

# des informémonos

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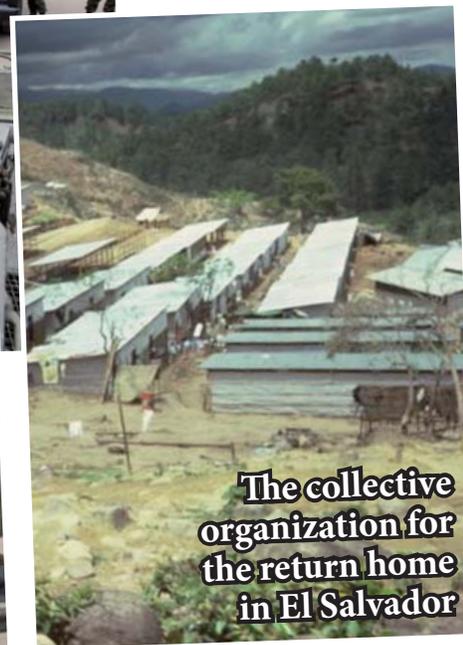
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# Democracy

Luis Villoro

**Mexico city.** *Luis Villoro, the Mexican philosopher, professor emeritus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), remarks that there is a different type of democracy from the one assumed to exist in our countries. Various authors would call it “republican or communitarian democracy”*

“Liberal democracy, an expression of current, modern capitalism, is the one that has been the cause of the ills that we are suffering presently,” stated three western philosophers: Jurgen Habermas, David Held, and Will Kimlicka. “Capitalist globalization,” they say, “has driven the West to the nefarious exploitation of workers, threats against the natural environment, and global injustices in a poorly structured society. Faced with these evils,” continue the authors, “the reaction is usually that of taking refuge in traditions that lead to intolerance and religious fundamentalism.”

Their opinion is correct with reference to the ills caused by western capitalism. But, how about the cure for this? No. I believe this is totally insufficient. Good intentions are not enough, as perhaps the three authors may think, to achieve

a new order based on universal human rights whose compliance has been so frequently violated.

Is it not naïve to think that faced with the ills of world capitalism that the authors describe, that it is enough to appeal to the universal rights of human beings? The implementation of those rights appeals to goodwill, and ignores, conversely, the real causes-economic and social-that prevent the achievement of these rights in all societies.

Faced with the ills of capitalism, it seems to me that the only cure would be to move toward a different order, even the opposite of world capitalism.

Capitalist hegemony has been accompanied by undesirable outcomes, like the destruction of nature by technology, the supremacy of instrumental reason over theoretical science and, in the social and political order, selfish individualism over the primacy of the common good.

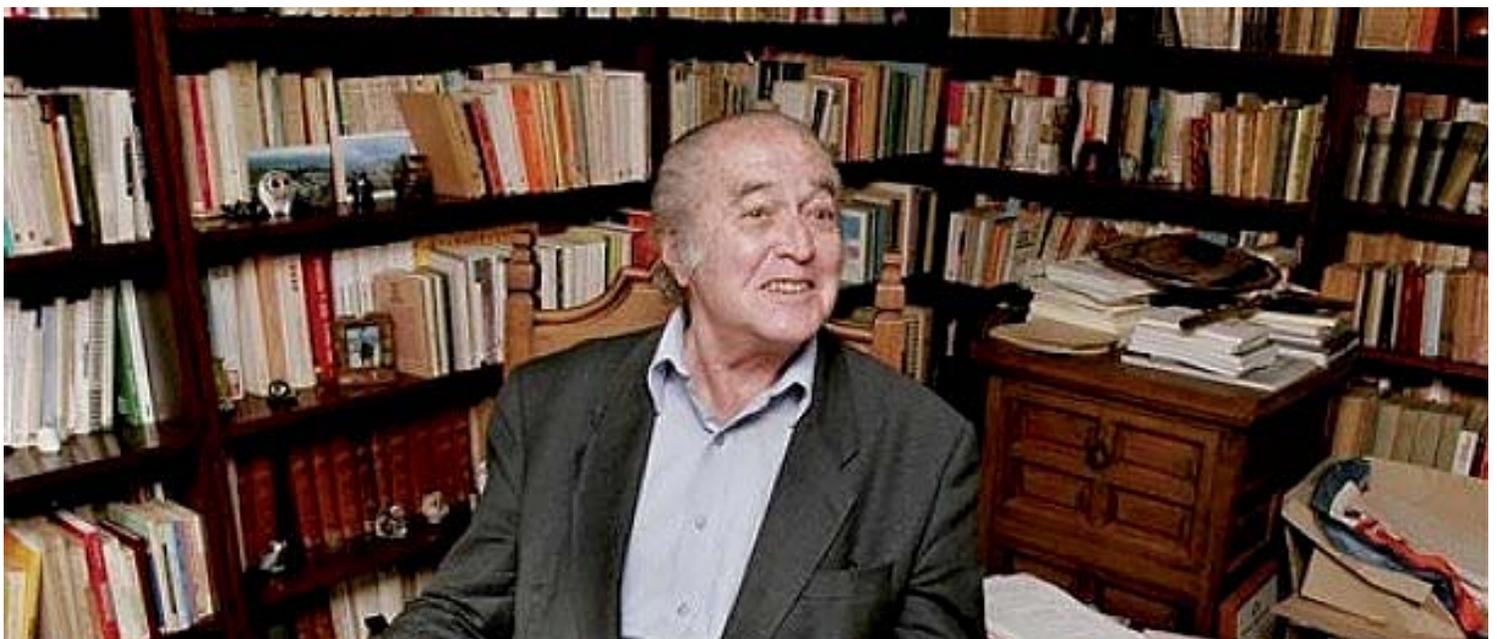
What could the alternative be? Whatever it is, it would have to be one that eliminates or at least reduces the ills caused by modern capitalism.

“Democracy” etymologically means “power of the people” but there are two types of true power of the people that correspond to two different realms of power: one that we can call “liberal” democracy, and the other “republican” democracy.

“Communitarian” or “republican” democracy does not exist in the majority of modern western countries but has its historical precedents in some of the Italian Renaissance authors who, at the time, tried to revive the spirit that is attributed to the Roman republic. In Rousseau, we can find the foundations of this doctrine that are developed through the first stages by the revolutionary democrats: the North American (in its Anti-Federalist trend) and the French (in the Jacobin party). Republican democracy has common features to communitarian democracy.

The opposition between these two positions (the liberal and the republican/communitarian) not only has theoretical consequences but also impacts political programs.

*To read the complete text go to [www.desinformememos.org](http://www.desinformememos.org)*



# Torture, sexual violence, degrading and inhumane treatment in Chiapas jails

*The government of Chiapas, as shown by the document titled "Violations against human rights in Chiapas jails", has failed to fulfill its obligation to guarantee and protect the lives, as well as the physical and psychological well being of the imprisoned individuals in jails within its jurisdiction.*

*Edited version of a text by Gloria Muñoz Ramírez*

**San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mex.** In penitentiary centers of Chiapas there are cruel, degrading, inhumane treatments and punishments, sexual violence, torture, overcrowding, poor hygienic conditions, lack of or poor medical assistance, low legal recourse for those denied their freedom, poor access to education, work, or recreation, forced transfers, and forced nudity, reveals a special report conducted by the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Center for Human Rights (Frayba).

Since 1989 Frayba has been completing an arduous field study in defense of the poorest and most violence-ridden regions of Chiapas, primarily within indigenous communities. Its founder and president, up until his recent death, was Bishop Samuel Ruiz García, whose charge, since this past 28th of January has remained in the hands of a man no less committed to the defense of the oppressed, Bishop Raúl Vera.

Throughout 2010, Frayba, supported by the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas, has received complaints from relatives and inmates regarding cruel punishments and treatment, as well as regarding the daily torture experienced within the penitentiary centers of Chiapas, located in the towns of Cintalapa, Comitán de Domínguez, Copainalá, Motozintla, Pichucalco, Ocosingo, Tonalá, and San Cristóbal de las Casas.

The government of Chiapas, concludes the titled document "Human rights violations in Chiapas' jails", fails in its obli-



gation to guarantee and protect the lives, as well as the physical and psychological wellbeing, of its inmates. During 2010, Frayba received 17 complaints from male and female inmates and relatives, a signed total of 2,000,142 individuals. In addition, the testimony of 24 relatives of inmates have been documented that denounce varying actions and omissions that penitentiary functionaries have exercised, predominantly direct action towards women, boys, and girls, who are subjected to cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment the moment they enter the jails in order to visit their relatives.

After a detailed and exhaustive documentation of all the received complaints, the Center for Human Rights confirmed "that a systematic violation of human rights exists in the penitentiary system of Chiapas, and urges the system to immediately

cease all degrading, inhumane treatment as well as torture activities that prevail in the prisons of the state of Chiapas, that the human dignity of relatives and visitors of the inmates be respected, that information regarding the rights, obligations and prohibitions due to the inmate be proportioned directly and clearly, as there is a lack of knowledge present, and in the meantime, exclusivity in terms of information; that there be a prompt and effective investigation into the functionaries (at all levels) that are committing these human rights violations. And, finally, that the actual condition of the inmates in Chiapas be made public and that national and international observers be permitted to verify the state as well as the condition of those aforementioned.

*To read the complete text go to  
[www.desinformememos.org](http://www.desinformememos.org)*

# In Rio de Janeiro **Bullets Announce** the Coming of the World Cup

*Against the backdrop of the major sports events that are quickly approaching, police and military action, robbery, death, and rape in Rio de Janeiro's shanty towns. Edited Version of the Reflections of "Desentorpecendo a Razão" (DAR) and "Lutarmada"*

**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.** Less than a month after celebrating Brazil's general elections, Rio de Janeiro experienced one of the most significant clashes between police and drug traffickers in recent memory. Between the 25th and 28th of November, close to 3,000 men of the civil and military police, the firefighters and the army, equipped with naval armor and tactics taught by Brazilian soldiers during the occupation of Haiti, took part in the "seizure" of two poor neighborhoods in the city: Vila Cruzeiro and the so-called Complexo do Alenão, one of the biggest clusters of shanty towns in Rio, where more than 100,000 people live (some sources estimate as many as 300,000), in what appeared to the rest of the world as a reaction of public power to a series of cars and buses set on fire by the drug gangs.

To date, the government of Rio has not divulged the exact numbers of people killed and wounded during the occupation, which is common for police operations in the city. Dozens of reports of police abuse during the operation have surfaced as well, mostly relating to the looting of homes.

The city government of Rio has undertaken systematic occupation in the poorest neighborhoods, installing so-called UPP's (United Police Peacemakers) in 13 shantytowns so far. The number is small considering that the city has close to 1,000 such neighborhoods, but the repercussions have been enormous given that the chosen shanty towns are all located next to the richest area of the city.

The police action was propelled by the extraordinary success of the Brazilian feature film *Elite Troop 2*. Released in October, the movie is already the most watched in the history of Brazilian film,



Photos: ABR

with more than 10,000,000 spectators. The story of Captain Nascimento, the leader of the Battalion of Special Operations of the police, which fights against corrupt police and politicians (without ever abandoning the use of force against drug traffickers), was so similar to the facts of Alemão that many commentators from the Brazilian press dubbed the intense media coverage of the event *Elite Troop 3*.

The major repercussions of what happened became the primary national topic for at least a week, during which diverse thinkers, artists, political groups, and collectives protested the events that occurred.

For the political Hip Hop collective "Lutarmada," from Rio, the facts of November are comparable to the sto-

ries of what happened in South Africa in 2010 with the coming of the World Cup, which caused a surge in state violence and systemic repression.

*Desentorpecendo a Razão (DAR)*, a collective that promotes a more nuanced debate about the regulation of illicit drugs, was "surprised that, after 40 years of the war against drugs 'made in the USA,' when the whole world is seeking alternatives to the total failure of 'prohibitionism,' war is being newly promoted as an instrument of peace."

*To read the complete text go to [www.desinformememos.org](http://www.desinformememos.org)*

# Femicide in Mexico Not Even One More!

*Desinformémonos*

**Mexico city.** The recent murders of the poet, feminist, and activist Susana Sánchez, and Marisela Escobedo Ortiz, mother of the young Rubi, both murdered in Juárez, have revitalized the protest against femicide in Mexico.

In the context of generalized violence various groups of women in Mexico and in a number of cities around the world took to the streets to protest and demand justice.

The mobilizations in Mexico City are part of the campaign called “No more blood,” initiated by the political cartoonist Rius, who comes from the civil society.

On January 15th hundreds of people belonging to different organizations, from Angel of Independence to Hemicycle for Juárez, marched in Mexico City. The mobilization was to protest the climate of violent femicide that prevails around the country.

Femicide in Mexico has increased in the past few years. In the city of Juárez, Chihuahua alone, in 2010, there were 306 victims. These deaths were brought to light following the recent murders of Marisela Escobedo and Susana Chávez. However, unfortunately they are not the only ones.

It is for this reason that the civil society, organized or not, takes to the streets in protest. They march, scream, and paint their imaginations. The pink crosses (that have been laid out by organizations and mothers of murdered women in Chihuahua and Juárez) have symbolized for over a decade the murder of women for reasons of gender.

Sometimes they are marked with a name in black. Other, bigger, crosses have been placed in strategic places like in front of the capital building or in the international bridge. Photos and names of the di-



*Photo: Joana Moncau*

sappeared women are placed on blankets. The posters from the march of January 15th said things like: “No more violence against women,” “Susana and Marisela, your voices won’t be silenced,” and “Not even one more murdered.”

Thais, from the feminist collective “We Are All There,” explains that we must distinguish between the fight against femicide from the fight against narcotics, because femicide has a distinct cause: patriarchy.

Darla Avila, from the collective “Free Women in Resistance,” explains that with the increase in violence around the country, femicide also increases, even though it is not directly related to narcotics.

“Demanding justice in Mexico means risking death because in this country there are no guarantees or respect for international legal standards,” explains the protesters.

The protests against femicide in Mexico have crossed the border. In Rome, Italy a group of women protested before the Mexican embassy against the violence and femicide in Mexico.

In the Italian capital, the activists recalled the murder of Susana Chávez that took place on January 5th. Susana is the author of the emblematic phrase “Not even one more,” created precisely to denounce the murder of women in Juárez.

Protests were also held in Barcelona, Spain against the impunity in Mexico. The collective “Mexicans in Resistance” from Barcelona, the group of support from the coastal region of Chiapas, and followers of The Other Campaign demanded an end to the gendered violence before the Mexican consulate.

*Not even one more!*  
A photo-essay of the protests can be found at [www.desinformememos.org](http://www.desinformememos.org)

Memory, historical value throughout 24 years of resistance

# The collective organization for the return home in El Salvador

*Today, Santa Marta, with its former and current residents maintains its own forms of organizing, far from the moneyed government officials, and with little effect from the political parties.*

*By Ricardo Martínez Martínez*

**Mesa Grande, Honduras and Santa Marta, El Salvador.** In the border region between El Salvador and Honduras there exist hundreds of communities that began to grow and recede 24 years ago. What was previously a desolate and inhospitable area, in the context of the Salvadoran civil war of the 1980's, is today a testament to the success of social and community organizations.

Between the plateaus and forested areas of the low mountains in the departments of Chalatenango, Cabañas, and Morzán, where the FMLN guerrilla maintained camps and training sites, the rear-guard of its insurgent army, the actual residents, many of them former soldiers as well as civilians, have developed methods of social organization with noticeable collectivist practices, a product of the difficulty of survival in an exceptional moment.



The majority of the residents of this region are former refugees of war and their descendants, who were born in Mesa Grande, department of San Marcos, Honduras. Every year they commemorate the return to El Salvador after 12 continuous years of living in seven refugee camps under the legal auspices of ACNUR, but surrounded by Honduran military forces, paramilitary group, and members of the Salvadoran Special Forces.

On January 15th of this year, the celebration of "The Return Home" was held in Mesa Grande, a striking event started by the current residents of the Santa Marta community, that in 1987 was founded as part of 3 resettlements in areas of the department of Cabañas, El Salvador.

Around 200 youth visited the extended plateau in southern Honduras where they were born and lived the first years of their childhood. They came to commemorate the events that have marked them for life, "a legacy of resistance and the example of our parents, to recognize the truth of where we came from and the mission that we have set ahead of us of the struggle for peace and justice," as Junior Alfaro recounted, who as a 27 year old feels ownership over this land that lies a mere 45 kilometers from the Salvadoran border. It is certain that Mesa Grande is the territory of collective memory of these youth who have managed to establish, in other areas of the border, what they had once dreamt of: organization, community, and a better quality of life.

Santa Marta, with its previous inhabitants as well as its newer ones, has its own forms of organizing, far from the moneyed government officials, and with little influence from the political parties. With the heritage of their parents, the current residents have become an enclave of resistance and collective organizing. "The community feels represented by its inhabitants; we have had to find diverse methods to resolve their problems, as we have been denied many rights, like education, health care, and a dignified life with work and respect for our culture. Rights that we have defended and that today are a reality."

*To read the complete text go to  
[www.desinformememos.org](http://www.desinformememos.org)*

# The revenge of the people of the land

*In the last decade, a process has begun to reclaim the identity of the Mapuche people in Argentina. Since 2001, 240 thousand hectares [approximately 593 thousand acres] have been recuperated by Mapuche communities. Edited version of a text by Martín Cúneo. Illustration: Emma Gascó*

**Mapuche Territory.** On November 8th 2010, in response to a growing trend which aimed to portray the 1879 Desert Campaign as an act of genocide against native peoples, an editorial in the conservative newspaper *La Nación* warned of the dangers in revising Argentina's history. Of concern as well was the re-taking of lands from Patagonian ranchers on behalf of Mapuche communities.

"They're worried because the Mapuche people are now fighting for their rights," says Lefxaru Nawel, from the Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Observatory. "They want the Mapuches to be like they were 100 years ago, when they went from being land owners to mere laborers."

In August of 2002, Rosa Nahuelquir lost her job and, along with her husband Atilio Curiñaco, decided to recover a plot of land that had belonged to Atilio's family for generations. To achieve this dream, they had to confront the textile giant Benetton. Rosa and Atilio soon became reference points in the fight for land rights.

Upon tracing the origins of the Benetton property, they uncovered one of the largest corruption scandals in the history of Argentina. Twelve years after the Conquest of the Desert, then-President José Uruburu donated 900 thousand hectares [approx. 2.2 million acres] to ten British citizens, who in turn transferred the property to the Argentinean Southern Land Company, Ltd, a shell company created to receive the property. It is believed that the donation was payment for British weapons that were used in the Conquest.

Some 42 thousand hectares [approx. 103 thousand acres] were given to 1,800 ranchers of the Rural Society, which had co-financed the campaign against the native



people. That mission left 14 thousand indigenous people dead and another 14 thousand in slavery. Those that ended up living in the city didn't fare well but instead lived on the peripheries and slowly lost their culture.

## The first shock

For the Mapuche Confederation, 1992 is the turning point. They realize that they cannot go back any further - 500 years later they're still alive and there is an opportunity to rethink their history, they have to advance.

This movement is fruitful, reforming the Constitution, and with that achieving the legal recognition of indigenous land rights as well as management of their natural resources.

## The third invasion

Conflicts over land escalated in 2001, with growing pressure from the tourism sector as well as the entry of petroleum and mining companies. On top of that came the arrival of domestic and foreign ranchers. Rosa and Atilio's occupation of their land in 2002 was followed by a harsh eviction.

They then began a campaign of letters, interviews, and even had a meeting with Luciano Benetton himself. "They called us ignorant, that we don't know how to wait, so we waited three years, and then we came back," says Rosa. In 2007 they once again got their land back and live there to this day.

## Emblematic cases

Quintupuray, two crimes and a recovery. In 1993, Lucinda Quintupuray was killed with two gunshots. Her son Victorio took up residence on her lands. Months later he was found drowned in a nearby river. In 2008, after 15 years and many demands, the territory was recovered.

The old lumber game. The World Bank's lumber and forestry programs encourage leasing lands to private capital companies. After finishing a logging operation, lumber companies have the opportunity to take ownership of the land and sell it - many times with people still living on the land.

*To read the complete text go to [www.desinformemonos.org](http://www.desinformemonos.org)*

# In memoriam **Nayem, a Sahrawi Youth**

*Author: Tiziana Perna. Photographer: Stefano Montesi*



**Western Sahara.** Perhaps it was that the Saharan sand hid the body of Nayem El Garhi, who turned 14 this past October. The Moroccan army killed him at one of the checkpoints that regulate access to the camp at Gadaym Izik, near El Aaiún, the capital of The Western Sahara, a territory occupied by Morocco.

Nayem was a Sahrawi youth, a descendent of the Berber herders who have lived from for immemorial times in the biggest desert of the world, possessors of a centuries-old culture, now destroyed by Spanish colonization and by 35 years of exile and Moroccan occupation.

The night he died, Nayem and other youths were returning to the Camp of Dignity in Gadaym Izik, where more than 20 thousand Sahrawis were protesting against the discrimination and lack of opportunities that this forgotten people suffer.

The camp had been created to promote of the human rights of the Sahrawis, and since October 10th, an unstoppable river of Sahrawis has been joining the lines of the non-violent, completely unpublished protest, that forced the Moroccan government to construct a new wall around the camp and establish checkpoints

to detain the entrance of the people — a community of free women and men that had organized a territory free of oppression and violence.

Nayem and his family were members of the camp, and that day he went to the city in order to bring back food for the camp. On his return, in front of the third Moroccan checkpoint, Nayem was killed. His body was buried in an unknown location. As for the other youth that were with him in the car, nobody knows where they are. From that day on, the camp was surrounded, holding up the supply of aid and impeding journalists and observers from entering the camp. Hundreds of soldiers surrounded the camp on the morning of November 8th, and attacked the camp, burning thousands of tents, releasing tear gas, arresting around two thousand people, causing an unknown number of deaths, and leaving thousands injured.

The resistance of the people of the camp was transferred to El Aaiún and other points of occupied Sahara which is currently controlled by a very strict curfew to prevent protests.

Further along, on the frontier with Algeria, in the immense camp of Sahrawis near Tindouf, survive around 200 thou-

sand refugees who were persecuted by the Moroccan military, which in 1975 with the famous “Green March” occupied the territory of The Western Sahara by force, using massacres and bombings. They made the entire people fight for their self-determination, recognized by all of the international organizations but always ignored in UN resolutions.

This piece of desert, rich in phosphates and possessing coasts abounding in fish, is crossed by a wall around 2,700 kilometers long that separates the area occupied by Morocco and the small line of desert controlled by the Polisario Front on the border with Algeria and Mauritania.

This walk is one of the most dangerous locations in the world because it has been completely mined. It is estimated that there is between one to two million anti-personnel mines. And that is how the Sahrawi survive and resist —the people of the desert— in between their own mined territory and the obscenity of an international community incapable of stopping a massacre. Though the story of Nayem has largely been forgotten, it remains a symbol of the return of the Sahrawi dignity.

*To read the complete text go to  
[www.desinformememos.org](http://www.desinformememos.org)*

# EZLN: 17 Years of Declaring Hope

By Hermann Bellinghausen

**San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.** Injustice is the currency paid to the indigenous people in their effort to save themselves and their whole country while the owners of economic power and policies seek the opposite. They fill their pockets with the riches of the country. The neoliberal governments are profiting and have found their dearest acolyte in Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, capable of unleashing the greatest amount of institutional violence in the last 80 years.

It is violence that begets violence, of all of the businessmen and traffickers of the capitalist world. In all parts of the world, and now Mexico, they are considered “criminals” of history. The “legal” powers are aligned with the enemy they call on to fight. Para-militarism, assassin cells, police corruption, and drug production and trafficking are all part of this “global” system: the most advanced phase of capitalism, and apparently, the most destructive.

The accomplishments of these armies, both legal and illegal, open the door to the largest mining, petroleum and monoculture companies, and builders (destroyers) of energy, converting or simply displacing the population with physical or economic violence.

The “state of war” is ideal for advancing these businesses, such that the government ignores the international standards that exist, the accords and all the rest.

The killing fields of Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya, and Mexico, as well as the vast multinational Amazon, are in this mined map whose evolution puts the viability of Mexico as a nation at risk (they assume that governments and intellectuals will conform), though there is still a heart beating in this corner (“in the corner of the poorest nation” like Real de Catorce sang, “the most forgotten”, like the Zapatistas said 17 years ago).



Photos: Moysés Zúñiga

Chiapas: Not just one more battlefield in the expansive wave of capitalism and appropriation of strategic resources, but also a place of permanent struggle. Where the peaceful practice of autonomy is just and effective.

December has had two indelible marks in Chiapas: the massacre of Acteal on the 22nd (1992) and the first uprising in 1994 of the EZLN. The shouts of pain, the proclamations of hope.

This hope has been betrayed by the powerful in the Union. They haven't complied with the changes in the law demanded by zapatismo, nor have they heeded the outcry for justice from the Abejas of Aceal, who today are part of the Other Campaign of the EZLN, and in 1997 were persecuted for sympathizing with Zapatismo.

To the updated and well documented case of the Abejas, this 22nd of December came this “response”: According to the evangelical organization Confraternice, in

the next months they will set free all of the paramilitary prisoners responsible for the massacre at Acteal. With this, the path of impunity is guaranteed to those responsible for that massacre during Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León term.

Silence marks the end of the year in the Zapatista communities, to commemorate the 17th anniversary of their rebellion. In the present national decomposition, their resistance has been converted into a giant barricade in the world of the real against the global attack (the “national” version) on the indigenous people. A war of extermination that the Zapatistas still denounce.

Still on their feet, against impunity and forgetting, against the incomplicity of the San Andrés accords, signed by the EZLN and the government in 1996, against the destruction of the soil, rivers, and people. The end of history has not yet begun.

To read the complete text go to [www.desinformemonos.org](http://www.desinformemonos.org)

“We no longer live in fear like before”

# Barry, a Senegalese in Zaragoza

*Testimony collected in Zaragoza, Spain by Sergio de Castro Sánchez*

Barry participates in the Support Network for Undocumented Immigrants of Aragón. “Now we know what our rights are and that, even though we do not have papers, we’re people.”

My name is Abdoulaye Barry and I’m from Senegal. I came to Zaragoza in 2008 and I worked for three months as a technician in the International Exposition of Zaragoza in the Senegal pavilion.

Here, for the same work as in Senegal, you get paid a lot more and because of the living conditions in my country I decided to stay in Spain.

I came by plane, but there are guys who come risking their lives in little canoes; they do it because there’s no hope of a future in Senegal and they decide to look for a life for themselves outside the country.

When the Expo ended I lived with other Senegalese friends. Afterwards, I went to another place where 15 of us lived in 2 floors, but the neighbors reported us and we had to leave. In that house we talked for the first time about creating a network of undocumented immigrants, an idea which we soon moved forward. That way, when we had problems at that house, the folks from the network help us to find another one.

When I decided to stay I tried to renew my papers, but a lawyer explained to me that they would only renew them if I had a contract. At that point I was afraid to go out on the street because the police were always around asking for papers.

Now, with the struggles we’ve carried out, we no longer live in fear like before. Now we know what our rights are and that, even though we do not have papers, we’re people. We’re with people that want to help us.

Even so, a month and a half ago they detained me. I was walking on the street with a friend and they asked us for papers. Then they took us to the station, they took away my belt and everything I had in my pockets and put me in jail. I was saying to myself, better that they call me to take me to Madrid and deport me than that they take away my liberty. Finally I signed a document and they told me that in 15 days they would send me a deportation order or a fine. Recently my lawyer called me to tell me that I would have to pay a fine.

Currently I don’t have a regular job, but thanks to the self-employment group of the Network, I’m finding little jobs and also we’re doing really interesting things. For example, a march that in September we carried out to Brussels against labor

reform and for social rights. We got to the European Parliament and we met with several members of the parliament from different countries.

The Network is made up of 500 Spanish and foreign people. It’s a social space that we created in 2009. It’s a very mixed group. In it, Mongolians, Italians, French, Senegalese... we are all together doing things like workshops, talking about the law that regulates immigration, and providing legal assistance for immigrants. Now, we’ve started to do an evaluation of the Network in the last two years. Then we’ll see what we need to improve and create new ideas going forward.

*To read the complete text go to [www.desinformemonos.org](http://www.desinformemonos.org)*



# A history of won struggles and lost hopes in Berlin

*Edited version of a text by Markus Schwarz*



**Berlin, Germany.** In June, 2005 more than 500 police members evicted Yorck59, an old factory in the neighborhood of Kreuzberg, that since the 80's was called Project House, a collective space that acted as a shelter with a focus on independent, social, and political projects.

In the 1990's, the ownership of the house changed. Berlin was also changing. The Wall had fallen and Berlin had attached itself to the kingdom of capitalism and the neighborhood of Kreuzberg presented many opportunities for business enterprises. The new owner decided to convert the house into a luxury apartment complex. He doubled the rent and the people that lived there refused to pay. That's when he called the police.

No further than a kilometer from Yorck59 was a grand building known as Bethanien, a former christian hospital that, ever since 2004, the government had attempted to privatize. A week after the eviction, on June 11, 2005, evicted members of Yorck59 occupied a space in the building that had been empty for a year.

In this section of Bethanien, now known as NewYorck, diverse activities rapidly developed. It was not only occupied as a living space but former projects that existed in Yorck59 were reignited.

NewYorck became a very important social center in Berlin. Its occupants and local neighbors prepared a local referendum against the privatization, and won in 2006. In 2009, the occupied section of Bethanien and other projects (a kindergarten, a school for alternative medicine and a theatrical center) were able to sign a contract of self-governance for 15 years.

Now, in NewYorck, there are 5 offices for political, social, and cultural groups, and 4 common spaces for meetings and talks and a kitchen. There are almost 20 groups that form part of the collective, within them are local groups for alternative urban development, refugee and migrant groups, theatre groups, and anticapitalist and antiracist groups. There are also many other groups that aren't part of the collective but that used the space for meetings, parties, film showings, discussions, and concerts.

The structure of the organization has a democratic base. Every month there is a general assembly where all the collective groups come and participate and make decisions in regards to how the common space is being used. There is rent that needs to be paid, but for now, the principle where every group pays what they can continues to function

**But, where then, does the title of lost hopes come in?**

We don't want to avoid the things that aren't going well. There have been people that have left the project and collective in the past few years due to not being able to handle the stress, the long discussions, or because they felt that they didn't fit in here anymore. We have declared that we don't want hierarchies, but they do exist. We pretend to be a space where sexism, racism, anti-semitism, homophobia and other discriminatory mechanisms don't exist but they do nonetheless

How do we continue? We continue fighting. Fighting against an inhumane system and against our own personal biases, many of them passed down or learned, in order to create a world where we can all live without fear. John Steinbeck was right when he said, "The struggle against the foreign enemy is much easier than the struggle against our own weaknesses."

*To read the complete text go to  
[www.desinformememos.org](http://www.desinformememos.org)*

*Desinformémonos hermanos  
tan objetivamente como podamos*

*desinformémonos con unción  
y sobre todo  
con disciplina*

*que, espléndido que tus vastas praderas  
patriota del poder  
sean efectivamente productivas*

*desinformémonos  
qué lindo que tu riqueza no nos empobrezca  
y tu dádiva llueva sobre nosotros pecadores  
qué bueno que se anuncie tiempo seco*

*desinformémonos  
proclamemos al mundo la mentidad y la verdira*

*desinformémonos  
nuestro salario bandoneón se desarruga  
y si se encoge eructa quedamente  
como un batracio demócrata y saciado*

*desinformémonos y basta  
de pedir pan y techo para el mísero  
ya que sabemos que el pan engorda  
y que soñando al raso  
se entonan los pulmones*

*desinformémonos y basta  
de paros antihigiénicos que provocan  
erisipelas y redundancias  
en los discursos del mismísimo*

*basta de huelgas infecto contagiosas  
cuya razón es la desidia  
tan subversiva como fétida*

*garanticemos de una vez por todas  
que el hijo del patrón gane su pan  
con el sudor de nuestra pereza*

*desinformémonos  
pero también desinformemos*

*verbigracia  
tiranos no tembléis  
por qué temer al pueblo  
si queda a mano el delirium tremens  
gustad sin pánico vuestro scotch  
y dadnos la cocacola nuestra de cada día*

*desinformémonos  
pero también desinformemos*

*amemos al prójimo oligarca  
como a nosotros laburantes*

*desinformémonos hermanos  
hasta que el cuerpo aguante  
y cuando ya no aguante  
entonces decidámonos  
carajo decidámonos  
y revolucionémonos.*

Mario Benedetti

