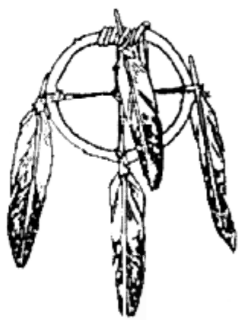


**Coordinamento di sostegno ai/dai Nativi Americani**  
**Supporting Coordination to / from Native Americans**



# IL CERCHIO

[www.associazioneilcerchio.it/wordpress](http://www.associazioneilcerchio.it/wordpress)

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**IL CERCHIO** (The Circle) is an organization comprised of National associations, groups and single individuals who have an interest in and deal with indigenous people issues, which was set up in 1992, when a group of people, deriving from different parts of Italy, who followed the battles of Native Americans, decided to get together for the first time in Pisa and start coordinating their work. The fundamental principles which all the people who are part of Il Cerchio have in common are respect for the traditions of Native people; support for the battles for land and for survival in a physical, cultural and spiritual way; the conviction that Native cultures are carriers of respect and harmony with nature, which we have forgotten in the western world, but which we can and must learn once again.

From the start, it was decided that each group would continue to work in complete autonomy, and carry forth their activities. The aim of the this organization is to exchange information and news, and to carry out common projects and actions, in addition to spreading the knowledge of cultures and the battles related to indigenous people as much as possible through conferences, meetings, seminars, and events organized in various Italian cities. In order to achieve this, we have been publishing a journal/magazine titled Il Cerchio since 1996 to 2014. In addition, to be more effective in a legal and representative way, in 1995 the organization turned into an association.

Throughout the years, the list of groups which have taken part in the Cerchio has changed, some new associations have joined in, while others are no longer active, still the spirit with which we work has remained the same, while the horizon has widened from the Americas to indigenous people on the entire planet.



## PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

- **SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS CONVICTS:** as much as we are able to, we try to support Native prisoners, political and non, both economically and through petitions, who are held in the American prisons and who are discriminated against due to their race and census (Native Americans hold the sad record of being the most represented in American prisons and on death row), in relation to their overall population. Among these, it is important to remember the most famous cases such as **Leonard Peltier**, **James Weddell**, **Fernando Caro**, **Ray Allen Running Bear**, but also the unknown such as Margarito Arguello, Tony Rios, Eddie Hatcher, Luis Rodriguez, Shoz Dijiji, and many more, including in the last few years our support to the Mapuche political prisoners.

- **SUPPORT FOR LAND AND SURVIVAL:** Il Cerchio has concretely supported many battles for the Native people: the **Western Shoshone** in Nevada who fought against the carrying out of nuclear experiments on their land; the **Dine** who were deported to make room for open cast mines; the **San Carlos Apache** who fought against the building of a telescopes on their Sacred Mountain (Dzil Nchaa Si An Mount Graham); the **Macuxi** from Roraima in Brazil who fight for the demarcation of their ancestral lands; the **Innu** who fight against the low flying of the military aviation planes of some of the NATO countries; the descendants of the **Maya** in Chiapas and EZLN; the **Mapuche** in Chile who fight against the state and the multinationals which invade their land. The support the Cerchio gives toward these battles is shown both through political action (demonstrations, denouncements, signing of petitions, motions in parliament, appeals,), and also through the divulging of information to the Italian public: in fact, throughout the years, we have organized conferences, debates, meetings, and events in schools and universities with indigenous nations representatives, with the aim of letting their voices be heard directly. Throughout the years we have invited **Frank Dreaver** (Cree), **Brian McLeod** (Lakota) and **Lew Gurtwitz** (representative of the Leonard Peltier committee), **Sharon Venne** (Lubicon Cree lawyer), **Carlos Gualinga Viteri** (Quechua), **Ola Cassadore** (Apache spiritual leader) and **Mike Davis** (her husband), **Lane Henson** (Cheyenne poet), **Rollin Haag** and **Nathan L. Hart** (Cheyenne), **Gilbert Pilot** and **Armand McKenzie** (Innu representatives), **Charles Cook** and **Clarita Vargas** (Native Canadian and Native American residential schools survivors), **Francisco Vera Millaquen**, **Jorge Huenchullan Cayul**, **Jose Llanquileo Antileo** and **Erwin Ariel Aguas Deumacán** (Mapuche spokespeople), **Arvol Looking Horse** (Lakota spiritual leader) and **Paula Horne-Mullen**, **Aunty Barbara Nicholson** (australian Wodi Wodi), **Xaureme Jesus Cadelario Cosio** (Wixarika from Mexico), **Eduardo Duran** (psychological counseling in indigenous communities in North America), **Gord Hill** (Canadian Native activist from Kwakwakawak), **Hugo Blanco** (Peruvian, director of Lucha Indigena), **David Keanu Say** (Kanaka Maoli, Hawaiian), **Michelle L. Cook** (Clan Honaghanii, Navajo Nation, member of Water Protector Legal Collective) and many others whom we have had the honor to host.

- **THE DARLINGTON PROJECT:** from 1997 to 2000, Il Cerchio has contributed approximately \$8.000 to the financing of an educational project for the teaching of the traditional Cheyenne and Arapaho language and culture to young natives in the Darlington School situated in Calumet, Oklahoma, which has involved various elders from the tribe.

- **PROJECTS IN CHIAPAS**: in support of the Zapatista battle, in spring 2001 we have contributed to the construction of a medical center in Oventic in Chiapas, in collaboration with the local community and other associations in Italy. In 2002 we realized a project of natural remedies in the Autonomous Municipality of San Manuel, through the recovery of traditional knowledge of the local people of the curative uses of medicinal plants of that region, along with beekeeping. Also in 2002, we co-financed a project of autonomous education in San Manuel, together with other Italian groups.

- **WORDS FROM THE EDGE**: in 2001 we realized the first edition of a tour in Europe of indigenous poets, with the collaboration of **Lance Henson**, a Cheyenne poet, and the participation of **Apirana Taylor** (Maori artist from New Zealand), Thounaojiam **Chanu Ibemhal Memchoubi** (Meitei poet from India). In 2006 we organized the second edition of this tour, always with the collaboration of Lance Henson, and with **Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm** (Anishnaabe writer), and **Laura Tohe** (Navajo writer).

- **NATIVI (NATIVE EVENTS)**: The aim is to spread the knowledge of a history which is different from the one that was written by the winners, because the possibility of building a real relationship of respect and finding common ground has to begin from the acknowledging of the genocide of indigenous people which took place, and continues to take place even today, in every part of the world, from Botswana to Tibet, from the Americas to Oceania. Following this aim, Il Cerchio decided to carry out **eVenti Nativi** every year; two days of meetings and cultural events centered on the resistance of indigenous people. This event represents the occasion to support the request in the Italian Parliament for the establishing of a **Giornata della Memoria del Genocidio di Popoli Indigeni** (A day in the Memory of the Genocide of Indigenous People) on October 11<sup>th</sup>, and campaigning for the ratification of the **Convenzione ILO 169** (ILO 169 Convention) by our countries, which is the only international juridical instrument on which the indigenous and tribal people can count to obtain the recognition of their rights. eVenti Nativi took place in Genova in 2008, in Rome in 2009 and 2010, Florence in 2011, 2012 in Ravenna, 2013 in Ariccia (RM), in 2014 in Pordenone, in 2016 in Ravenna, 2017 in Bassano del Grappa and 2018 in Alzano Lombardo (BG).

- **SUPPORT TO THE MAPUCHE PEOPLE**: For many years we support the struggle of the Mapuche, and in 2008 we decided to do something more concrete. In 2009 we born the ACIPAMA PROJECT, which consists of sending Observers for Human Rights and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Mapuche territory. So far we were made more trips to the project, which allowed to come into direct contact with local communities, to be present at hearings in courts, to visit all the prisons where they were imprisoned Mapuche Political Prisoners, to document interviews, video , photos, and later draw up reports, complaints, letters, apart from making the provision of information in Italy about what happens in Wallmapu (the Mapuche territory).

- Finally, we want to specify that for Il Cerchio it has always been fundamental not to close ourselves only in our specific themes, but to try and find a link with all the realities which follow the same aims, maybe using different instruments, and this is the reason why we have had so many collaborations with other associations and groups, various social centers which are self run in all of Italy, social cooperatives, schools, fair trade associations (in collaboration with the RAM in Genova in 1997 we realized an import project following the Com.e.s criteria). Il Cerchio has also taken part in the **Working**

**Group of Indigenous Peoples** (Genova 1992 and Trondheim 1993) and to the **Working Group on Indigenous Population in Geneva**, an advisory organism of the ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council), in 2000 and 2002.



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