different in their nature, in their rules and in their actions than any other political organizations. But these people, I don't see that they practice the Indians' rules and the Indians' ways to defend the interest of their people.

CHARTIER: What do you think is the future role of the WCIP with respect to your situation specifically and to the Indigenous world generally?

#### RIVERA:

Honestly, I am really concerned about the future itself of the WCIP and also, of course, I am concerned about what they will do in the situation of our people in Nicaragua. I don't trust much to their positions and their leadership. I see they're weak as Indian leaders, and they don't have the experience and they don't have the moral authority and strength to face this difficult situation in Nicaragua. We are concerned that they can be used by the Sandinista government. As you know, the Sandinista are so dirty with their maneuvers and these people, even they can fall in the hands of the Sandinista and they can be used. I doubt that they can do anything positive for the Indian people in Nicaragua or elsewhere. But I'm concerned that they can damage our struggle. We hope to talk with them and express all these concerns and we'll ask what they plan to do. The worst thing that can happen is that these people will now start to support the government plans and legitimize the autonomy project started in Nicaragua because it's clear that we're not so happy at what happened and with their leadership.

CHARTIER: The World Council represents quite a number of organizations around the world, in fact in 31 countries; however, of course, there are also a lot of Indigenous organizations that they do not represent. If there's any message of solidarity or any way that Indigenous peoples and organizations or nations can help your struggle, what would that be?

#### RIVERA:

Well, I think now the Indian people in other countries, should try to continue their fights in different levels according to the reality they're facing and to defend their interests by themselves and not to wait too much from the international organization. In the measure

of what they will continue doing on behalf of their own people, they are also helping or supporting our struggle in Nicaragua. I believe, Clem, that we Indigenous people are still not ready to fight all the international battles, diplomatically or politically. Maybe we need to work more in our countries, among our own people, to consolidate our national organizations and try to form more powerful leadership among our people. Then maybe we will be ready to organize powerful regional and international organizations.

Because you can see for instance, CORPI is a regional organization, but it's integrated by few element. They don't have the experience to defend the Indian rights or to fight for their people, or not to be too afraid of governments or other forces, but to defend the interests of the people. Also, there's some elements that don't have the support of the people. They're illegitimate elements. So they are lying to our people, saying that there is a regional organization, CORPI. But for what it's good, this organization? For nothing! It's not useful for the Indian people but just to justify political actions on behalf of other forces. I think national organizations and national leaders of our people should be consolidated and in that context support the struggle of other Indian people directly for the time being. I think with time, we can form or organize a powerful worldwide organization but we need more powerful leadership and then we can make advancement in the international struggle.

CHARTIER: Well, there's a lot of issues that we didn't cover. There' a lot we could have spoken about. We haven't covered everything but I think we've done enough at least to give people something to think about. Just to finish off, in terms of the conflict your people are facing against the government of Nicaragua and yourself as a leader of the resistance, what influence do you personally have as to whether the resistance continues or as to whether it ceases?

### RIVERA:

Well, modestly I can say that I have strong support among my people. The people have lots of confidence in my person as their leader and they are saying that our leadership represents their aspirations and the hope of their struggle. I'm sure that we have lots of influence to the people in their struggle. But beyond that, there's a reality that the Indian people are committed themselves to their own resistance and this is not the will or decision of one person. Even myself, it's not from who the people depend totally in what they are doing. I'm just one person that's part of the resistance. The resistance is the whole people, it's theirs and depends from them. They are suffering, they are dying and they are fighting the government there. That's the reason I say it all the time, even if I myself would decide to separate from the resistance or to give up from my position, it will affect a lot to my people and their resistance, but that is not the end of the resistance because the people will continue. They're facing the reality that they don't have other alternative in order to survive, to re-unify their family, to re-build their communities, to live freely back in their communities and develop their land and the resources and community and their future. They have to fight in order to provide the opportunity that the over 40,000 refugees who live outside will come back to Nicaragua. They have to fight in order to live freely in their villages and fish, hunt, and cultivate their land and to be able to swim freely in their lagoons, their rivers. They don't see other possibilities. They are facing a real threat as a people for the future. I repeat, it's not a matter of the decision of one person. It depends on the whole people and I'm convinced that while one of our people is still alive, the resistance will continue until there is justice and freedom for the Indians.

## PART II, JANUARY 3, 1987

CHARTIER: Since the interview of April 30, 1986, a number of developments have taken place. To begin with, given the fact that the U.S. government has passed legislation by which MISURASATA will receive five million dollars in aid, does this change MISURASATA's policy of seeking a solution with the Sandinista government and your continued nonalliance with the Contras?

RIVERA:

Well, the position of MISURASATA, it's not dependent on what's happened in other countries, governments or organizations. It's strictly depends from the interest of our people and their reality. So, we have an official position within this resistance which is to promote peace with justice for our people because we are fighting just for the interests of our people. We think the best thing for our people is peace based on the recognition of their historic rights. And this position cannot change for any reason. MISURASATA has an independent position in their struggle against the Sandinista aggression. This means we're fighting for ourselves, we're not part of any other fights of any other organization. Because we have our interests which are legitimate, the problem is also the rest of the Nicaraguans. They don't understand and they don't respect the cause of our people. Because of that we cannot just renounce our agenda and be involved in the fights of other groups. So we are still in favor of a serious initiative of peace and peaceful settlement. We still have an independent Indian resistance position.

CHARTIER: Was there any conditions attached to the approval of this aid by the U.S. government?

RIVERA:

Well, we understand that in general terms the Congress of the U.S. established that they are expecting at least some positive development will happen with this aid that they have approved for the resistance forces in Nicaragua. Some of these conditions are the cooperation actions among different organizations. Secondly, the respect of human rights of the people of Nicaragua. Thirdly, that these organizations are not involved in drug trafficking, and fourthly, that they will have a common political project for the future of

Nicaragua. So, these are the goals that this Congress have set for the organizations which will be getting these funds from the government.

CHARTIER: Does this mean that you have to co-operate politically with the FDN (Contras)?

RIVERA:

Well, I think that this is what they would like to see or many of them would like to see, but the thing is, we have our position defending the interests of our people and we think we are decided not to renounce this position just because of the aid. As I said already, the most important thing is what is best for our people. And, as you can see now, at the present time, all the rest of the organizations are united in some kind of coalition in UNO and in BOS but MISURASATA is still separate from all these coalitions and unification of the Contras.

CHARTIER: As well, in the press it was reported several days after the aid approval, that the CIA would be put in charge of the operational aspects of that aid. Does this have any impact on MISURASATA's acceptance of the U.S. aid?

RIVERA:

In the particular case of the MISURASATA aid, several Congressmen and Senators friendly to the organization have decided to work in order to make possible that this money will be channeled through the State Department and not through the CIA. And they have arrived at some kind of agreement with several other Congressmen to convince the administration to make it possible that these aids will not be used against MISURASATA to force them to be a part of the war against Nicaragua but just to provide the means for the Indian people for their self-defense and to make possible that MISURASATA will keep outside of the U.S. war against the Sandinistas. So, this is the hope and the possibility that we have that this money won't be channelled by the CIA but by the other agency of the government.

CHARTIER: Why does MISURASATA feel justified in accepting financial aid from the U.S. which is widely condemned for sponsoring the Contras in its bid to overthrow the Sandinista government?

RIVERA:

Well, we have to deal with reality and the reality is the systematic destruction of our people by the Sandinistas and we have a right to defend ourselves. The Sandinistas keep killing our people and keep their ethnocidal practices against our people. We don't have other alternatives. In order survive and in order to achieve peace with justice, we need to consolidate our resistance fight. The other reason is, the Sandinistas are getting thousands of tons of arms, weapons from the Soviet Union and the east bloc countries and no one is arguing about that. But they are using these weapons to kill the Indians, to destroy our villages and they are still doing so without any pressure by the people or

organizations in the world. The other reason is, we are demanding any other governments and organizations for support, for supplies without any conditions. We are willing to receive aid and supplies from anywhere that makes it possible that our people will defend themselves. That's what we are trying to do.

CHARTIER: Has MISURSATA received any of this financial package to date?

RIVERA:

At the moment the organization is not receiving any of this aid because we understand that there is a problem. First, with these scandals of the Iran affairs. Second, because the Contras and the CIA are pushing a campaign against our organization in Washington before the Congress and the Administration with the accusation that we will be using this money to strengthen our position and then we will negotiate again with the Sandinistas. Also they are saying if we will get this money we will use it to fight FDN. So, many of these people are concerned about what is our position and what we will be doing. It's clear that some of the agents are trying to use this money to blackmail the organization; that they want to use this money in order to have control of the organization and the resistance. Of course, we are not willing to allow this thing to happen. Because of this, the amount earmarked in law, it's still not flowing for MISURASATA.

CHARTIER: You mentioned the manipulations or the work of the CIA and the Contras against Indian interests. Has this been a difficulty that MISURASATA has been facing over the past number of years?

RIVERA:

Believe me that we have been and still spend much of our time, our energy, our resources fighting against or defending ourselves against the Contras and the CIA action against the organization. Much of the time we don't have the energy or resources to fight or defend ourselves against the Sandinista regime because these external forces, they just keep our leadership and our people defending ourselves against them. They have been trying to destroy our leadership and the organization itself. They have been using all their influence, their funds to divide the Indian people and to use our struggle for their own interests. They have been creating artificial organizations like Kisan, Misura, and now Nicopa. They have been inventing leaders of the Indian people. They have been trying to discredit the legitimate leadership of MISURASATA. Even they have been trying to organize an attempt to kill MISURASATA leadership. So, in all these years we have been in a very harsh and delicate situation with all the aggressions and threats against our lives and the organization. It's clear the effects of damage that the Contras and the CIA have been committed against the Indians, against the resistance of our people.

CHARTIER: In terms of the continuing attempts to re-open the peace talks or dialogue with the Sandinista government and coming to a peaceful solution based on the recognition of legitimate Indian rights to autonomy and land with respect to this struggle, for autonomy specifically, what does MISURASATA mean by autonomy and what areas of jurisdiction are you seeking, including the extent of land rights?

#### RIVERA:

Our people have the right to administrate their internal affairs. This includes the administration of our historic rights over the land, the natural resources and self –government. We are proposing the autonomy as the right to administrate what is ours including the cultures, the traditions, way of life and of course, the decision to pursue our own political, economic and social development according to our reality and interests. The jurisdiction of this autonomy should include the administration of the Indian rights, the land, the natural resources and the people itself, control of our people and their rights. We are talking about the extent of the collective ownership of the land and that people will have their land to develop their customs and resources and to rebuild our society within this territory. We are also talking about the sum of all the lands of the villages including the subsoil, the mineral resources, the rivers, the sea, the forest and all the other resources that the Creator had put in our land should be legalized for our people. And the Indians will control these resources and have possession and benefit according to their own traditions and interests.

CHARTIER: In order to administer all of these rights that you've elaborated, what form of self-government would be set up?

#### RIVERA:

We are proposing a self-government type which will be based on the traditional way of life, values and structure of the villages. That means the self-government of the Indian people will have their base and fundamentals on the villages, on the people and on their traditions, on their customs, values and interests. There will be government for each community and in each community there will be a Council of Elders, which are the traditional authorities, and the Communal Council which will administrate the collective interests of the people. Then on the middle structure there will be the Comarcas government. Comarca is a jurisdiction of a certain number of villages located in their neighborhood area. They share common terrain and resources and interests. On this level there will be a government based on the administration of the interests and rights and also the authorities of the Elders will be there. Finally, at the Regional level, the total of the autonomous territory, there will be government representatives of all the Indian nations and the ethnic groups and national community. This government will represent and defend the interests of all these collective nations and people of the region. They will be over all the administration, the self-government of the Indian people.

CHARTIER: You also mentioned it would include the ethnic groups which I take it include the Creoles and the National communities which, I guess, addresses the Ladino population within the Indian territory. Because the regional territory will represent not only Indian people but also non-Indian people, is there also room within the autonomous territory for the national government?

#### RIVERA:

Well, the national government will be limited in the power and responsibility over the autonomous territory of the Indian people. They will have certain powers regarding for instance, to the foreign relations, to defense, international borders, customs, the banks, the postal systems, etc., but all the rest of the rights will be controlled by the people through their self-government of the region.

**CHARTIER**: You mentioned that the national government would have control over defense. What do you see becoming of the resistance forces after a peaceful solution is arrived at?

#### RIVERA:

Well, I think they should be part of the forces of self-defense of the autonomous territory. We know that these forces should be part of the country's army, but the members and the officials of this army should be Natives from the region and also the military staff will be integrated by the members of our resistance forces, basically. Of course, this should be a process, depending on the advancement of the negotiations and the building of mutual confidence and the reconstruction of the region. And in that measure and progress, the resistance fighters will keep going forward and institutionalize as the force to keep defending the rights and interest of the people, but now as part of a country army.

CHARTIER: There have been press reports that the government is being successful in it's autonomy project and that more fighters, including fighters of MISURASATA, are entering into cease-fire agreements and embracing the government plans of autonomy. Is this accurate?

#### RIVERA:

I think there is much exaggeration than accurate because we see that there is much publicity and twists of the facts in favor of the government's interests. The truth is, after a year of intense campaign of gaining minds and hearts of the people in the region by the government, there is a failure of a concrete result from these unilateral actions of the government. They have some kind of agreement with a few of the fighters of Kisan. They have all these fighters in their villages but the number has not been increasing and not one military commander is part of these maneuvers of the government. It's just a few fighters that have been abandoned by Misura in the past, then by Kisan. Because of the lack of supplies and later, leadership, they engaged in these talks. But even they're not part of any dialogue because they don't have the capacity to enter in negotiations with the governments. MISURASATA fighters are not part of the dialogue even though we are facing serious limitations, supplies and aid. The resistance and the people are still strong and we are insisting to re-open the talks with the leadership of the organization. I think

the only way to success for the government is to assume seriousness and negotiate in good faith with the people, including the leadership and the resistance because they are all together, they are one. But in trying to separate the fighters from the people or the fighters from the leadership, they are just wasting their time, confusing the public opinion and they are assuming an intransigent position denying an opportunity for the peaceful settlement for the Atlantic Coast.

**CHARTIER**: What tactics has the government been using during the past year in order to promote its autonomy project and to basically crush the resistance of the people?

RIVERA:

During the 1986 year after the cowardly attack against our leader and the villages in Wangki River and in other parts of the region, they decided to push an intense campaign of political warfare against the Indian resistance and the communities. Basically, they have been using three or four different approaches towards the Indian people. One is using psychological warfare of intimidation and harassment against the villages. They have been using their helicopters, their airplanes, their heavy weapons, just to intimidate the civilians and the fighters, to try to convince the people that they're a powerful government and the resistance forces cannot beat them and they can destroy the villages using all these weapons.

The second track of approach is politically, through the autonomy plan and so-called dialogue with the fighters in the field. They have been pressuring the families, the relatives of the fighters in order to convince them to co-operate for the surrender of the fighters. At the same time they have been sending letters and even safe passage for the fighters, offering them amnesty if they accept to surrender the army. They have been offering money, supplies, and salaries to all these fighters who may surrender. They have been pushing intensely their autonomy plan through different meetings, assemblies with the village people, pressuring them to support their plan and to co-operate for the inclusion of the fighters in this autonomy plan.

The third approach is military. They have been invading and occupying militarily the villages, with the continuing repression against the villagers by arresting, intimidation and torture. They have been attacking the civilians and the fighters through aerial attack and also their counter-insurgency operation, trying to wipe out the resistance in the entire region.

So these are the three tracks of approach that they have been using simultaneously against the people, trying to submit them under their control. But there is one more approach which is very destructive against the capacity of the people for resistance, which is the economic pressure and blackmail.

Our people traditionally have been self-sufficient. That means they have been producing their own food and means of life. But now the government has a system that controls every aspect of life including the subsistence of our people. At the present time the people don't have the possibility to cultivate the land, to dedicate to produce their own food. They are forced to depend totally from the government. The government institutions are controlling the distribution of the food. Of course the people don't have the money and, you know, the cost of living is very high, including inflation and the exchange of the currency. The goods, the foods, articles are basically very cheap if you compare with other currency exchange, but for the people it's almost impossible to get the money to buy what they need. Even if the people get a little money from somewhere, the government is rationing all the foods. So, you still have no way to get all you need. But the government, what they are looking is to have control of the people. Then they can force them to submit under their interest and their system.

CHARTIER: In November of this past year, 1986, the General Assembly ratified the new Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua and some mention is made with respect to the Indian peoples of the Atlantic Coast. It is also now stated that the government will be proceeding with an autonomy document or statute for the Atlantic Coast early in 1987. Do you believe that the government will proceed and pass such a statute? If they do, do you think it will have any kind of acceptance in the communities?

#### RIVERA:

Well, I think they can do it, but it's sure not to work. They can impose it against our people's will, but for sure our people will never accept it. It's implied that it doesn't help or facilitate the solution of the conflict. Our people know what exactly they want and they will never accept any artificial solution covered with the ethnocidal purposes of the government. So, even if the government will impose this autonomy the resistance will go forward. More bloodshed, more fights will be going on because the government will continue imposing their cowardly war against our people. I think an imposed plan will never work anywhere and for sure it will never work for the Indian people of MISURASATA.

CHARTIER: With respect to the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, we had some discussion of this in April and you made some comments with respect to the situation at the time. What is MISURASATA's current opinion with respect to the September 1986 decision of the WCIP Executive Council to adopt a neutral position with respect to the conflict and their apparent readiness to promote the government's autonomy project and peace process?

#### RIVERA:

Precisely I said in the April interview that we were concerned about the further actions of the WCIP leadership in regards to the situation of the Indian people in Nicaragua. At the present time some of the actions that they are giving indicates that our concerns were

valid because I think they are not in a responsible position to assume any neutral position, even that this is ironic and contradictory with interests of an international Indian organization, like WCIP. But we should ask what it means, a neutral position for them, because as we see their actions, it's totally identifying with the maneuvers of the government. That is to say, what they are doing, whether they want or not, is legitimizing the government's ethnocidal plan of the so-called autonomy regime. We still are seriously concerned about the damage that they may have committed, consciously or unconsciously, against our people's interest in Nicaragua.

CHARTIER: What do you believe the Fifth General Assembly of the WCIP should do in addressing this situation?

RIVERA: Well, I think they should invite the leadership of MISURASATA in order to provide the opportunity to them to explain freely to the delegates of the Assembly the nature and the implication of our Indian resistance in Nicaragua. And also, of course, they should allow you to share with the delegates your experience and the purpose of your visit in Nicaragua with the MISURASATA resistance. And finally, the Assembly should judge the abuses and the arbitrary decision of the Executive Council to separate you from your position elected by the Fourth General Assembly in 1984.

**CHARTIER**: In closing, with the respect to the struggle that your people are facing, what message would you like to give to countries and support groups and people that are in a position to influence the Nicaraguan government?

RIVERA: We urge them not to let themselves be deceived by the Sandinista supporters and the propaganda of the government. That the Indian people are in a self-sacrificing struggle for their own interests and for the just cause of all the Indian people throughout the hemisphere. That what the Sandinistas are saying is exactly the opposite of what they are doing in fact. That the Indian resistance belongs to our people and we are never involved in the interests of external forces or to give up to the oppressor of our people. Also, that the future is for the oppressed people in this hemisphere. We are fighting for our future so that there will be freedom and self-determination for all the Indians. Finally, we urge them to increase their solidarity action for MISURASATA. We need comprehension and assistance from all the honest people in order to preserve the resistance of our villages which is the only alternative, the real alternative for the survival of our people, and which is also the alternative for a peaceable settlement of the Indian conflict in Nicaragua. Thank you.

CHARTIER: Thankyou.

### APPENDIX B - WCIP Intervention to the UN

March, 1986

# Address to the United Nations: Commission on Human Rights

Forty-second Session Agenda Item 21: Oral intervention March 3, 1986, Geneva, Switzerland

Measures to be taken against all totalitarian or other ideologies and practices, including Nazi, Fascist and neo-Facist, based on racial or ethnic exclusiveness or intolerance, hatred, terror, systematic denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, or which have such consequences.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to self-determination, caught between the two extreme poles of the right and the left, and affected on a large scale, are Indigenous peoples who are essentially forced to live under the presence of military and/or political systems foreign to Indigenous ideology. It is our experience that non-Indigenous systems in many cases lead to totalitarian ideologies and practices based on terror and systematic denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including in many cases the right to life itself when governments of these systems arbitrarily decide the fate of Indigenous lives, lands and rights.

As a consequence of these occurrences and with the objective of seeking the attainment of selfdetermination, Indigenous representatives of our peoples and nations living in 19 states within 5 regions of the world met in 1975 and by Charter dedicated our newly formed organization, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), to advocating the abolishment of the use of physical and cultural genocide and ethnocide, to combatting racism and to ensuring political, economic and social justice for our peoples.

Mr. Chairman, in the case of Nicaragua, there is a conflict based on ideologies and control of power. This conflict is fuelled by the so-called spheres of influence of the right and the left. The Sandinista controlled government of Nicaragua has the support of the Soviet Union. On the other hand the Contras are supported by the United States. And then there are Indian peoples of the Atlantic Coast who have become victimized by this power struggle. In this connection, governments and NGOs, including some of our own, are going to have to decide, and I hope in good conscience, whether they are going to place political ideologies or self-interest before the lives of Indigenous peoples. This conflict has led to the WCIP issuing a Declaration in Bogota in March 1985 to the government of Nicaragua, to MISURASATA and to the governments, peoples and communication services of the world, In our BOGOTA DECLARATION we state in part:

With the change in the government of Nicaragua and with the establishment of the administration of the Sandinista Front of National Liberation, the Miskitu, Sumo and Rama peoples had hoped to finally achieve the full recognition and respect fo their historical Indigenous rights.

After five years of the Sandinista regime of the government of Nicaragua, the Indigenous people are continuing to struggle to achieve the recognition and respect for their inalienable rights such as the right to autonomy, to territory, to organization, economic system and political process.

The failure to recognize these rights and the application of a policy of genocide in the form of violence and repression against the Indigenous people has produced violence in kind. This continuing conflict has been capitalized upon by antagonistic political forces foreign to the Indigenous struggle, resulting in jeopardizing the struggle and worsening the situation for our brothers and sisters.

The WCIP, with its regional organizations recognize and affirmatively support the Indigenous organization MISURASATA in their efforts to achieve, with the Nicaragua Government, a just recognition of the inalienable natural rights of the Miskitu, Sumo and Rama peoples who, from time immemorial, have inhabited the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua.

The WCIP, with its regional organizations, unconditionally support the efforts of Peace with recognition of the Indigenous Rights, efforts which are approached bilaterally, fully respecting the dignity and sovereignty of both parties, begun since October 1984 and continuing to this moment between MISURASATA and the government of Nicaragua.

However, Mr. Chairman, I must sadly state that the peace process stalled in May 1985 and both the WCIP and MISURASATA, through our own efforts and through the good office of President Betancur of Colombia have actively engaged in trying to have the talks reopened. In the spirit of the proclamation of the International Year of Peace adopted by the General Assembly on October 24, 1985 we urge all governments here present to encourage the Sandinista government or the people of Nicaragua to enter into meaningful dialogue of peace with MISURASATA, coupled with the recognition of rights which reflect the Indian peoples' true aspirations. In this connection, we are, and will continue to be, prepared to meet with the government of Nicaragua to pursue this most critical objective.

In the case of East Timor, we are experiencing a phenomenon of decolonization where victimization does not cease. Here is a situation where an Indigenous people should finally exercise their right of self-determination. While one colonial country was preparing to return the land and government back to the original sovereigns, another country invades and sets up yet another period of colonization and repression. Here, as in other parts of the world, genocide and destruction turned loose upon the people of the land has not defeated the will of the people to be free and self-determining. The United Nations must not abandon as an agenda item of priority this gross violation against the Indigenous peoples of

East Timor and their representative organization, FERTILIN, by Indonesia which is acting under the protection of the United States and other western countries.

Also facing problems in the process of decolonization are the Indigenous peoples of New Caledonia. In a move to prevent sovereignty from returning to the Indigenous peoples, by a process of transmigration, the government of France is denying a peoples' right to be governed by their own ideology. This form of manipulation must not be tolerated or accepted and the United Nation is requested to place New Caledonia on the decolonization list and enter into talks with the legitimate representatives of the Kanak peoples, the Front Uni de Liberation Kanak.

These examples and the use of the terms right and left ideologies may give rise to criticisms that the approach is too simplistic. This may be true, however ten minutes does not permit more than a cursory view of a most complex subject matter. What is needed of course, is more dialogue and time to explain the complex issues confronted by us in our attempts to freely exercise and enjoy our ideology of oneness with the land and all that this entails. We can not, and never will, fit into the current non-Indigenous ideologies and values which at this time are tending to polarize the world community.

In charting our course in the direction of the recognition of our rights, all peoples, nations and states must be involved. As the United Nations is the body created to bring together the peoples of the world, it is important that all peoples have an opportunity to take maximum advantage. In this connection, Indigenous peoples must have a greater role and visibility at all levels of the United Nations and in all of its organs. While supporting and encouraging the work of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, we propose as a necessary interim measure the addition as a permanent agenda item of the General Assembly, the item, Rights of Indigenous Peoples, along with the extension of observer status in the General Assembly to a representative of the world's Indigenous peoples as decided upon by our representatives.

This is only one small step in what may prove to be a long journey in the securing of our rightful place in the world community, however it is a step which must be taken, because, as evidenced in this chamber, and in others, only we, the legitimate representatives of our nations and peoples, can and do speak for ourselves and in our true interests.

Mr. Chairman, delegates of governments, we the Indigenous peoples of the Fourth World, must have an effective voice at all levels of the United Nations.

Thank you,

Presented by: Clem Chartier

President and Chief Spokesman

WORLD COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

## **APPENDIX C - BOGOTA DECLARATION**

#### WORLD COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



#### CONSEIL MONDIAL DE PEUPLES INDIGENES

## CONSEJO MUNDIAL DE PUEBLOS INDIGENAS

Bogota, March 27, 1985

#### BOGOTA DECLARATION

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), an international organization having consultative status with the United Nations, along with its five regional non-governmental indigenous organizations consisting of the Regional Coordinator of Indian Peoples of Central America (CORPI) representative of indigenous organizations of the Central American Nation-States, the South American Indian Council (CISA) representative of indigenous organizations of the South American Nation-States, the Pacific Regional Council representative of indigenous organizations of the Pacific Nation-States, the Nordic Sami Council representative of indigenous organizations of the Samiland including Norway, Sweden & Finland and the North American Region representative of indigenous organizations from Canada and the United States of America.

Hereby makes this Declaration to the government of Nicaragua, to the indigenous organization MISURASATA and to the governments, peoples and communication services throughout the World, that;

The principles upon which our Indigenous Peoples in the Americas and throughout the World are founded are principles upon which the WCIP are guided.

The Nation-States of Republics of the Americas which today exist are the products of invasions, occupation and colonization of our nations and original peoples. These Nation-States and Republics have institutionalized and systemitized oppression upon our peoples, imposing models and systems inconsistent with the truth of the circumstances of our existence.

During the colonization process of Nicaragua and during the rule of the government of the Republic of Nicaragua, the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have not been fully recognized nor respected to the contrary, the Indigenous Peoples have been a victimized by the denial of recognition and respect of their fundamental rights.

555 King Edward Ave. Ottawa, Ontario

WCIP-Secretarias

Teles # 053333R

With the change in the government of Nicaragua and with the establishment of the administration of the Sandinista Front of National Liberation, the Miskito Sumo and Rama peoples had hoped to finally achieve the full recognition and respect of their historical indigenous rights.

After five years of the Sandinista regime of the government of Nicaragua, the indigenous people are continuing to struggle to achieve the recognition and respect for their inalienable rights such as the right to autonomy, to territory, to the natural resources and to the practice of their indigenous culture, social organization, economic system and political process.

The failure to recognize these rights and the application of a policy of genocide in the form of violence and repression against the indigenous people has produced violence in kind. This continuing conflict has been capitalized upon by antagonistic political forces foreign to the indigenous struggle, resulting in jeopardizing the struggle and worsening the situation for our brothers and sisters.

The MCIP, with its regional organizations recognize and affirmatively support the indigenous organization MISURASATA in their efforts to achieve, with the Nicaraguan Government a just recognition of the inalienable natural rights of the Miskito. Sumo and Rama peoples who, from time immemorial, have inhabited the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua.

The WCIP, with its regional organizations further declare that policies of systematic genocide against our peoples have been and continue to be present in the majority of Nation-States and Republics throughout the Americas, OUR MOTHER EARTH. We call upon, we demant that each national government examine with the most serious frame of mind, its present government policies and practices and conform them to the principles of humanity, respecting fully the rights of indigenous peoples, in order to achieve the full peace and amicable co-existence of all peoples.

The WCIP with its regional organizations unconditionally support the efforts of Peace with recognition of Indigenous Rights efforts which are approached bilaterally. fully respecting the dignity and sovereignty of both parties, begun since October 1984 and continuing to this moment between MISURASATA and the government of Nicaragua.

The WCIP with its regional organizations further declare that indigenous peoples are not social classes or oppressed ethnic groups; we are nations and/or peoples discriminated against, oppressed and exploited racially, culturally, spiritually, socially, economically and politically.

We suffer this discrimination, repression and exploitation within our own regional territories as well as throughout the Nation-States and republics of the Americas and in other regions of the World.

The WCIP with its regional organizations expresses its sincere hope that the present negotiations to achieve peace with justice, conducted between the indigenous representation and the government of Nicaragua will be conducted in an attitude of mutual respect for the dignity and humanity of each other, taking into full comprehension the realities of the peoples for whom these negotiating parties represent.

The WCIP with its regional organizations appreciate and thank the government of Colombia and the national indigenous organization of Colombia ONIC, for their efforts and support in facilitating these negotiations between the government of Nicaragua and the indigenous organization MISURASATA. We furthermore appreciate and thank the Colombian Government and ONIC for their generous hospitality shared with the international indegenous observers.

## APPENDIX D - February 1988 Accord

# BASIC PRELIMINARY ACCORDS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA AND THE ORGANIZATION YATAMA RESULTING FROM DIALOGUE FROM JANUARY 25 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2, 1988

The government of the Republic of Nicaragua and the organization YATAMA (YAPTI TASBA MASRAKA NANI ASLATAKANKA), engaged in a genuine process of reconciliation and search for a solution of peace with justice to the current conflict of historic roots in the Atlantic Coast of the country, and with the intention of moving toward the decisive step of this reconciliation effort and establishing the true bases of a revolutionary solution, have established certain basic accords. These accords are withing the constitutional order of Nicaragua, and both parties agree to engage in political and legal initiatives that may be necessary to implement future accords related to the historical reinvindication of the Peoples of the Atlantic Coast. The accords are the following:

#### POLITICAL ASPECTS

- 1.1 The Government of Nicaragua reaffirms its recognition of the right of the Peoples of the Atlantic coast to exercise autonomy which consists of the right to determine, within their traditional territory, their own political, economic, social, cultural, educational, religious and legal development without external interference according to their historical and ethnic values and traditions, within the framework of the Nicaraguan state.
- 1.2 Pursuant to the spirit of the Esquipulas accords, the Government of Nicaragua and YATAMA commit themselves to advancing along the road toward peace for a solution to the conflict in the Atlantic Coast. To that end, once a definitive cease fire is agreed upon the Government of Nicaragua shall guarantee the establishment of YATAMA and its current leadership within the political and civic life of the country. The government furthermore agrees to fully respect and recognize the communities' own organizational forms in the development of Autonomy.
- 1.3 The YATAMA organization agrees to hold a General Congress 90 days from the signing of a formal cease fire accord in order to consolidate the unity of its organization and the peace process.

#### II. ECONOMIC ASPECT

- 2.1 The Government of Nicaragua recognizes the right of the Peoples of the Atlantic Coast to the lands and waters they traditionally have occupied and worked, lands and waters which form an inalienable territory and serve as an essential element for their survival and development.
- 2.2 The Government of Nicaragua reaffirms its recognition of the communal property rights of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast over the lands, forests and waters withing their traditional territory and agrees to entering into accords with the Autonomous Government of the region for the rational exploitation and use of the subsoil and sea resources which should benefit in just distribution the development of the Atlantic Coast and the country.
- 2.3 The YATAMA organization agrees to promote, in coordination with the government and in conformity with national legislation, the securing of foreign resources and international technical cooperation for the immediate needs and economic development of the region. The government agrees to support and facilitate this effort.

#### III. SOCIAL ASPECT

- 3.1 The Government of Nicaragua declares the Atlantic Coast a Region of emergency and reconstruction. Upon the initiative of YATAMA, a Committee of Emergency and Reconstruction shall be created. It is agreed that YATAMA shall participate in a an effective way in this committee.
- 3.2 The Government of Nicaragua reaffirms its responsibility to provide, according to its means, financial resources and materials necessary for reconstruction and thus shall continue providing such resources and materials and shall engage in greater efforts for reconstruction and the replenishment of the goods and communal properties affected by the war.
- 3.3 The Government shall continue to organize and promote along with other institutions immediate humanitarian assistance (food, medicine, housing, tools, etc.) and foreign financial resources for these needs and the reconstruction of the communities.
- 3.4 The Government of Nicaragua shall continue working with the International Red Cross, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in order to facilitate resettlement and assistance for the displaced and refugees, who shall return directly to their communities of origin when such is possible. YATAMA also shall support the efforts of these organizations.

In accordance with YATAMA the creation of a Commission of Support for Refugees and Displaced Persons, made up of the Government, YATAMA, the Moravian Church, CEPAD, the Catholic Church, SUKAWALA and other national and regional organizations, is suggested.

3.5 The Government agrees to take steps to procure a radio transmitter which shall be turned over to the communities of the region, through their organizations, and which shall function in conformity with applicable legislation.

#### IV. CEASE FIRE ASPECT

- 4.1 The government of Nicaragua and YATAMA agree to avoid offensive military actions within this period of negotiations, and no later than beginning on March 1 shall discuss a formal cease fire accord in the Atlantic Coast between the armed forces of the Government and the YATAMA troops. The cease fire accord shall be for an extendable period of 45 days.
- 4.2 Both parties agree that their respective forces shall avoid all military confrontation and provocation during this period.

#### V. CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND WITNESS COUNTRIES

The Conciliation Commission comprised of the Moravian Church and CEPAD shall be wetness to the compliance of the accords and shall invite the friendly countries of Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Norway and Sweden also to be witnesses and to support this process materially and morally.

#### VI. PENDING MATTERS

The basic points on which there has been no agreement, including aspects relating to autonomy and the delimitation of traditional lands, shall be discussed in the next round of dialogue.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA

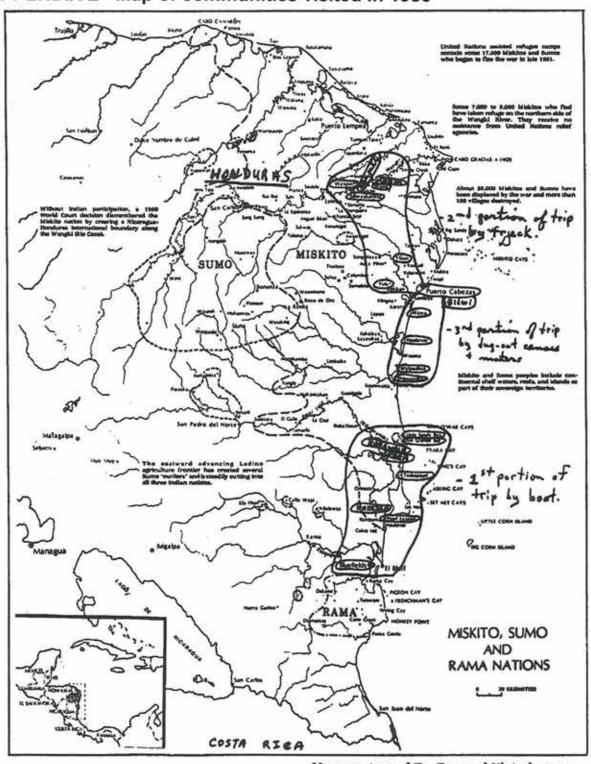
FOR YATAMA

Tomas Borge

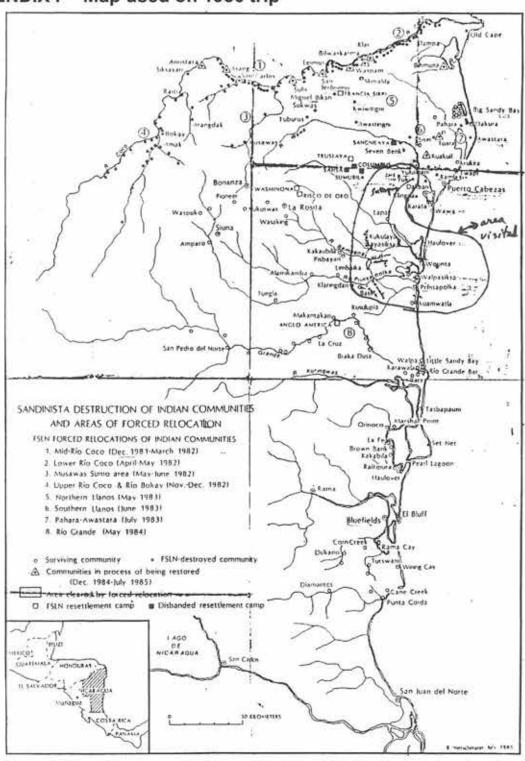
Brooklyn Rivera

Given in the City of Managua on the 2nd day of February of 1988

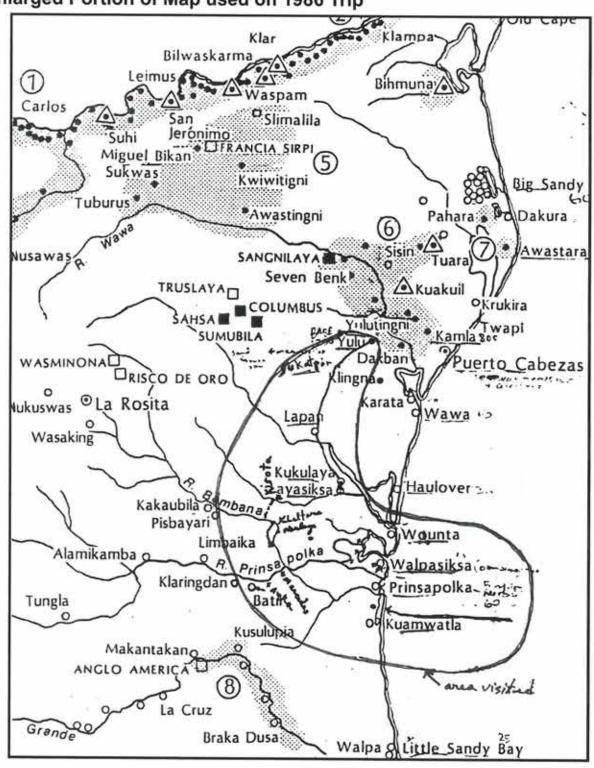
# APPENDIX E - Map of communities visited in 1988



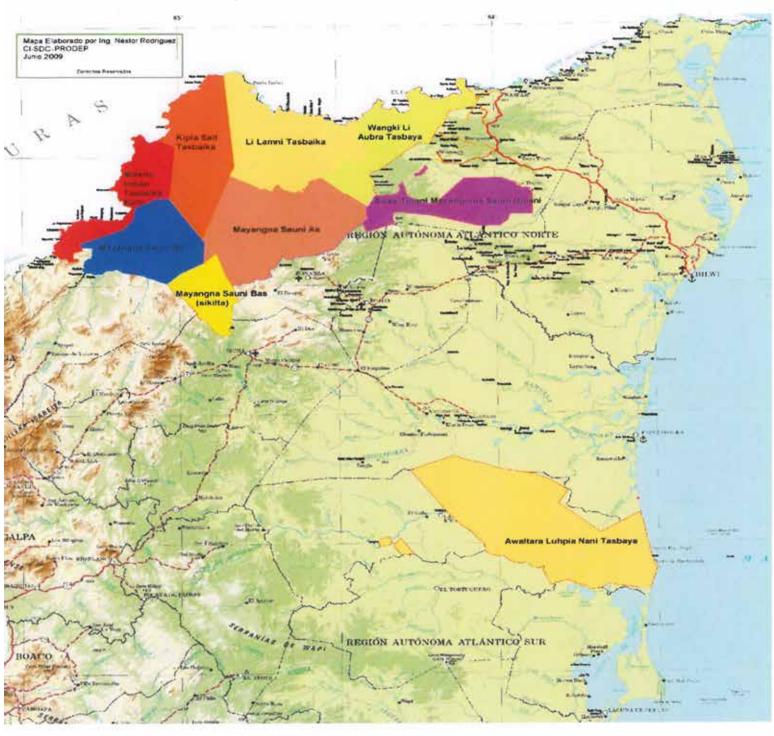
## APPENDIX F - Map used on 1986 trip



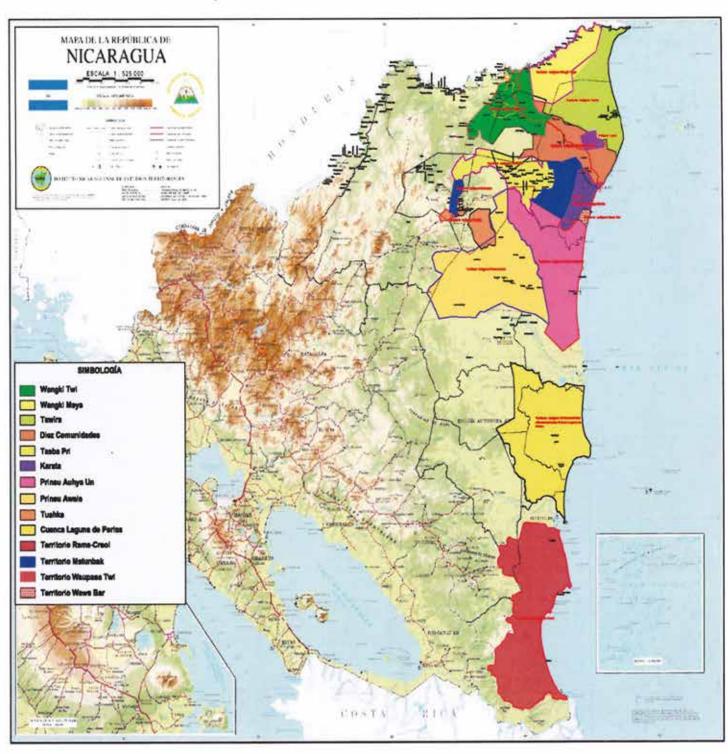
## Enlarged Portion of Map used on 1986 Trip



# **APPENDIX G - Map of Titled Territories**



# APPENDIX H - Map of Territories in Process



APPENDIX I - Map for State of Advancement for Process of Demarcation and Titles of the Indigenous Territories







In this book Clem Chartier tells of his gripping adventure into one of the most important indigenous struggles of the Twentieth Century. He provides insights into failed policies of Nicaragua's revolutionary Sandinista government that led to all out warfare embroiling the Miskito, Mayangna and Rama Indigenous peoples. The experience he reveals in this book was an important chapter in the march toward greater autonomy and respect for the basic human rights of these peoples.

**James Anaya**,
United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

