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20 YEARS AGO IN THE RNJ

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See also *NEW PACIFIC PUBLICATIONS* on page 155.

20 YEARS AGO IN THE RNJ

THE GREAT MOTORCYCLE RALLY OF 1988

According to reports received from a number of islanders and printed in at least two opposition newspapers and one opposition magazine, on September 9 a motorcycle rally took place on Easter Island. Reports agree that from 50 to 60 of these machines participated as part of the centennial celebration of Chile's taking possession of the island.

It is still not clear exactly where the course was laid out. There seems to be general agreement that the route took the motorcyclists from Hanga Roa up the west coast through the Tahai area, around the North Cape, by Hanga Oteo and Papa Te Kena to Anakena. Afterwards they continued along the public road, turned into the Rano Raraku area, and returned to Hanga



Roa. One island source states that at Hanga Reva (between Akahanga and Vaihu), the bikers turned inland and passed through Vaitea on towards Rano Aroi, returning by Ahu Akivi and Tepeu and back down the west coast to Hanga Roa. However, a Chilean official gave assurances that the participants stayed on public roads at all times.

The newspaper *El Epoca* reported that the president of the Chilean Instituto de Ecología, Mauricio Bravo, has spoken out in protest against the "Rally Enduro Rapa Nui". It is understood that (privately) several conservation groups in Chile and elsewhere and a number of concerned individuals have been in touch with Chilean authorities, and they have made known their intense disappointment that such a potentially destructive event could have taken place in this unique open air museum. One person compared having a motorcycle rally on Easter Island to putting a discotheque in the British Museum or a roller rink in the Louvre.

First reports indicate that there was no significant damage, but the article in *La Epoca* quotes the Instituto de Ecología as saying that generally, "these competitions are damaging zones of ecological value". If further reliable information comes in, *RNJ* will carry it in a future issue.