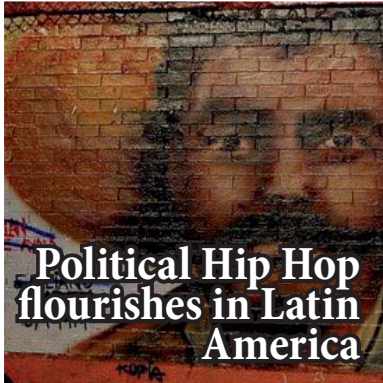


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Autonomy Doesn't Take a Break **War against the Zapatista Experience** *Hermann Bellinghausen*

The Zapatista experience is real, and for this reason the powers use war to stop it. To thwart them, the Zapatista people show that the struggle continues, that their forms of government are developing and functioning with democratic solutions thanks to a legitimacy and a commitment that the bad governments have completely lost.

Chiapas, Mexico. Soon it will be 17 years since the armed uprising of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in the mountains of Chiapas. A lapse that includes four federal governments. It becomes easy to forget that in all that time, day after day, hundreds of indigenous communities have lived in a continuous war, carefully designed by the highest federal commanders with their own military elements and using the strategies of counterinsurgency. Even now that the entire country is militarized and though the posts and controls of the federal army are not just in indigenous territory (including Guerrero, Oaxaca, Hidalgo, Veracruz), the autonomous Zapatista territory continues to be the region must overwhelmed and permanently militarized in all Mexico.

The achievements of the Zapatista experience of autonomous governments do not only reside in their prolonged brilliant duration and permanent peaceful will towards their non-Zapatista brothers, but also the construction, from the roots, of educational systems, of health, agricultural production, and trade, deliverance of justice, and communication; everything done independently of a deteriorating political system. They are open to permanently learning how to "lead by obeying". They have offered a proposal of change in these times of conservatism, apathy, and bad faith in government structures. A message that things can be done another way, and well.



But just like the creation and evolution of autonomy doesn't rest, neither does the war waged against it by the federal and state governments that employ all of their warlike, technological, policing, propagandic and economic resources, intended for the intensive manufacturing of what they call "intelligence" with the explicit aims of "counterinsurgency".

In the present stage of this continuous war against the Mayan Zapatista communities, dozens of families, which are the Zapatista base of support, have been expelled from their homes and lands. Such is the case of the Tzeltal communities El Pozo (San Juan Apóstol Cancuc) last June, and September 9th in San Marcos Avilés (official municipality Chilón, near Sitalá). In this last one were obligated to leave their houses and belongings of 170 people, Zapatista support bases organized with the caracol of Oventik. The reason? According to those who kicked them out from the PRI, the PRD and the Green Ecologists it was because of their plans "build an autonomous school," and they can only come back if they cease being Zapatistas.

Besides these "hot spots", where the violence has overflowed of late, the presence of the tens of bases of operations of the federal army in the Lancandon forest, in the highlands, in the Northern Zone and in the border jungle, remains invisible, persistent, and precise. This implies the military occupation of important parts of

the territory of the Tzotzil, the Tzeltal, the Chol, the Tojolabal, as well the the Zoque and Mame- their land, community, roads and waterways. The multiple operational bases of the armed forces also offer tacit or shameless protection for the groups hostile to autonomy, paramilitaries or not.

It is not infrequent that there is a literal closeness between federal troops and sympathizers of groups like OPDDIC, Paz y Justicia (Peace and Justice) or Ejército de Dios (Army of God), like what happened on the bases of Monte Líbano, Toniná, Jotolá and Rancho Nuevo, for example. In San Pedro Polhó, close to Acteal, the military occupation is suffocating and affecting thousands of displaced Zapatistas after the slaughter in Chenalhó in 1997, 13 years later they still haven't returned to their land.

The Zapastista experience is real and for this reason the powers use plenty of war to stop it. Wars of bullets, of bills, of asphalt and cement, of false promises, paper and televised anesthesia. To thwart them, the Zapatista communities have showed that the struggle continues, that their ways of government have developed and function with democratic solutions (where "the people lead"), thanks to a legitimacy and commitment that the bad governments have completely lost.

Read the complete text at www.desinformemonos.org

Frei Betto

One of the principle architects of Liberation Theology in Brazil and the world, with a long involvement as a social activist, occupies an exceptional vantage point from which to speak about the theme of religion and social transformation. In the following interview with Desinformememos, he gives us her impression about the current political moment in Latin America.

Edited version of an interview conducted by Joana Moncau

How important is the Catholic Church in the social battles being waged in Latin America?

Between 1960 and 1980 the Catholic Church played a vital role in the social movements of Latin America. Through the Base Communities (Comunidades Eclesiales de Base) and Liberation Theology, with roots in “The Option for the Poor,” many activists were formed by the Church according to the methods of Paulo Freire. In countries suffering dictatorship, like Brazil and Nicaragua, this formation resulted in a revolutionary option. With the rise of Pope John Paul II and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the “Vaticanization” of the Latin American Church began. Liberation Theology was censored, the progressive bishops sent away, conservative priests named as bishops, etc. Today, although the Catholic Church houses progressive groups that enjoy popular support, it has rejected the Option for the Poor and tries to situate itself in supposed neutral ground with regard to social conflicts.

Is it possible to speak of a genuinely popular social movement in Latin America without considering the power of Catholicism and religion?

As far as I know there is no progressive political force in Latin America that avows atheism and is anti-religious. Since Fidel acknowledged, in the 1985 interview that I conducted (in the book “Fidel and Religion”) the importance of religion as a factor in liberation, the prejudice against religion has ended. There will never be popular participation in Latin American social processes without the incorporation of the religiosity of the people. Here the door into reason is through the heart, and the key to the heart is religion.

With regard to these issues, how do we interpret the Cuban Revolution?

The Cuban Revolution has incorporated the religious values of the people, so much so that it has had leaders who have risen as Christians, like Frank Pais and Jose Antioio Echeverria, or like the chaplain Father Guillermo Sardinias, who after the victory received the title of Commander of the Revolution. Today Cuba is experiencing a period of excellent relations between the Church and the State, to the extent that the State has permitted the Church to intervene in mediation that will allow the liberation of prisoners of conscience.

What role do the social movements have today in the politics of Latin America?

Without the social movements, Latin America would not be experiencing this democratic renaissance represented by Lula, Chavez, Funes, Mujica, Evo, Correa, and Lugo among others. However, there is a diminishment of the social movements, often because their leadership has been co-opted by these governments. The fall of the Berlin

Wall, the influence of neo-liberalism, the rise of new technology, and the advent of post-modernity are a few of the factors that explain the de-mobilization of the social movements, though some remain active like the Indigenous movement, and, in the case of Brazil, the Landless Workers Movement (MST).

Speaking of the governments that have come out of the left-leaning political parties and the social movements that are currently being consolidated in Latin America, is it possible to classify them as Leftist governments?

No, they are progressive governments, and some, as in the case of Venezuela, even espouse socialism as their political project. However, they are still far from being right wing or conservative governments. Among the realistic, and not ideal, possibilities they act in favor of the poorest and most of all overturn the political power of the traditional oligarchies, even though they still occupy significant economic power.

Read the complete text at www.desinformememos.org



The Beautiful Monster of Biodiversity

and the Native Populations of the Amazon : **Belo Monte**

The reactivation of a hydroelectric plant project that had been put on hold more than 30 years ago demonstrates that Lula's government in Brazil has been following a predatory model of development.

An edited version of a text by Christiane Peres

Sao Paulo, Brazil. Pre-electoral urgency has made Brazil's government reconsider the project of the hydroelectric plant of Belo Monte in the Xingu River in Para. In order to discuss the resistance to this project, which would affect one of the principle tributaries of the Amazon Basin, more than 400 indigenous people belonging to more than 36 nations of the Amazon, as well as river folks and representatives from social movements, participated in the Tierra Libre (free land) encampment.

The proposed mega-project brought upon president Lula an accusation that would have been unthinkable a few years back: "Lula has shown himself to be enemy number one of the indigenous population," stated Chief Megaron Txukarra-mae, leader of the Kayapo. The statement of the encounter also denounced 426 other private or government initiatives that impinge on indigenous land, as well as the proposal of more than 300 new hydroelectric projects for the Amazon. The opposition is not only found among the indigenous. Few times before has Lula's government awakened such opposition among engineers from Brazil's most important universities.

According to the government, the project has undergone some changes that will reduce its environmental impact. The area of flooding has been reduced from 1225 to 516 square-kilometers. Actually, there will be no flooding in indigenous land, however the "solution" proposed creates another impact: A stretch of the river known as Volta Grande 100 kilometers long will reduce its flow.

A panel of 40 specialists concluded an independent analysis last year about Belo Monte. The document notes a series of

faults and omissions in the project. The plant was announced as the "salvation of the country" in order to generate electricity, and is the third biggest in the world, with 11million mega watts. However, this is only true when the river is full. During most months of the year, the expected energy production is 4.5 million mega watts. The Indigenous fear that the government will, in the future, return to the original plan, formulated in the 70's, of building 5 more plants there to take advantage of the energy potential. According to the government, 18 million direct jobs will be generated, as well as 23 million indirect jobs. What they do not mention is that the benefit is temporary and that after ten years, less than 4% will be employed, thus creating multiple problems. "With the masses unemployed, the illegal extraction of wood and the incursion on protected areas will grow," says the biologist Renata Pinheiro.

In addition, the National Foundation of the Indian (FUNAI) alleges that the indigenous communities were consulted, however various indigenous leaders have

disagreed. To make things worse, in 2009 the foundation announced its support for the project without taking into account the protests against it.

As it now stands, it appears that the indigenous communities of Xingu will pay for the construction of Belo Monte. And there is no authority to whom they can appeal. It is a shame considering that the social and environmental diversity of the region has impressed the world for many decades. Along the 2700 thousand kilometers of the Xingu river we find one of the biggest channels of protected land in the world: 19 indigenous communities and 10 areas of conservation, a total of 28 million hectares of Amazonian riches.

Read the complete text at www.desinformemonos.org



“The penalization of abortion is the criminalization of poor women”:

Mónica Baltodano

Edited version of an interview conducted by Amaranta Cornejo Hernández

Mónica Baltodano speaks about criminalization of abortion in this interview for *Desinformémonos*.

In Nicaragua, in 2006, three weeks before the presidential elections, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) promoted the punishment of therapeutic pregnancy interruption. Faced with questions directed at the FSLN itself, the female director of the campaign argued that abortion was being punished because they needed to win votes, but that in 2008 they were going to try to get it decriminalized once more. Which they never did.

Illegalization or criminalization, legality or legitimacy in reference to abortion?

The illegalization and criminalization of abortion go hand-in-hand because they involve the behavior of society and legal bodies, including groups within society that turn abortion into a punishable, prosecutable crime. The defense of abortion rights has to do not only with legality, but also with the essential right of a woman to manage her own body and to decide if she does or does not want to be a mother. It is a legitimate right that should not be subject to any kind of legal processes. It is a human right that we women must assert with our struggle.

The criminalization of abortion involves a discriminatory bias by sex and by class

There is a sex bias, because it is women that become pregnant, and there is also a social class bias, because the least informed are the women with the fewest resources. Middle or upper-class women get abortions in conditions that are clandestine, but safer. There are even women that go to other countries to get abortions. Thus, this punishment is discriminatory towards women and among women, towards those who have less



access to contraceptives and abortions in safe conditions. That is, it's aimed at criminalizing poor women.

The issue of abortion during the Sandinista Revolution

We wanted the 1987 Constitution to expand the right to abortions, reforming how it had been established in the criminal code since 1870. But we couldn't do it. What did happen was the creation of women's organizations that created spaces for broader tolerance with respect to the practice of abortion. One of our critiques is to ask ourselves: "Did the revolution in which we participated and fought, and for which we took up arms achieve fundamental changes that distinguish us from places in which there was no revolution?" And my belief is that there are very few changes.

Women's reaction in the face of the criminalization of abortion

There is a large amount of confusion. The Church and the secular fundamentalist groups that revolve around churches put it all in the same bag: that all abortions are unnecessary and criminal. There is mass ignorance about what an abortion is and what a therapeutic abortion is. Most Nicaraguan men and women are against abortion, but 40% of Nicaraguan women have had at least one abortion in their lives. That means that a woman ends up having an abortion thinking she's committing a sin. In this way, abortion has brutal consequences in psychological terms.

The patriarchal system and its role in the illegalization of abortion

We're talking about a patriarchal culture, in which men often prohibit women from using contraceptives. Even though we're the ones who end up pregnant, men are the other half of the pregnancy process, via sexual relations. But they don't take any responsibility. Therefore, the whole issue of responsibility is focused on the woman.

Personal feelings

The criminalization of abortion is to me one of the greatest injustices that exists in Nicaragua, and I maintain a permanent attitude of rejection, of anger, and of rage, which moves me to commit myself to the fight to decriminalize therapeutic abortion and abortion in general. I also reject the double standard, and I condemn the religious hierarchical hypocrisies that do not condemn the crimes of humans beings in war, yet treat us women who are for abortion like criminals.

Read the complete text at www.desinformemonos.org

The current situation of social movements in Argentina

Edited version of an interview by Waldo Lao

Claudia Korol —member of the Centro de Investigación y Formación de los Movimientos Sociales Latinoamericanos (Center for the Investigation and Formation of Latin American Social Movements or CIFMSL) and of the Equipo de Educación Popular “Pañuelos en Rebeldía” (Popular Education Team “Pañuelos en Rebeldía”)— is interviewed here by *Desinformémonos* about the current situation of social movements in Latin America.

Buenos Aires, Argentina. In order to discuss social movements in Argentina, one must refer back to 2001, when neoliberal politics showed their crippling effects on the country. At that time, there was resistance from many movements and an increase in the number of activists involved in those movements.

Yet today the reestablishment of governance has resulted in these movements experiencing a politics of exclusion and so their impact has declined.

The big problem in Argentina is the absence of an alternative project of popular direct democracy. The organizations that reject vertical power structures did not succeed in constructing horizontal political structures. However, in the last few years, organizations like the *Asambleas Ambientalistas* (Environmental Assemblies) have emerged. These local assemblies joined forces by forming the *Unión de las Asambleas ciudadanas* (Union of Citizen Assemblies).

Another serious problem that concerns current social movements is the politics of criminalization, being used to establish control over the population. There are approximately 5 thousand political prisoners.

One example is the case of the *campesinos* from Atenco, in Mexico, who have already been released but were sentenced to 112 years in prison. This kind of punishment is used as a threat in order to maintain control over the population. In the case of the *Movimiento de los Sin Tierra de Brasil* (Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement or MST), the struggle has been legalized but they want to criminalize it. Many Latin American organizations are defending themselves against false charges and there are also prisoners in jail who are accused of things that cannot be proven.

The constitution should include criteria that would not allow poverty to be criminalized. Many people are in prison because of situations that they were pushed into, or because they do not have anyone to defend them. Sometimes, they do not even understand what they have been accused of because they speak another language. The system resolves the exclusion of the excluded by imprisoning them.

The march of the *Movimiento Indígena* (Indigenous People’s Movement) was an initiative that was taken by communities in order to make their existence and demands known and to destroy the myth that everyone is white in Argentina. For this reason, it was a historic movement with great significance.

In the nine years following the crisis in Argentina and due to the capacity for rebellion that was expressed in 2001, much hope and happiness were generated. We learned a lot about ourselves. As a Zapatista friend said, “The Argentinean people are quiet for many years and then they erupt, exploding and burning everything,” then the moment arrives where governance is reestablished. Today social movements are on the defensive.

We must have confidence in popular people’s organizations. Many social movements are in a stage of resistance and of rearticulating their proposals. We have the ability to take advantage of this learning period. We must count on popular education and political formation in order to successfully build political and organizational infrastructure.

Read the complete text at www.desinformememos.org



France The shadow of a proposed airport looms over the residents of Notre-Dame des Landes

Edited version of a text by Marie Ghismalfilatre

Nantes, France. Twenty kilometers north of the city, a new airport is being planned. On July 30th, the company VINCI, a French public works giant, was selected by the State as the manager of the future airport for fifty-five years. The residents of the area, who will be most affected, are organizing against the project.

Since the 1970s, the farmlands of the town of Notre-Dame des Landes have been threatened with destruction. It was only upon reading the newspaper, one morning in May 1970, that the residents of the area discovered that “The Nantes-San Nazaire metropolis could become the aerial Rotterdam of Europe thanks to the creations of an international airport north of the Loire River.” However, sensing trouble ahead, the farmers and farm workers organized. They began a struggle to stop the project, settle new young farmers in the area, and promote collective control and management of the land. Despite the determination of local elites and land planning experts, the mobilizations and the oil crisis of that time stopped the project. But it was only a temporary victory.

In the year 2000, the airport project was restarted by leaders of the French Socia-

list Party. The government was talking at that point about the need to build a third airport of international magnitude in France. Relaunching the old project, the mayor of Nantes, Jean-Marc Ayrault, called for replacing the city’s airport with a new one four times bigger, in the area of Notre-Dame de Landes. What stands out are the so-called “environmentalist ambitions” of the project, because the city of Nantes, which claims to be the “champion of sustainable development,” proposes to construct an airport of “high environmental quality”. This is surprising given the pollution generated by air transport, and Nantes city hall’s ambitions to be spokespeople for the world’s cities at the great summits of Copenhagen and Cancún against greenhouse gases and climate change.

Believing in the ideals of “participatory democracy,” many opponents tried to contest the building of the new airport during the public discussion that by law must precede any significant public project. But despite the mostly opposing comments, the public investigation commission released a report in April 2007 favorable to the project. Spurred by this clear denial of the citizens’ voice, local resistance actions have developed again:

August 2009 saw a week of resistance and the first French “climate camp.” At the same time, there was a call to occupy the expropriated lands and houses in the area, which were from that point on inhabited by new residents participating in the struggle.

Today, the acquisition of the airport by the VINCI company sharpens the conflict: Five occupied houses in the area received eviction notices this summer. However, the residents refused to leave their homes and decided to occupy the headquarters of the regional government on July 31st. Since then, there have been popular assemblies organized in the area. Faced with the appetite of big business and the heavy “green” propaganda of the Nantes city government, the resistance has had difficulty making its voice heard. Now more than ever, they need support beyond their local area to broaden the struggle.

*Read the complete text at
www.desinformememos.org*



An Ecuadorean Street Vendor **Whatever I sell, I can only keep two dollars**

Adán is a youth who sells cigarettes and candy on the corner in the Ecuadorean capital. This is a story of life and loneliness in the streets, an uncertain future, and above all a dream to become a doctor or a soccer player.

Testimony recorded by Adrian Castro Bibriesca in Quito, Ecuador

I am Adán Quiroz, I'm 16 years old and I was born here in Quito. I live ten minutes from the Ofelia bus station. I have three brothers, I am the youngest, and I work in the city center. I sell cigarettes and candy.

I live with my grandmother and my mother. My grandmother sells meat at a market, and my mother leaves to sell corn in the afternoon. I work in the afternoons from Monday to Friday, and Saturday and Sunday all day; on the weekends there are more people in the city center. Only the three of us work. I don't know my dad, he left and I don't know where he lives or with whom, I think he lives in his parents' house. They haven't told me anything.

There are five of us who live in my house. I sleep with two brothers. One of them doesn't work or go to school. My mother gets mad at him, the good thing is, he doesn't steal or do bad things, but he's alone in the house with nothing to do.

I'm not studying now. I only help my older brothers who are in high school. My mother says that next year I will return to school. Where I live people don't have much money. I have a friend who I always play soccer with. His name is Joel. I don't have a girlfriend. I don't have luck with girls. A while ago I liked a girl, but she didn't pay me any attention. You need money to have a girlfriend.

I earn about five to ten dollars a day, Saturday is when I earn the most, generally no less than 15 dollars. Whatever I sell, I can only keep two dollars. I want to get my money together to buy a dress for my mother, a while ago we passed by a store and she liked it a lot. A few

days ago I was going to go back to my house and some kids took my things and my money and my mother got mad, she thought I had bought something. I told her what had happened but she didn't believe me.

I want to be a soccer player or a doctor. But to be a doctor is very expensive, school costs a lot of money. I'm always looking for a way to get money. If I really want to be a doctor I have to work a lot, one always needs to work a lot. My mother says that if I work a lot and I do well in school she is going to help me so I can study.

One time I was involved in a robbery. It was less than a year ago, one of those who stole my money and my things, began talking to me.

One day because of me a man hit a kid who was passing by his house. I threw a rock through the man's window and I hid, when he came out, he saw this boy and he hit him. He thought it had been him. The idea was that when the man went out, the others would go into his house from behind, but none of them entered the house, they left and nothing happened to me, only to the other boy. A few days later they started to bother me and they said that I wasn't worth anything. I got mad and I fought with them. Afterwards the thing with the money happened. A few days passed and I haven't seen them, I think they don't live there or something happened.

I would like to be a father, but I don't want to go and leave my children like my father did. There are a lot of things I want to do, study, play, but sometimes I can't. Work takes up a lot of time each



day. In spite of all of this, I know a lot of cool people here. One lady who helps me a lot is Lucia, she gives me water every Saturday and Sunday. She has a telephone booth business. What's more, I walk a lot, I don't like to stay in one place to wait and sell. There are a lot of things to see.

I would like to be able to help my mother and my grandmother with other jobs, but I have to go to school. Now I only have this, but I now that my aid helps my family and my other brothers, they have already promised they'd help me in school. Now I only have to keep working and when I have the chance, I will do all that I want.

*Read the complete text at
www.desinformememos.org*

Political Hip Hop flourishes in Latin America

The seed of Hip Hop found fertile lands in this region, converting itself into a catalyst for the training centers in the urban areas and the political voice of the oppressed. Life has changed for thousands of people due to this subtle combination of art and politics.

Edited version of a text by Pimentel Spensy

Twenty years ago, political rap reached its highest point in the United States. Groups such as Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions (BPD), and Niggaz with Attitude (NWA) expressed in their own unique way the discontent of the many residents living in the inner-city ghettos suffering a lack of economic opportunities and political violence. The virulence of their word, mentioning many of the ideas and names of the civil rights leaders of the 60's and 70's, attracted attention, and the groups became the target of FBI investigations

Cause? Effect? Symptoms nonetheless. While the hostile verses sounded off against the police throughout the black and latino neighborhoods, the growing dissatisfaction culminated in 1992, particularly in LA, where police officers, accused of beating a black motorist named Rodney King, and who were captured on film, were found not guilty by a mostly white jury.

Shortly thereafter, the winds in the US changed. Due to the many neoliberal reforms that the country has taxed on to the rest of the world, particularly Latin America, the economy has prospered. In Latin America, a series of governments have aligned with the free market, the privatization and dismantling of their

economies. The continent has fallen to ruin and today suffers the consequences of those decisions.

Just as the economy of the US experienced a period of prosperity, rap has gained new ground, and political hip-hop has become a minor afterthought. Gangsta rap surged ahead celebrating the consumerist lifestyle of the formerly poverty stricken artists who were now gaining wealth through their music.

But the spark belonging to political consciousness and rebellion is not dead, it simply migrated. In France it was a band of youth from the poorest of neighborhoods that were against the liberal politics and political violence. In Palestine, it is the rhythms of struggle from the youth of the Intifada movement. In Africa, the fruit of the Black Diaspora returned to plant the seed of civil disobedience against authoritative states.

And it is in Latin America where the seed of Hip Hop has found a most fertile land, becoming a catalyst for the nucleus of the political trainings throughout the urban neighborhoods and the voice of the oppressed. Thousands of youth, many of whom don't speak about or know of the many parties and movements, black or indigenous, are found reading works by

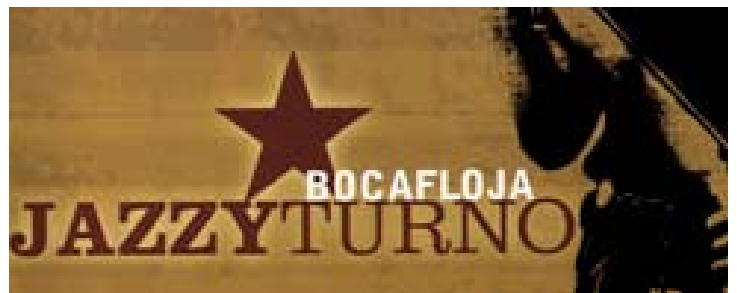
Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr, and searching out information regarding leaders such as Zumbi dos Palmares, Che Guevara or Tupak Katari. At the same time, they promote festivals, dance, art and poetry classes, and social work in the communities where they live.

The majority of them will not become millionaires, but, without a doubt, they will change their lives due to this subtle combination of art and politics, which Hip Hop has become.

One of the greatest innovations in the past few years is indigenous rap. In Bolivia, there is rap being sung in Aymara, by the group Wayna Rap, from El Alto. In Chile, the Mapuches, the main indigenous group of that country, face strong racial discrimination and political violence, and their identification with Hip Hop is surging. In the borders of Brasil and Paraguay, The Guarani-Kaiowa face a similar situation and the young natives have responded by rapping in Guarani.

Hip Hop in Latin America has not stopped evolving. The continent is constantly bringing in, reflecting upon, and ultimately transforming the legacy of the Black Diaspora.

Read the complete text at www.desinformemonos.org



A Woman and her Music *Amparo Sánchez*

The Spanish singer, founder, and vocalist of the former band Amparanoia, now in her solo stage, talks about her origins

and her passion for the music that accompanies her in her passage “through this wounded but still rebellious planet.”

Madrid, España. The years go by and my love for music is greater every day. She does not stop giving me sweet melodies and unforgettable memories. She lets me create her, change her, transform her, shape her, experience her, and I will never know why my voice lets me sing, why it comes out of me without me even thinking about it. It is always there, hidden, waiting for the sound of a guitar or a piano to join itself to them, to melt into the music.

I have never tried to discover that sweet secret, the secret of why I sing, why I create songs. It is part of my existence on the planet Earth, it cannot be any other way. I started my relationship with her when I was 15 years-old, to keep being playful and to escape from the real world, which had brought me to be a very young mother – single and adolescent – and over which I wanted to triumph despite the difficulties.

She who appeared as an escape in those hard times, turned into my job, traveling from stage to stage, each moment farther from my home, each moment closer to myself. Now, in my 40s, she continues to be my job but is also a wholly delicious way to live and a means of expression without which I would not know what to do, because I feel free writing, I feel free singing, I feel happy when I go back home and hug the people there, full of new experiences to share, able to travel around this wounded but rebellious planet, to tell in words what I see and don't like or what I do like and what gives me strength, looking for answers and creating questions.

*Read the complete text at
www.desinformemonos.org*



The Trashumante University: A Pedagogical Space for the Fight

Edited version of a text by María Coco Magallanes and Mario Canek Huerta

Rosario, Argentina. In July, 2010, the Trashumante University conducted an internal seminar following ten year of creation, through autonomy and self-management, of a popular education project. The seminar's objective was to discuss and reflect on its conditions, and to consider a constitution for the Trashumante School.

Given the complex circumstances facing Argentina today, this university is an especially symbolic project. Professor Roberto "Tato" Iglesias, founder of the Trashumante University, explains that the current panorama of social movements in the country is bleak, an opinion that contradicts that of the "democratic process" expressed by other critics and progressive sectors of Latin America.

But Tato sees Argentina in a different light. The trashumantes think and construct their alternate country based on a skepticism that rejects all types of "democracy" in favor of the collective. They favor social movements that fight for change using popular wisdom and symbols, recognizing and confronting the problems of hierarchy and poverty with exercises in autonomy and horizontality.

Nevertheless, Tato Iglesias explains that demobilization, state cooptation and social dissolution are latent as a result of the privatizations imposed by Carlos Menem.

The young participants in the seminar reflect about how and why they walk their own path, with the same autonomy that has been generated by collective processes of reflection through more than 140 workshops that form part of this political and popular pedagogy.

During the seminar, the participants spoke about construction possibilities for the school and created different teams with specific tasks. The seminar served also as a forum in which to denounce the experiences of repression, exclusion, and scarcity experienced by everyone throughout Argentina, but it was also a space of reunion, happiness and dreams.

Ideas and information develop at the event in such a way as to create a space to think deeply about reality. It is a space to talk about the experience of popular work as a basis for a new project created from the mix of wishes, desires, passions, and the

decision to "form popular educators for the fight."

The objective is to engage the youth in an exercise of deep reflection that helps them become aware of work with communities, collectives and movements.

The Trashumante has been discredited by various groups because of its skepticism about partisan politics and for maintaining its anti-capitalist stance. Its members have been called extremists for their belief in a system "without leaders nor authority." Tato says that the seminars at the heart of the Trashumante that are "without hierarchical structure" are inspired by zapatismo, which serves as a "political, cultural and ideological reference for us."

Professor Iglesias explains that "we must understand reality to then organize and fight to transform it." As such, the political pedagogy of the Trashumante University is to fight here and now for the realization of its ultimate dream, another country.

*Read the complete text at
www.desinformememos.org*



A Disinformed Year

A million thanks to all of the people and collectives that joined us in this first year. And thank you, most importantly, to all those who never give up, and continually provide us with all of the work ahead

One year ago we announced our birth in a moment when nobody needed us. We continue to feel this way. Our presence is therefore due to the collective need, then and now, of creating a global communication space with information about the ongoing battles and resistance continually occurring throughout five continents. A non-profit space based on the union of a diverse constituency, a space that contributes to the force of the autonomous media that, fortunately, is already established and continues to expand.

A space with information about the countryside, the inner city, the university, the factory, and the indigenous community; A space of the streets and the plains, filled with the testimony of men, women, and children normally invisible to the mass media: immigrants, indigenous folks, refugees, artists, sex workers, children living in the streets, farmers, workers, students, and a large “etc.” made up of the dispossessed classes, the “nobodies,” as the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano calls them, “that are worth less than the bullet that kills them.”

Desinformemonos was born and raised as a project of autonomous media, free and independent, made up of a team of communicators, members of social movements, and friends and colleagues who, like us, are trying to create a space for expression from and in Mexico, the United States, Argentina, Brazil, France, Spain, Italy, and Germany; with friends and collaborators in Bolivia, Uruguay, Colombia, Ecuador, Belgium, Turkey, Palestine, India, Thailand, Burma, Ukraine, and Vietnam among other corners of the world.

In Desinformemonos we do aspire to a journalism of neutrality or false objectivity. We assume a space from below and to the left, outside of power and the powerful, in favor of autonomy, and for the right of the people to decide their own destiny - a medium for hope and not false optimism, for dreams and construction, and not the victimization of the movement. In this first year, through Desinformemonos we have tried to produce create connections between autonomous spaces and movements using media and journalism as a tool. We are not the movement, but rather a tool at its disposal. We come behind it, not above it, though we are always part of it. Our dream and goal is to accompany and to be accompanied, fight the imposed loneliness, and build community.

If we had to describe this first year in one word, the one that suits us most would be learning. We have learned, for example, that the autonomous path makes us responsible for our own destiny, and most of all, our own mistakes. On more than one occasion throughout this brief and modest run we have questioned our position with regard to certain events, and with regard to the complexity and quantity of artists that are present below and to the left, we have returned again and again to the ethics that have always reigned inside the movements that inspire us. The responsibility, however, is ours alone. Our plan is to never stop questioning ourselves, never stop doubting, advance slowly, and continue responding as a collective.

One disinformed year - very little, for certain, but for us a source of great happiness. Our engine throughout these 12 months has been the battles documented in different parts of the world, stories in which conforming is not an option. After hearing the voice of a Palestinian in Gaza, of a taxi driver in Bolivia, and of an indigenous man in Brazil, of a sex worker in Tijuana, of a Zapatista in Chiapas, of a Central American immigrant, or of a Kurd in Istanbul we have nothing left but the firm resolution of never giving up, of doing something, anything except indifference and stagnation.

A million thanks to all of the people and collectives who participated with us during this first year. Thank you, most of all, to all those who never give up and leave us with much work ahead. Thank you, also, to the long list of journalists, photographers, translators, editors, all of the friends and comrades that have offered a testimony or an image and much of their time and attention. Thanks to all of this will power, today we can continue publishing for you.

“Resistance is in knowing how to listen to the Land,” said John Berger in our second issue. And it is there, on the bottom, where we continue finding the answers. Berger also recommended in that foundational moment “not to confuse the deliberate intention of disinforming ourselves with being misinformed.”

There is much to be done, and we have done very little, but that is where we are.

*With best wishes,
The Desinformemonos team*

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Director Gloria Muñoz **Editorial design** Francis Goche

Coordinator Bimestral Grassroots Review Amaranta Cornejo Hernández and Marcela Salas Cassani

Translation Boston Interpreters Collective **Proofreader** Marcela Salas Cassani