WATER RIGHTS

The 9,000 member White Mountain Apache tribe is fighting the state of Arizona to preserve its precarious access to water. The state claims that it has the authority to determine the tribe's water rights to the Salt River, but William Veeder, attorney for the Apache claims: "What is being practiced here is genocide...The magnitude of the outrage can't be comprehended unless you contemplate desert land without water." The Apache suit argues that the state of Arizona has no authority over their access to water, and also challenges a federal declaration abandoning title to 14,000 acres which the tribe argues was mistakenly omitted from a survey of the White Mountain reservation in 1887.

The tribe is also accusing the BIA of mismanaging the tribe's water resources for the purpose of increasing water availability to federal reclamation projects. Furthermore, the Departments of Justice and the Interior, of which the BIA is a branch, have been representing the tribe in court despite the tribe's objections.

INDIAN ALLIANCE FORMED TO ADDRESS CONGRESS

A new alliance of Indian groups has been forged under the name Alliance of American Indian Leaders. The goal of the organization is to strive for recognition by Washington and other world governments of the constitutional rights of Native Indian people as sovereign nations. Roger Jourdain, chairman of the Red Lake Band of Chippewas, and Wendell Chino, president of the Mescalero Apache Nation, have been named as the group's founders.

At a recent conference in Rapid City, South Dakota, the pair offered a five-point program to the AAIL that called for the following: oversight committee hearings in the Senate and House on the sovereign status of Indian nations; concurrent resolutions in the Senate and House that recognize the correct constitutional relationship of the federal government to the tribes; the establishment of a congressional seat for a non-voting American Indian representative to be elected by members of the Indian tribes; election of the BIA to presidential cabinet level position; and the reduction of layers of bureaucracy in the administration of federal Indian affairs. All five points were adopted by the AAIL.

"We want our voice heard in Congress," said Jourdain. "We want our voice heard by Indians and non-Indians alike." Chino pointed out: "President Reagan gave his State of the Union speech on television to the American people, but nowhere in it did he speak for the Native American people."

The AAIL will bring its campaign to the public during the next several months, beginning with an international symposium planned to be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on October 1, 1987. The symposium, entitled "In Search of a More Perfect Union: Native Americans and the U.S. Constitution," intends to "bring factual information about the very fundamental aspects of Indian tribes' relationships to the federal government into the public arena on a nationwide scale for the first time," according to AAIL program director Melanie Oliviero.

RESOURCES:

- "Native Unemployment Remains Critically High," *Akwesasne Notes*, Autumn 1986, Vol. 18, No. 5.
- "Congress Ready to Regulate Indian Gambling Operations;" "Indian Unemployment High in States;" "White Mountain Attorney Charges Genocide Against Appeals Court," *Akwesasne Notes*, Spring 1986, Vol. 18, No. 2.
- "Indian Profits From Bingo Challenged," *Atlanta Constitution*, Oct. 5, 1986.
- "The Supreme Court Gives Tribes A Winner At Bingo," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 26, 1987.
- "Indian Alliance Formed to Address Congress," *IPN Weekly Report, Indigenous Press Network*, March 9, 1987.

ECONOMIC STATUS

UNEMPLOYMENT

(Unless otherwise noted, unemployment figures only represent those able to work and seeking employment. Those too discouraged to look for work are not included.)

Comparison of 1980 to 1986

Age and race	Total		White		Black		Hispanic Origin (any race)		American Indian Eskimo, Aleut		Asian and Pacific Islander	
	1980	1986	1980	1986	1980	1986	1980	1986	1980	1986	1980	1986
Total, 16 years and over	6.5	7.1	5.8	6.1	11.8	15.0	8.9	10.3	13.2	unavailable	4.7	unavailable
16 to 19 years	14.4	19.7	12.9	16.5	27.7	41.9	16.4	23.7	23.9	unavailable	10.6	unavailable

Sources: *Employment and Earnings*, July 1986, Dep't. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics

POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL (NUMBER IN THOUSANDS)

	1975		1980		1985	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Total Population	25,877	12.3	29,272	12.6	33,064	17.3
White	17,770	9.7	19,699	10.2	22,860	11.4
Black	7,545	31.3	8,579	32.5	8,926	31.3
Hispanic Origin (any race)	2,991	26.9	3,491	25.7	5,236	29.0
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	———	———	(1979) 408	(1979) 27.5	———	———
Asian and Pacific Islander	———	———	(1979) 476	(1979) 13.1	———	———

Sources: Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 154, Issued August 1986
1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics