

### Que Tal Raza- Interview with Tarcila Rivera Zea- Part 3

Rivera: I am part of an international commission that will organize a global summit on the climate change for indigenous peoples, collaborating with organizations Alaska. We want to analyze how we can contribute, to prevent. Because our ancestors knew perfectly how often a cataclysm would occur and took the necessary precautions. The same is true of draughts; they knew to save food and supplies. There was an understanding of how the environment changed.

Lozada: Now with all the technology we have, we still cannot foresee or at least do not take action.

Rivera: It's that we have the problem of the western mentality, of a predator. We see everything in economic and monetary terms. Like in the forests for example. They see trees and immediately think of the gain from wood without understanding that in bringing down the forests, they are destroying the surroundings.

Lozada: You have also denounced the presence of military troops in indigenous territories.

Rivera: Yes, it is a Colombian issue. As you know, the militarization in indigenous zones in different regions of Colombia has been a result of armed conflict. Many times, indigenous peoples are victims of the carnage, between two belligerent groups. The same is happening in Colombia. We have had ten women leaders from Colombia from different regions. One of them for example, with traditional authority has been received death threats from the military groups. She leaves in fear and hiding, afraid of her family's life. It was very touching when she was able to speak at the end of the forum. There are violent situations that are not provoked by indigenous peoples but takes place in their territories without concern for their livelihood. It was a request spearheaded by Colombia and other countries, including some from Africa.

Lozada: The laws in Peru do they protect indigenous peoples?

Rivera: In most aspects, the laws in Peru are more advanced. The signatory in 169<sup>th</sup> Convention that recognizes the indigenous peoples has promoted and supported the entire process of ratification of the Indigenous Peoples' Declaration in the UN system, but we still need the political decision for implementation. That is why we ask to participate in political life.

Lozada: To fight for their vindication? But the indigenous women that are politics are they not fighting for those types of changes, in legislation, for improvement? Because it seems to me, not to criticize, merely as an observation, that some of the women that are in parliament speak of being indigenous, not as part of the fight, but only to be free to do anything. According to what you've said, this fight for rights is not taking place.

Rivera: They make an effort, in the realm of what's possible. But there are only two or three people so there is a correlation.

Lozada: Do they in some way help other indigenous women to organize themselves politically? Do they act as mentors for other indigenous women?

Rivera: They do transmit the importance of preparing oneself.

Lozada: But do they actually help them prepare?

Rivera: In sharing experiences. What we as part of an indigenous women's movement have concluded at this forum is that we have to transcend the role of agitators. We need to develop proposals and know how to become part of the dialogue if we are to become part of the political process because we have also concluded that yelling in the streets may not accomplish anything. Political preparation for young women must include not only strategy but also the capacity to move forward and to develop proposals at the highest level. And that's why we believe participating in politics is participating in the decisions and the future of our country. We seek representation to respect that diversity, but it is necessary to exert democracy for everyone not only for a few. Just because we are seeking opportunities in decision making and power that does not mean it is only for us but that other sectors should also exert the same influence we would like to have.

Lozada: And how do you perceive the relationship between indigenous women and women that have ties to other cultures?

Rivera: We have to recognize ourselves as what sociologists call as having "intercultural citizenship." We do have more of the indigenous in us, the Imara or the Quechua, but also have cultural contributions from western culture, just in the fact that we speak both languages. We need to have political proposals that take into account the fact that no one is "pure" We need simply the recognition of our rights.

Lozada: And to feel proud of them. To finish, Ms. Rivera, you have already planned the second forum, to take place in Colombia.

Rivera: Yes, that's right. In Colombia, in three years, our sisters from Colombia will be hostesses where the other three Americas will congregate. Guatemala also wanted to host so first it will be in Colombia, and three years later it will take place in Guatemala. Mexico will host the Sixth Meeting of Indigenous Women in 2009.

Lozada: Well, we wish all the luck in the world. We are at your disposal to help with dispersing any information for your events. And we encourage you to continue because one day you will receive the recognition of all because we all have indigenous blood in our hearts.

Rivera: Well, Thank you for the invitation. And I hope that soon, the respect we all deserve will be better understood.

Lozada: We are all equals. And I think that we should mention the participation of the Minister of Women, Dr. Susana Pinilla, who is very important who has been an important part in government participation and has worked with you. Thank you once again. We are going to take a break, but before that we are going to watch a video.