



Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations

The Only Multi-Racial Worldwide Indigenous Confederacy In Existence

RAPANUI (aka EASTER ISLAND) - THE COUNTRY STOLEN BY CHILE

Thursday, May 21, 2009

I was fortunate in my second year course of Tribal Link (Project Access Global Capacity building for Indigenous Peoples) May 2009 training in New York City - to meet Erity Teave, she is a member of the Rapanui Parliament, and she descends from a long and distinguished line of freedom fighters of the Rapanui People.

Erity is soft spoken and has a big heart, the minute you meet her you get a soothing sense of calm...a gut feeling that if all the people in positions of power across the Earth were just like her - there would be true equity, peace and justice in the world. I was excited to finally sit down and have an in-depth conversation with Erity, for I had only read about the Rapanui in the pages of National Geographic Magazines in my teen years, two decades ago. Erity calmly began to tell me the sad history of Rapanui, one that mirrors my own Arawak People's sorrowful experiences after first welcoming strangers from across the sea into our lands with open arms of friendship...only to have our world destroyed and freedom banished in return.

Rapanui is 64 square miles in area, and is 3,800 km to the east of Tahiti, and 2,300 km to the west of Chile, for 2000 years the Rapanui have lived on their island, all alone in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean. Then on September 9th 1888 the Chilean Navy under Captain Toro, acting on the advice of the Catholic Bishop of Tahiti, was sent to Rapanui to annex the island; Upon arrival the Chileans recorded that the Rapanui gave them a friendly reception.

In 1889 the Chileans tricked the Rapanui King Arike Atamu to attend a meeting in Chile with the President of that country, once the King reached Valparaiso in Chile - they poisoned him. A fraudulent document (Civil Decree 590) was drawn up with the bogus signature of the King who did not know either to read or write the alphabet - which surprisingly is still used by Chile to justify their illegal annexation - and in this document the page is divided into two halves, to the left is a Spanish translation of the Rapanui Kings words which read in English "We Rapanui welcome you as friends, we allow you to stay on our land and trade with us as friends"...and on the Chilean government right half (which was NOT translated to the King) it reads "We Rapanui agree to cede our island without reservation to the state of Chile."

In an attempt to stress the point that their murdered King would have said no such thing - when informed after the fact by the Chilean Navy - the astonished Rapanui tried to illustrate their point by picking up a handful of soil and keeping it in their clenched fist - and up-rooting some grass and on presenting it to the Chilean Navy told them - "as a friend you may use what the land produces for your horses, sheep and cows, but the land will always belong to the Rapanui".

The William Balfour Company of England then 'legally' leased the entire island of Rapanui (including the Rapanui people) for the rearing of 250,000 sheep - and rounded up the 'illegally squatting' Rapanui and forcibly re-settled them in one small area of the island called Hangaroa, you might call it a forerunner of the Nazi concentration camps or Soviet era Gulags, for if they attempted to leave the zone of imprisonment the Rapanui were shot dead by Chilean Navy sailors; whether men, women or children - no mercy was granted. Torture, rapes and all manner of evil including slave labor, were inflicted upon the Rapanui in the Hangaroa camp; situated right next to the Chilean Governor's residence on the island.

In 1914 the Rapanui revolted and the Chilean Navy burned every Rapanui house and captured 36 Rapanui leaders - later releasing 35 of them, the principal leader was taken back to Chile in chains and never saw his homeland or family again, dying - like the Great Apache Chief Geronimo of America - in the custody of his oppressors; That great Rapanui martyr was Erity Teave's Great grandfather. His son, Erity's grandfather continued the struggle, and succeeded in winning fishing rights back for the Rapanui People. In 1954 the ignoble lease of Rapanui island to the William Balfour Company of England expired, and then the Chilean Navy became the government appointed administrator of the island.

In 1964 the island had a Rapanui Mayor called Alfonso Rapu, and at this time Erity's father Juan Chavez Teave was a young man who sought the only employment available which was in the Chilean Navy, a telegraph came in while he was on duty - saying that a naval ship was on it's way to Rapanui with orders to arrest the Mayor whom they deemed to be an opponent of the State of Chile. Erity's father - like a loyal patriot to his people - secretly warned the Mayor and informed a then visiting Canadian team of scientists (RAPAIMUN) of the plot - and they then provided a kind of insurance policy of potentially informing the wider world should any harm come to the Mayor; thus these acts saved the Mayor's life. Once the Canadian scientist departed the Rapanui had to lay low until the new President Eduardo Frei was democratically elected in Chile, this President created a law which offered some protection to the island, but still fell short of what could have been done by his administration.

In 1968 Juan Chavez Teave organized the first re-constituted Rapanui traditional Agricultural collective.

In 1970 Leftist President Salvador Allende (1970-1973) was democratically elected in Chile, and was generally good to the Rapanui, but still did not right crucial historic wrongs.

In 1973 the infamous General Augusto Pinochet overthrew Allende in a CIA backed coup and seized power for himself.

In 1976 Erity's father Juan Chavez Teave, retired from the Chilean Navy and sued the state of Chile - because the Chilean Air Force had illegally taken his father's land to build an Antenna, he won his case in a surprising and rare instance of justice for indigenous people in the Supreme Court of Chile. Juan Chavez Teave sued the state of Chile again in the 1980's to get the entire island back for the Rapanui People - but the state responded instead by enacting laws which provided 15 hectares of land to each Rapanui family (ie parents with children). Neo-Colonial States such as Chile still do not seem to comprehend that it is NOT good enough for a thief to steal your entire house and then expect to be congratulated when he tells you that you can have back your toilet. This Act does NOT return the island to the collective ownership of the rightful landlords - who are the Rapanui People, and is merely a more cunning form of re-colonization.

Erity's father was granted an audience with the then brutal Military dictator cum President of Chile General Pinochet - who had recently outlawed the speaking of the Rapanui language on the island, and it is Juan Chavez Teave who has gone down in history as being one of the bravest men to ever stand before the tyrant and tell him to his face "There will never be born a man who can forbid me from speaking my own language". The law was later rescinded.

In 1996 UNESCO declared Rapanui to be a patrimony of the World and of Humanity.

In 2001 The Rapanui Parliament, of which Erity Teave is a member, was formed. This noble and democratic body will become the Government of Rapanui once their Sovereignty is restored in accordance with International Human Rights Laws and Conventions concerning colonized indigenous peoples.

In 2006 Michelle Bachelet was democratically elected as the current President of the Republic of Chile. It is the sincere hope of the 3,000 Rapanui alive today that Her Excellency President Bachelet will prove to be the ONE Chilean politician with the vision, moral fibre and strength of character to use her position of power and influence to accept and correct the heinous historical injustice inflicted on the Sovereign people of Rapanui; and herself be honorably recorded by history as being a shining example to all countries worldwide - who seek to shed their backward colonialist ways, and join the enlightened progressive states of the Earth who stand for all that is just, moral, and right to do...in the treatment of our fellow men.

President Bachelet - let the Rapanui People be free!

Damon Gerard Corrie

President of the Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations,

*Attending the Eighth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII),
New York City; 18-29 May 2009.*