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Bimестrial Grassroots Review Number 15 October / November - www.desinformemonos.org

SECOND ANNIVERSARY



Self- defense of indigenous communities in Mexico



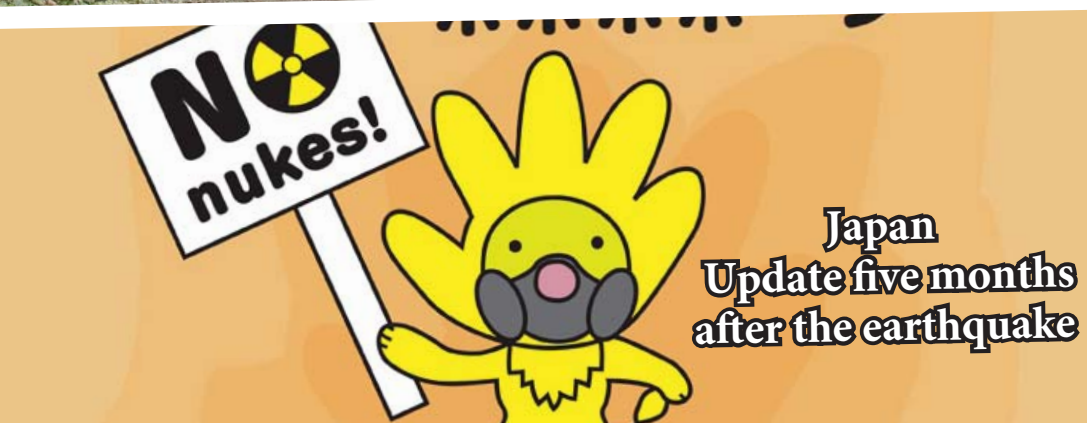
Opposition to militarization and extraction of natural resources in Nigeria



Palestine exists, recognize it



La Patrona, an oasis along the way for Central American migrants



Japan Update five months after the earthquake

MORE REPORTAGES

Women in the mountains of Guerrero

In Chile

From poor education to social revolt

The war of the guaraní-kaiowa

Canada *A march against death and destruction*

OURS

Marcos Roitman

The outraged: the return of the political

Self- defense of indigenous communities in Mexico without support from the government

Indigenous communities demand the right to self-defense through the re-establishment of community policing, guards, and watchmen - traditional organizations protected under international law.

Edited version of an article by Gloria Muñoz Ramírez. Photos: Prometeo Lucero and Federico Ortiz

Cherán and Ostula, Michoacán; and San Luis Acatlán, Guerrero. Violence, dispossession, security institutions that are inefficient or accomplices in crimes, disreputable political parties, and corruption pushed Indigenous villages in Michoacán and Guerrero to take their self-defense into their own hands.

They are not armed groups against the government. The nahuas of Ostula, the purhépechans of Cherán and tlanepac, Mixtec, nahua and mestizos of la Montaña and Costa Chica of Guerrero organized, according to their traditional laws, against delinquency and against those who want to seize their territory. And it is no accident that the three cases arose in Indigenous communities, “the Indian villages are the ones offering an alternative for the country,” it was pointed out in Cherán.

The threat in Ostula is the construction of a super highway and a tourist plan that includes various construction projects. In Ostula they are demanding their right to protect the more than one thousand hectares of land recovered in 2009, called Xayakalan.

The response of the government has not been good, they say. “We demand that our police be recognized, but if this does not happen, we will still carry on regardless.”

They decided not to participate in the elections in November because, they explain, governments and parties favor dispossession and exploitation of the communities and they do not keep their promise to recognize the recovered land or guarantee the rights of the community police.

In la Montaña of Guerrero 65 communities have security forces and a system of justice: the CRAC (Regional Coordinator



of Autonomus Authorities and Community Police) which has been in charge of security for 16 years and has reduced crime by 90 percent. Now their priority is to defend the territory from English and Canadian mining projects.

The government gave them an ultimatum to disarm; they responded that they are a group that can collaborate in the security of the population. Their present position—although there are arrest warrants against them—“is to avoid getting into confrontations with them, as we do not challenge their power.”

The mining companies bring “environmental destruction, poisoning and dispossession.” They decided not to allow mines in their region. The government “should guarantee and ensure our right to be consulted. We have this historic right regarding the use and preservation of our lands and territory,” reported CRAC.

In Cherán the richness of the forest is threatened; the residents returned to the use of traditional watchmen to defend

against wood poachers and to look after internal security. Since then, they have reduced the amount of tree felling considerably, crime has been reduced by 90 percent, and alcoholism by 50 percent.

The government does not respond to their demands. “It is convenient for them that things stay this way. They see us as political booty, but the community has decided that there is no way that electoral authorities will enter.”

For the time being, without the government, they organize reforestation brigades “in order to restore the forest.”

As in Guerrero and Ostula, the members of the traditional patrols are unpaid volunteers. Regardless of what happens, they point out, “there is no turning back the process that we started. We will never trust the government with our security ever again.”

*Read the original article at
<http://desinformemonos.org>*

The war of the guaraní-kaiowa: praying to stop the bullets, retaking the walk toward justice

Despite brutal displacement, the indigenous guaraní-kaiowa return and affirm that they would only leave their camp after their traditional lands are delineated.

Edited version of a text by Joana Moncau. Photos: MPF and Joana Moncau

Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. The bullets came in their direction. Wounded in the spine, the old shaman said he did not stop praying “so that no one would die”. There were no deaths on that morning in August, but at least four indigenous people were shot and suffered wounds from rubber bullets. Of a group that had contained almost 30 indigenous Guaraní-Kaiowa no one remained within the encampment on the side of a highway. It was next to hacienda Santa Rita, in the municipality of Iguatemi, where the traditional indigenous lands called Pyelito Kue–Mbarakay stand, and have been taken back after a long time.

The most recent attempts to take back the area began in August, when the indigenous people occupied part of the hacienda. Less than four days later they were attacked by masked gunmen; they had to flee and hide themselves in the forest, where they attempted to resist. After two days, during which they didn't even drink water, one part of the group decided to leave and face the gunmen of the hacienda; they said that they let them go alive this time, but that wouldn't be the case if they were to return.

And so they left the hacienda to make their encampment on the edge of the highway and continue with their struggle. They were also attacked there. Despite the threats against the group, their determination has strengthened along with the people who have unceasingly supported them. “When they burn our tents, we build more” they say. “Live or die, we will be here!”.



The attacks are being investigated and, according to the Prosecutor of the Republic, a genocide investigation has been opened.

About the other land reclamations

In July of 2003 the same group tried to take back Pyelito Kue–Mbarakay. After two days they were driven out by gunmen from the hacienda, their encampment was invaded, men, women, and the elderly were tortured and arms and legs were broken.

In December of 2009, the group returned. In one unjust displacement executed by the gunmen, one youth was disappeared and more than 50 people, including the elderly, were hit, threatened with weapons, attacked, and shot at along the edge of the trail.

The largest indigenous group in Brazil. With 45,000 people, the guaraní-kaiowa are the largest indigenous group in Brazil. They live in the state of Mato Grosso

do Sul in small ‘islands’ of land that total almost 42 thousand hectares. Isolated by violence and prejudice, harassed by the hacienda owners, surrounded by cattle fields and soy and sugar cane plantations, and without forest land- only two percent of the original forest stands- they struggle persistently to survive.

In 2008 Funai (the Indigenous branch of the government) piloted a program to identify the indigenous territory in the state, it was to relearn and demarcate the 26 municipalities in southern Mato Grosso do Sul, among them Pyelito Kue–Mbarakay. The occupations of the reclaimed land by the indigenous people have been done with the objective of putting pressure on Funai to complete the demarcation process.

With information from the kaioa anthropologist Tónico Benites, advised by de la Aty-Guasú.

Read the complete version at <http://desinformemonos.org>

Women in the the mountains of Guerrero:

the other face of community justice

“Everything started when we heard about Comandanta Ramona, Comandanta Esther, and the Zapatista women”

Text and photos: Colectivo Construyendo Resistencias

Guerrero, Mexico. The women of the mountains and coast of Guerrero heard about the Zapatista experience and about the Zapatista women. They listened carefully to the experience of the women of the National Zapatista Liberation Army (EZLN), who after lengthy discussion and reflection created the Revolutionary Law of the Zapatista Women. A woman they called Comandanta Ramona and another they called Comandante Esther were the ones who spread the words of their comrades, and not just that: they were Comandantas! They held profoundly important positions in the military ranks, and their words were heard and respected, because it wasn't just Ramona or Esther talking, but all the Zapatista women, and the men, their comrades, listened to them and respected them.

One of the Guerreran women stood up and asked the others, “And us? When do we make our law for women?”

Women in the Community Police

It has been almost 16 years of organized community justice in the mountains and the coast of the state of Guerrero, with results that no legal institution of the state has achieved in any part of the country. Here, the Regional Coordination of Community Authorities – Community Police (CRAC-PC) exemplifies struggle, resistance, consistency, and coherence, but it also has been, and is, an object of harassment and unfounded accusations. The communities, in addition to being marginalized, face ever more voracious attempts to plunder them. Their territory has attracted the eyes of one of the worst monsters of capitalism: mining interests.

It is in this context that this system of justice has developed and grown, it is here that the me'phaa, ñuu savi, mes-

tizo, and afromestizo peoples live and and commune with nature and with their gods. “It is important that women have a voice and vote because we too have the right to occupy important positions and we should not just be in the kitchen,” asserts Adelaida Cayetano Herrera, of the community of Chilixtlahuaca.

This process of community justice cannot be complete without the active participation of women, and the foundation is there to take this significant step because there already is an institution of justice in place that can guarantee the institution and enforcement of the points expressed in the Letter on the Rights of Women.

It has already been a year since the reception and approval of the Letter of the Rights of Women by the community authorities in Zitlaltepec, Guerrero. Throughout this year the women have kept their focus and they keep working in their communities. Some committees have grown, responsibilities have shifted, and new members have been named.

The organization of women in the mountains has had an impact on other regions too, and the CRAC knows that it is impor-



tant that in each and all of these communities respect for, and participation of women be guaranteed and accepted by its members, who are also convinced that the struggle is impossible without the other half of the sky, without the other half of the world, without the other half of the resistance, of the struggle: women.

*To read the complete text go to
<http://desinformemonos.org>*

La Patrona, an oasis along the way for Central American migrants

In their passage through Mexico, Central American migrants are the victims of kidnapping, robbery, and extortion. But in a small place in Veracruz, they are received by a group of brave women who offer them hope.
Edited version of a text by Sergio Adrián Castro Bibriesca

La Patrona, Amatlán, Veracruz. Just a few meters away from the tracks that carry the train bound for the United States with hundreds of Central American migrants, a group of women offers hope to those who have gone in search of the American dream – giving them food, water, and moral support in their journey towards the unknown.



They're known as Las Patronas ["The Women from La Patrona," or "The Patron Saints"]. "There are twelve of us," says Bernarda, who is one of them. "Each of us has a role, one day it's your turn to go get the bread, another day to make the food. The day starts at seven in the morning: we get the bread and prepare the food that will give energy to our Central American brothers and sisters."

"All of us have husbands, children, and there are times that some can't come, but we cover the spot and we always support each other," adds Norma, the group's leader. They prepare around 200 servings of food, and "there are times when it's not enough to go around."

For the women of La Patrona, time is of the essence. The train comes by "almost always, after two in the afternoon," and they must have everything ready to go when the train's whistle blows.

"We don't get support from the government or political parties." Help is given through donations from supermarkets, neighbors, dedicated young people, and people who come with specific items "like water, plastic bottles, and rice or beans."

Along with the bags of food, the women add information on migrants' rights.

"When they're informed they can defend themselves a little more," Bernarda points out.

The train doesn't always stop. "You see it all. Good-natured conductors, who stop and let everyone take the bags, and others who don't stop," explains Julia.

This story of solidarity began "one Saturday morning. I was walking with my sister back home, after buying bread and milk. Some Central American youths asked us for food, we gave it to them. The next day, with our family, we mentioned the event and we decided to start preparing lunches on Monday," remembers Bernarda. Since that February 4th of 1995, the activity of Las Patronas hasn't stopped.

"We also got ourselves organized for our trips and workshops, like the one that will be held in Ixtepec, Oaxaca, with father Alejandro Solalinde." Norma says that they never imagined what that "simple assistance" would become, because now "we have the responsibility to share this experience in other places."

"We have a lot of work, we can't give up. Just like the migrants don't complain, neither do we. Just like they get up when they fall, with that strength that they have,

that's how we must pick ourselves up and keep moving forward," states Norma.

The experience of Las Patronas and migration

Norma's experience makes it clear to her that "there are more and more young people who migrate. They range from 12 or 13 years old to 25, and almost 80 percent are Honduran, the rest are Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Nicaraguan."

"The reasons they leave are almost always related to the lack of work, but now crime is also forcing them out."

In their passage through Mexico they're subjected to extortion on the part of the authorities and the people. "There are places where the train stops and people open their shops and sell them things at high prices. Everybody takes advantage."

"The hardest thing," says Norma, "is changing civil society, which is what places the first obstacles. The role of the authorities, we already know them. The work is to change peoples' mentality, so that instead of throwing stones at the train and at the migrants, they toss them food and water."

The complete text can be read at:
<http://desinformememos.org>

Opposition to militarization and extraction of natural resources in Nigeria

*In Africa, the Ogoni people unite and organize against the relocation of a military base and petroleum extraction in their ancestral lands.
Text and photos by Pedro Flores*

Ogoni, Nigeria. Two Ogoni youth, Goteh Keenam and Dambani Kuenu, from Zorsogho, in the state of Rivers, Nigeria were murdered by the police during a demonstration against the government's plans to relocate the Bori military base to Ogoni territory. Even though these kinds of extrajudicial executions are common in Ogoni and in Nigeria, the murders and the growing resistance to the relocation of the Bori base seem to indicate that a confrontation is approaching of a kind that has not been seen in many years.

In the nineties the Ogoni people organized a large movement of nonviolent resistance to drive out the multinational petroleum company Royal Dutch Shell from its territory, the response of the military dictatorship of Nigeria was absolute disregard for the Ogoni people and their land. The leaders of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the organization that led the anti-Shell movement, were disappeared, and thousands of Ogonis were killed, raped, or displaced. In spite of the death and destruction, the Ogoni were able to drive out Shell from their land. However, the devastation caused by the conflict persists and the MOSOP was never able to recover completely and fell apart.

Now, the shootings in Sogho, and the insistence of the state government of Rivers to relocate the base in Ogoni, against the will of the people, have had a unifying effect. Factions of the MOSOP that previously refused to work together have now united. There are mobilizations that have not been seen in years, and the Ogoni as well as their supporters all over the world



are organizing to raise their voice in a collective No! to the military base.

The conflict of the nineties created an aversion to the presence of the military in Ogoni, but there are geographic, demographic, and political considerations that make the relocation of the Bori base even more problematic. Vast extensions of Ogoni territory have been expropriated in the last few years to benefit the multinational petroleum companies and the federal government of Nigeria, which has compromised the access to fishing and to the farm land that constitute the backbone of the traditional economy and the method of survival of the people.

Now then, why does the state government of Rivers want to mover the Bori base to Ogoni? The answer is simple: Petroleum. The government of Nigeria wants to establish a military presence to assure the free flow of petroleum. Shell knows that there

is no return for them to Ogoni, and so they have been trying to sell their concessions in the area over the last two years. The Nigerian government has been paving the road and creating favorable conditions for the return of multinational petroleum companies to Ogoni.

In response, the MOSOP and other Ogoni activists met at the Ogoni Center for Peace and Liberty in the city of Bori to condemn the persistent violation of the human rights of the Ogoni people by armed soldiers, and to demand the immediate withdrawal of troops from Ogoni. At the same time they rejected any trade in Ogoni land, whether for the proposed relocation of a military base or for agricultural projects, and they called on the government to stop all land prospecting.

*The entire report can be found at
www.desinformememos.org*

Interview with Randa Nabulsi, Palestinian Ambassador to Mexico

Palestine exists, recognize it

*The current petition for recognition of the Palestinian State at the UN is not looking for a gift, but a commitment.
Edited version of an interview by Gloria Muñoz Ramírez*

Mexico. After arriving at a dead end with the government of Israel, Palestine demands recognition as a state member of the United Nations, defining itself with its 1967 borders. Randa Nabulsi, ambassador of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to Mexico and chief of a special Palestinian delegation to Mexico explains in an interview with *Desinformémonos* that “they have turned to the United Nations to take responsibility for this goal because, among other things, all of the pressure that the European and United States communities have exercised to stop the policies of building settlements have had no effect.”

After 19 years of negotiations with Israel, Palestine decided to abandon them two years ago. In those years, Israel quadrupled its settlements and built a wall of separation, violating international rights and the International Court of Justice, which is why, says Nabulsi, “we decided to stop negotiations until Israel stops building settlements and we have terms of reference for the question of time and borders.”

Palestine is aware that gaining membership to the United Nations would not change much about daily life in its territory, “but we would become a state under occupation instead of the Palestinian Territories, which would reinforce all of the previous UN resolutions.”

44 years of occupation without ever enjoying a day of liberty. “Can you imagine how horrible this is? Daily life is different from one place to another. The Palestinians in Gaza are in a giant prison with an inhuman blockade imposed by Israel.”

There are 650 permanent military checkpoints between each village and city, in addition to hundreds of temporary



checkpoints. “This makes daily life for Palestinians hell: babies have been born at military checkpoints, sick people have died before arriving at hospitals, children do not arrive at school in time for exams, and a long list of other atrocities.”

Another grave aspect of the situation is the presence of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons: “There are 11,000 prisoners”. Scores of them have spent more than 40 years in prison in “special conditions,” meaning tents in the middle of the desert.

The Palestinian representative in Mexico remarks that, in spite of all of these problems, “we have finished building the infrastructure of a permanent state, in

accordance with the World Bank, the European Union, and the International Monetary Fund. That is why we say we are ready to govern ourselves, we just want to untie ourselves from the occupation.”

The current petition for recognition of the Palestinian State at the UN is not looking for a gift, but a commitment. “Self determination is not given, it is taken,” asserts the ambassador. Palestine declared its independence in 1988. Since then, 131 countries have recognized it, two thirds of the international community and “we keep hoping that the others will recognize us.”

*To read the complete text, visit
<http://desinformemonos.org>*

The outraged: the return of the political

“Between all of us, we must rescue politics from those who have kidnapped it and made it a spurious trade, removed from the common good and dependent on business and economic powers.” Marcos Roitman, Sociology Professor, Complutense University of Madrid
Edition of a text by Marcos Roitman Rosenmann

Madrid, Spain. We live in uncertainty. Life is a process without pre-established steps. The same is true of capitalism. Its certainties are not so certain. Those who design its routes know; a good reason to create dikes of contention is to control the movement of the waters. Security before everything. Capitalism lives in a startled state, crouched down behind state logic and armed forces, avoiding overflow and, nevertheless, like a witch's apprentices, capitalists unleash uncontrollable forces, flooding their internal capacity to absorb shock. In this manner, the dike of contention cracks to the point of general failure. Under these circumstances, the so-called atractores play a decisive role. The drop that overfills the glass. This circumstance has repeated itself in all of the recent sociopolitical movements in the world.



How to explain the citizen's insurgence. The rescue of politics

In Spain, the so-called movement of the “outraged” started as a marginal protest, without support from unions or majority political forces. This supposed minority ended up camped out in public squares in the majority of cities in the Spanish state. But it was the intervention of the forces of public order, intending to evacuate them, that lit the fuse. In Madrid, Puerta del Sol became a symbol of resistance. The protest spread and the 15M took shape.

Those that have participated in this network have had the power to resuscitate the sense of ethics in politics. They are rescuing it from the claws of the market and returning it to the people, who never should have lost it to economic power. The people involved are not apolitical, nor are they naïve or utopian. Their proposed path is: Generate politics from the bottom up, break the circle of hegemony of political parties and of traditional sociopolitical movements, unions, and NGOs.

The search for consensus from the bottom up is an experience that must recognize citizenship. Young people, women, the elderly, professionals, workers, and intellectuals participate in neighborhood assemblies. They are schools of politics, politics that are connected to the real problems of a neighborhood, town, city, and its inhabitants. In this manner, a city redefines itself. It becomes politicized and educated in civic culture. The recovery of public space is, itself, a negation of one model of citizenship and the recognition of another: that of the “critical citizen.”

The outraged, politics and intellectuals

In these dynamics, neither the intellectual nor the ideologue, and not even cheap theory, given far too much power, have a role deemed inalienable. At this moment, words are crucial weapons for changing the world. If we do not have a language that identifies us, power and the system, others produce those concepts, transforming us into a puppet without its own voice, with a voice lent by its master. No

one speaks for them. It is their members who have, with the goal of proposing, denouncing, and constructing alternatives, created their own language. Their experience, without a doubt, has become part of the fights for dignity, justice, and democracy, whose roots exclaim “Enough!” a cry let out from the Lacandon rainforest by the EZLN on January 1st 1994.

Now what? Organize the outrage

One must go step by step. Each person does their part. Some share experiences and learn new practices with humility and without prominence in the media. Between all of us, we must rescue politics from those who have kidnapped it and made it a spurious trade, removed it from the common good and made it dependent on business and economic powers. The effort is worth the pain. The hope is that, together, we can achieve the objective, which is why the outraged are organizing.

<http://desinformemonos.org>

The nuclear threat in Japan **Update five months after the earthquake**

It seems like life has returned to normal, but that's a lie: the nuclear accident has not ended. Neither have the resistance and the opposition.
Edited version of an interview with Sono Ryota and Tsukakoshi Miyako from Anti-Nuclear Action, with the help of Inaba Nanako.

Tokyo, Japan. There was a state of emergency for one month, with a shortage of food, transportation, and electricity, even though this last one was fabricated by TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Company) to make us believe they needed the nuclear power plant. Even though the damaged plant continues to emit radiation, we cannot see it; neither the government nor TEPCO have reported what is really happening in Fukushima. That is why what happened is so quickly forgotten. We are not informed and the government imposes a return to normalcy so that corporations can carry on with their work.

The changes

Due to radioactive contamination, we try to eat greenhouse vegetables, people have stopped hanging their clothes outside, and there are initiatives to move small children to other areas where the radioactive emissions are less. So as to not lose their jobs, the workers of the nuclear plants must go to work. There are precarious employees, temporary workers, who don't have health care coverage.

The resistance

By diminishing the importance of the catastrophe, fewer people are made aware of the manifestations of radioactive exposure, but even so, there are always more people coming forward with radiation sensitivities. The government has sent out the message "Let us fight together to overcome the difficulties we face as a nation," and even the antinuclear movements founded in the seventies have resisted protesting.

We cannot accept this: the earthquake was a natural disaster, but the accident



at the nuclear power plant is a man made catastrophe for which the government is responsible. The victims are those residents forced to leave their homes and jobs and move away to allow closure for the accident.

We demonstrated in front of TEPCO; we expected 20 people, but approximately 1,200 came. Two weeks later 15,000 people rallied in the Koenji neighborhood of Tokyo.

On a political level, we do not see any concrete results. Even though the Prime Minister announced a gradual replacement of nuclear energy, we cannot say that this was due to the protests. The local governments are just waiting for the protests to stop.

For the first time in Japan, social movements and youth whose cause has nothing to do with nuclear energy have joined a series of antinuclear actions. Where the movement has branches, it has become

more active and people have joined who had never demonstrated before. The protests are almost daily.

Development and memory

In the fifties, business people, aided by the government and the United States, initiated a campaign for "the peaceful use of nuclear energy." Soon the Japanese believed that they needed nuclear energy for their development. The battle that started at the beginning of the sixties was in opposition to nuclear weapons and for compensation for the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, not against nuclear power. Many of us had not thought that the atom bombs had a relationship with nuclear energy. One year ago, a young woman from the third generation of a family from Hiroshima died of cancer. Nuclear energy is directly intertwined with our current lives, and it is therefore important to understand the threat it poses.

Learn more at www.desinformememos.org

From poor education to social revolt

Young Chilean women and men are not giving up their right to free, quality public education, nor on their attempt to dismantle “The Chile of only what is possible”.

Edited version of a text by Marcelo Zamora

Santiago and Valparaíso, Chile. Between the end of the dictatorship (1990) and 2010, the “political transition” (where what was important was advancing only “what was possible”), gave rise to a system covertly controlled by capital and the military. Those twenty years progressed in the context of a two-party system that promoted the existence of two large blocs, always ensuring a parliamentary majority to the military regime and the Right (those who promoted the neoliberal model). Major issues came to a standstill without popular participation capable of deciding how it wanted to produce, educate itself, protect public health, and participate in civic life. The result is a concentration of capital and the media in a handful of families and a tiny political elite, in an economy left wide open to the international market.

In 2011 this new movement appeared, led by previously marginalized actors who became the vanguard and mobilized the society. The central issue is education, and the protagonists are high school and university students who enjoy overwhelming support particularly from their parents and the millions who couldn't afford to get an education.

The system of “only what is possible” is beginning to collapse because these young people have discredited capital and the political elite, who profit from education and who have put their parents deep in debt for expensive, low-quality degrees. The issue of education has gone beyond demands to simply fix the system; it now questions the neoliberal model itself.

The 1980 constitution, written by the right, approved by the military, and endorsed by a fearful populace, imposed



definitions of the most important areas of public life: education, health, labor rights, the role of the armed forces, etcetera. Education was left to the whims of the market, under the assumption that competition between public and private schools would increase quality. The result was a brutal failure and shameless profiteering with money taken from public coffers and from ordinary families.

By the middle of the first decade of the millennium, less than 50 percent of students were in public institutions while private institutions, subsidized by the state, had grown to equal them in number. Many high-cost, low-quality private universities were created, full of empty degree programs with little hopes for future employment. The old state universities began charging market rates. Families went into debt with loans lasting more than 20 years. The political elite, which did receive the old free public education of the eighties, justifies this and says that “for governmental reasons, from now on Chileans must pay to get an education.” Our country is among those that pay the



most for education, but more than 45 percent of that money comes out of the pockets of ordinary families.

Uncertain times are ahead. Students control the school grounds where classes are no longer in session and are preparing to mobilize in spite of the government's threats. The latter has managed to get student leaders to agree to talks and is doing everything short of the impossible to divert the public's attention by using the media.

This story is similar to the dictatorship with its festival of television, but this time perhaps the young people won't fall for it and will once and for all dismantle the Chile “of only what is possible.”

*Read the full article on
www.desinformemonos.org*

In Northern Alberta, Canada **A march against death and destruction**

The extraction of bitumen, a substance derived from petroleum, has caused the destruction of the forests of Northern Alberta. Due to the urgency of saving the earth and its water, a group of people march to stop the continued of the devastation. Edited version of a text by Aidee Arenas, Choo-Kien, Christine Leclerc, and Rita Wong.

Northern Alberta, Canada. Headed by a group of elderly people, the Second Annual March for Healing heads towards the area where the Syncrude and Suncor companies extract bitumen on a grand scale. Indigenous people and sympathizers marched 13 kilometers and shouted together: “Zapata vive, la lucha sigue!” (Zapata lives, the struggle continues!). The march confronted the enormity of the land stolen from indigenous people, now destroyed, emptied and lifeless.

Surrounding indigenous communities live in conditions similar to the poor of Latin America. Where are the benefits of bitumen extraction for these communities? Marginalized by Canadian politicians and struggling against institutional racism, the long term interests of the miners are conserving a privileged way of life for few at the cost of others. Our cities reap the temporary benefits of the destruction of their land.

Although the continued violence of colonialism can be seen in the high indices of cancer in these communities, the resistance and the commitment to peace continues, as it has throughout the past 500 years, through a humble and peaceful power based in love for the life of a community and in respect for the land that has given us life. It contrasts with the ethic of those in power who exploit the land while they live on it. Colonialism, eurocentrism, and capitalism kill the indigenous and destroy our mother earth.

The damage has extended to the Athabasca River and Fort Chipewyan, people sick from the toxins in the water, acid rain in Saskatchewan, and less fish in the water. The companies are responsible for at least three of the last pipeline leaks in Canada



and the United States. Enbridge spilled three million liters of oil in the Tallmudge and Kalamazoo Rivers in Michigan, four and a half million liters of oil was spilled in Lake Lubicon in Cree territory, and Enbridge spilled 500 thousand barrels near Wrigley, in the Northeast Territories.

Along the edge of these toxic lands, life is simple and cozy. The indigenous families in the forest, in their trailers, with their art and photographs of ancestors and grandchildren, resist displacement and talk about the destruction of their land. “Giving up is not an option.” Berry Point is one of the sacred lands, at risk of being converted into an recreational vehicle

park by order of the ministry. The indigenous people installed a peace camp of protection; the police are pressuring them to leave it.

In a place where destruction reigns, one community organizes to transform the zone devastated by bitumen mines into a space of solidarity. During the inspiring march of healing, the marchers share an understanding that ecological integrity should be first and foremost. It’s as simple and necessary as fresh air to breathe and clean water to drink.

Read the full article on www.desinformememos.org

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tan objetivamente como podamos*

*desinformémonos con unción
y sobre todo
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*que, espléndido que tus vastas praderas
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*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

