

Dateline Mexico by Cruz del Carmen Moreno Soto

The return of Aztec paganism

In the name of a non-Indian "indigenous movement," the anti-Columbus protests reveal their pagan roots.

During the well-organized protest demonstrations in Mexico against the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the Americas, the controllers were easily identifiable as promoters of the "Age of Aquarius," that counterculture project launched by the Anglo-Americans more than 25 years ago as a means of controlling populations through destruction of their minds.

This time, the pretext was the celebration of the Columbus quincentenary, and the propaganda bombardment centered around a rejection of the evangelization of America and of mixing of the races, and to praise the bloody rituals of the Aztecs.

Various protest marches were organized, one from Oaxaca and Chiapas, another from Tabasco, and a third up from Central America, to join on Oct. 12 in the main plaza, or Zócalo, of Mexico City. Two additional marches, begun earlier in the year from Alaska and Patagonia, converged at ceremonies at the Teotihuacán pyramids, a pre-Aztec archeological site near Mexico City, in order to "receive the energy of the rising Sun, in harmony with the Cosmos."

Despite the fact that the marches were organized to protest the alleged "genocide" of the Spaniards against the indigenous people, the majority of the delegates were not Indians, but radical leftist groups; young gangs; squatters demanding housing, water, and electricity; students; ecologists; anthropologists; punks; and open supporters of Peru's Shining Path terror-

ists, who back home celebrated 500 years of "Indian resistance" by massacring 47 Indians, 30 of them women and children.

The marchers in Mexico assaulted Christopher Columbus's statue on the Reforma, one of the main thoroughfares in Mexico City, while in the university town of Morelia, activists tore down the statue of the first viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza. In the capital city of Chiapas, San Cristóbal Las Casas, protesters attacked the statue of one of the early evangelizers, Diego de Mazariegos.

Of the 20,000 who reportedly showed up in the Zócalo, although others speak only of 10,000, a mere 400 (less than 4%!) were Indians.

Along one side of the Zócalo, where the remains of the Aztecs' leading temple can be seen beside a wall made of the skulls of human sacrificial victims, the promoters of what Pope John Paul II called the "anti-culture of death," adorned in traditional garb, organized ritual ceremonies to carry out "the prophecy of the Fifth Sun," to launch the era of the "Sixth Sun," and to bring about a "spiritual and cultural re-encounter with their ancestral roots." In the propaganda the protesters distributed, they acknowledged that the "re-encounter" they speak of is "the Age of Aquarius," or "the New Age."

However, behind the exotic extravaganza, it is clear that support for this "new indigenism" comes from the highest levels of the Mexican government. For example, on orders of the government secretary, all commemorative celebrations of the quincentena-

ry must be called an "Encounter of Two Worlds," and not "Discovery." Various state governments were informed that they had to change the focus of the celebrations they had planned. At the same time, the celebrations that were planned were deliberately minimized, including the unexpected cancellation of a great choral mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City.

President Salinas, an avid proponent of "indigenism," took the opportunity of his address to the "Encounter of Two Worlds" event to announce the creation of a Public Trusteeship for the Recovery, Conservation, and Preservation of Archaeological Zones. That trusteeship has been endowed with a 100,000 peso budget to finance 12 archaeological projects through 1994.

Salinas explained that reforms of Article IV of the Mexican Constitution recognizing indigenous cultural rights, and support for the National Solidarity Program and the new Public Trusteeship, were intended to reaffirm Mexico's pride in its Indian roots.

As part of this new ideological project, the Ceremony of the Sixth Sun was held on the island of Mexcaltitlán, in the coastal state of Nayarit, with the attendance of the state governor and other special invitees. The ceremony was an allegory in which the symbolic flame of "Mexicanism" was carried by the Aztec god Huitzilopochtli, representing the 901 years that have passed since the Mexican tribe emigrated from Aztlán to found the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán. Participating in the journey through 85 kilometers of twisting natural canals were the consuls of Spain, Germany, Costa Rica, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Korea, and Czechoslovakia, in the company of Gov. Celso Humberto Delgado.