

A Transformative Movement Among the Campa of Eastern Peru

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The Arawak speaking Campa Indians occupy an extensive territory in the upper Ucayali region of the Peruvian montaña and are one of the largest native groups remaining in the entire Amazon basin. During the past three hundred years they have been subjected to various degrees of Western influence, yet have notoriously resisted assimilation. In 1742 under the military leadership of the "Inca Messiah", Juan Santos Atahualpa, the Campa overthrew the Franciscans who had established a number of missions in their territory. When White penetration again became a serious threat in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an unsuccessful Campa uprising occurred and was followed by an unusual religious movement which rejected much of the traditional culture in favor of Christianity and sought a total transformation of the world.

1. Theoretical Background

The Campa movement described here is perhaps best understood by consideration of ABERLE's (1966) theoretical discussion of social movements.

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