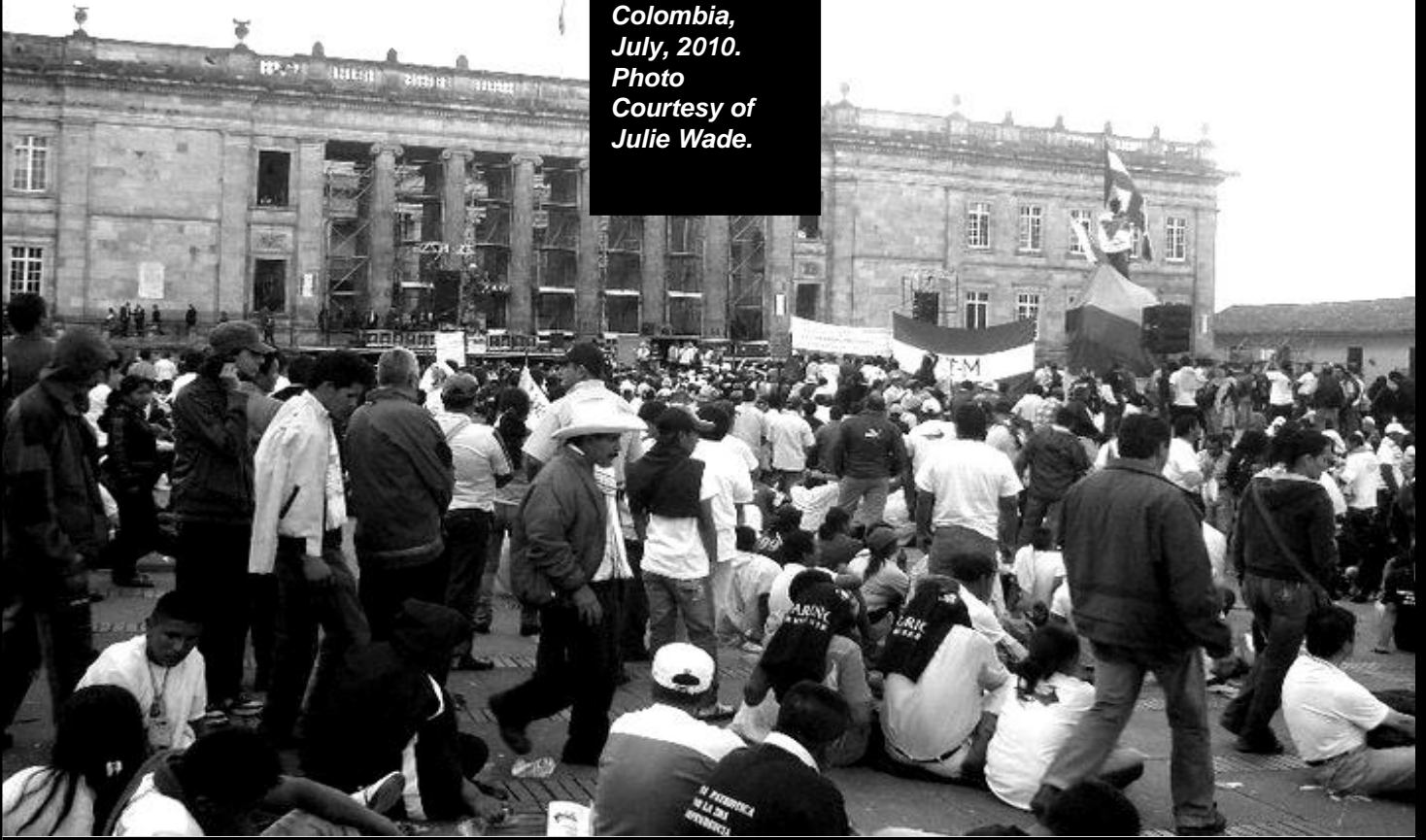




The Newspaper of the Observatorio Internacional Contra las Políticas de las Multinacionales

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*Photo From
The Australian
Solidarity
Delegation to
Colombia,
July, 2010.
Photo
Courtesy of
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DEATH THREAT AGAINST UNION AND SOCIAL LEADERS IN BUGALAGRANDE

BY SINALTRAINAL NATIONAL
EXECUTIVE

On the 17th February 2011 in the municipality of Bugalagrande, a pamphlet appeared produced by AU ERPAC, threatening members of SINALTRAINAL, Sintramunicipio and Acaceva and depicting them as FARC guerrillas and ELN.

They announced that they sought to restore order lost since the demobilisation of their comrades because the state has bowed down to the guerrillas and that they would demonstrate that they are not a band of delinquents as portrayed in the media but they are an army with the knowledge to finish the communist dogs and guerrillas disguised as unionists, NGOs, social organisations and those fellow travellers of the guerrilla movement pretending that they are defenders of human rights, concerned with the welfare of companies and farmers but and those referred to in the document and all those they name as social rubbish.

They justify the death threat by the claim that the worker's struggles have harmed companies and companies and society and ask where they get the money to finance those who

hide behind the pretence of saying that they are the army of the people, they warn that they are serious and single out , among others Fredy Sepulveda, Martin Agudelo, Alvaro Varela and Rafael Esquivel, names that correspond to leaders of SINALTRAINAL that work at Nestle S.A.

It is worth noting that this threat makes reference to the overseas travel , referring to the recent tours by SINALTRAINAL members to other countries, where they denounced the abuses committed by such companies as Nestle, Coca Cola, Sodexo, and Kraft Foods amongst others.

It is curious that the document says the "they continue working for the guerrillas by giving them machinery and fuel paid for by the people" a situation that we relates to the way in which SINALTRAINAL has publicly and legally managed to petition Nestle and the municipality to provide machinery to drag the bed of the Bugalagrande River which had overflowed its banks to the height of the Carlos Arturo Zamoro Recreation centre, which served the

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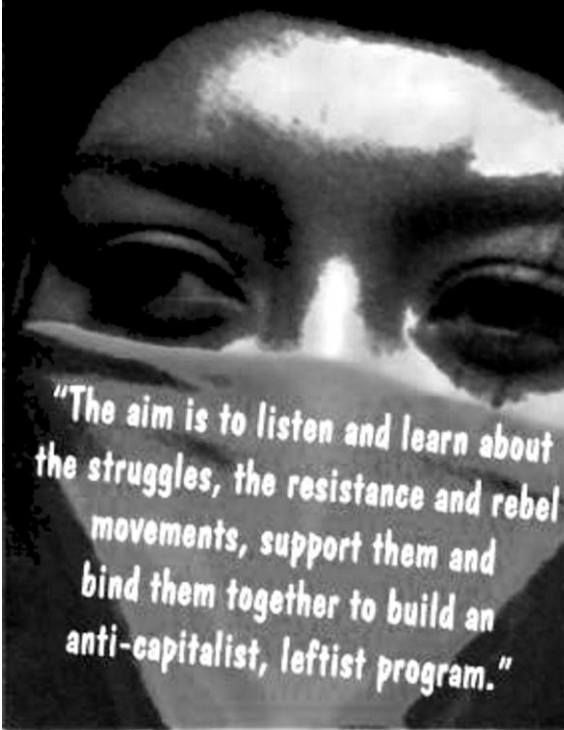
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**The people united will
never be defeated !!**



**"The aim is to listen and learn about
the struggles, the resistance and rebel
movements, support them and
bind them together to build an
anti-capitalist, leftist program."**

community and because there was a risk of future flooding and we wanted to avoid a disaster of enormous proportion for the whole community.

They refer to foreign guerrilla ideology, which relates to the international missions which SINALTRAINAL has brought to Bugalagrande so that they could witness the situation of the Nestle workers and the community of Valle del Cauca.

We believe that these threats are meant to create fear and confusion to undermine the work of SINALTRAINAL and social organisations in order to continue to justify the persecution that under the government of Juan Manuel Santos continues to increase along with judicial persecution, the assassinations, the land grabs and the dismantling of the rights of the population.

We demand that the government of Juan Manuel Santos investigates and punishes those responsible for this material and the threat to protect the lives of those affiliated to SINALTRAINAL and the families of those members of those organisation that appear in this death threat.

if you love life

Killer-Cola

don't drink Coca-Cola

DEFEND TRADE UNIONS IN COLOMBIA CAMPAIGN

We are seeking your help to stop a gruesome cycle of murders, kidnappings and torture of union leaders and organisers involved in daily life and death struggles at Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia, Latin America.

Support the Boycott against the Coca Cola company called by SINALTRAINAL(National Food Industry Workers Union) in Colombia and the Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET) with Colombia Demands Justice Campaign in Australia.

The multinational Coca Cola does not respect workers rights, and is co-responsible for the repression and violence/terror of union leaders in Colombia and other countries around the world. We need to demand that this multinational stop damaging the environment and making huge profits through the exploitation of workers, with low salaries and unsafe working conditions.

For more details please visit: latinlasnet.org, email: lasnet@latinlasnet.org or call: 0400 914 944

ABOUT THE WARS:

A FRAGMENT OF THE FIRST LETTER FROM SUBCOMANDANTE MARCOS TO DON LUIS VILLORO, BEGINNING THE CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT ETHICS AND POLITICS. JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011

TRANSLATED BY KRISTIN BRICKER

(...)

As Mexican native peoples and as the EZLN, we have something to say about war. Above all if it is carried out in our geography and in this calendar: Mexico, in the beginning of the 21st century...

II. MEXICO'S WAR FROM ABOVE

"I would welcome almost any war because I believe that this country needs one." - Theodore Roosevelt.

And now our national reality is invaded by war. A war that is not only not far away from those who were accustomed to see war in distant geographies or calendars, but also one that begins to determine the decisions and indecisions of those who thought that wars were only in the news and in places so far away like... Iraq, Afghanistan,... Chiapas.

And in all of Mexico, thanks to Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's sponsorship, we don't have to look towards the Middle East to critically reflect on war.

It is no longer necessary to turn the calendar back to Vietnam, the Bay of Pigs, always Palestine.

I don't mention Chiapas and the war against Zapatista indigenous communities, because it is known that they aren't fashionable (that's why the Chiapas state government has spent so much money so that the media no longer puts it on war's horizon, instead, it publishes the "advances" in biodiesel production, its "good" treatment of migrants, the agricultural "successes" and other deceiving stories that are sold to editorial boards who put their own names on poorly edited and argued governmental press releases).

The war's interruption of daily life in current-day Mexico doesn't stem from an insurrection, nor from independent or revolutionary movements that compete for their reprint in the calendar 100 or 200 years later. It comes from (as all wars of conquest) from above, from the Power.

And this war has in Felipe Calderón Hinojosa its initiator

and its institutional (and now embarrassing) promoter.

The man who took possession of the title of President by de facto wasn't satisfied with the media backing he received, and he had to turn to something else to distract people's attention and avoid the massive controversy regarding his legitimacy: war.

When Felipe Calderón Hinojosa made Theodore Roosevelt's proclamation that "this country needs a war" his own (although some credit the sentence to Henry Cabot Lodge), he was met with fearful distrust from Mexican businessmen, enthusiastic approval from high-ranking military officials, and hearty applause from that which really rules: foreign capital.

Criticism of this national catastrophe called the "war on organized crime" should be completed with a profound analysis of its economic enablers. I'm not only referring to the old axiom that in times of crisis and war, the consumption of luxury goods increases. Nor am I only referring to the extra pay that soldiers receive (in Chiapas, high-ranking military officials received, or receive, an extra salary of 130% for being in "a war zone"). It would be necessary to also look at the patents, the suppliers, and the international credits that aren't in the so-called "Merida Initiative."

If Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's war (even though he's tried, in vain, to get all Mexicans to endorse it) is a business (which it is), we must respond to the questions of for

whom is it a business, and what monetary figure it reaches?

Some Economic Estimates

It's not insignificant what's at stake:

(note: the quantities listed are not exact due to the fact that there is not clarity in the official governmental data. which is why in some cases the source was the Official Diary of the Federation [the federal government's official publication], and it was complemented by data from [government] agencies and serious journalistic information).

In the first four years of the "war against organized crime" (2007-2010), the main governmental entities in charge (the National Defense Ministry--that is, army and air force--, the Navy, the Federal Attorney General's Office, and the Ministry of Public Security) received over \$366 billion pesos (about US\$30 billion dollars at the current exchange rate) from the Federal Budget. The four federal government ministries received: in 2007 over \$71 billion pesos; in 2008 over \$80 billion pesos; in 2009 over \$113 billion pesos; and in 2010 over \$102 billion pesos. Add to that the over \$121 billion pesos (some US\$10 billion dollars) that they will receive in 2011.

The Ministry of Public Security alone went from receiving a budget of \$13 billion pesos in 2007 to receiving one of

over \$35 billion pesos in 2011 (perhaps because cinematic productions are more costly).

According to the [federal]¹ Government's Third [Annual] Report in September 2009, in June of that year, the federal armed forces had 254,705 soldiers (202,355 in the Army and Air Force and 52,350 in the Navy).

In 2009 the budget for the [Ministry of] National Defense was \$43,623,321,860 pesos, to which was added \$8,762,315,960 pesos (25.14% more), in total: over \$52 billion pesos for the Army and the Air Force. The Navy: over \$16 billion pesos; Public Security: almost \$33 billion pesos; and the Federal Attorney General's Office: over \$12 billion pesos.

The "war on organized crime's" total budget in 2009: over \$113 billion pesos.

In 2010, an Army private earned about \$46,380 pesos per year; a major general received \$1,603,080 pesos per year, and the Secretary of National Defense received an annual income of \$1,859,712 pesos.

If my math is correct, with 2009's total war budget (\$113 billion pesos for the four ministries) could have paid the annual salaries of 2.5 million Army privates; or 70,500 major generals; or 60,700 Secretaries of National Defense.

But, of course, not all that is budgeted goes towards salaries and benefits. Weapons, equipment, bullets are needed...because those that they already have don't work anymore or they're obsolete.

"If the Mexican Army were to engage in combat with its over 150,000 weapons and its 331.3 million cartridges against an internal or external enemy, its firepower would only last on average 12 days of continuous combat, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff's estimates for the Army's and Air Force's weapons. According to the predictions, the gunfire from 105mm howitzers (artillery) would last, for example, 5.5 days of combat if that weapon's 15 grenades were shot continuously. The armoured units, according to the analysis, have 2,662 75mm grenades.

In combat, the armoured troops would use up all of their rounds in nine days. In the Air Force, it is said that there are a little over 1.7 million 7.62mm cartridges that are used by the PC-7 and PC-9 planes, and by the Bell 212 and MD-530 helicopters. In a war, those 1.7 million cartridges would be used up in five days of aerial fire, according to the Ministry of National Defense's calculations. The Ministry warns that the 594 night vision goggles and the 3,095 GPS used by the Special Forces to combat drug cartels "have already completed their service."

The shortages and the wear in the Army and Air Forces' ranks are evident and have reached unimaginable levels in practically all of the institution's operative areas. The National Defense [Ministry's] analysis states that the night vision goggles and the GPS are between five and thirteen years old, and "they have already completed their service." The

¹ Author &/or translator's use of brackets throughout this article --ed.

same goes for the "150,392 combat helmets" that the troops use. 70% reached their estimated lifespan in 2008, and the 41,160 bulletproof vests will do so in 2009.

(...)

In this panorama, the Air Force is the sector most affected by technological backwardness and overseas dependency, on the United States and Israel in particular. According to the National Defense Ministry, the Air Force's arms depots have 753 bombs that weigh 250-1,000 lbs. each. The F-5 and PC-7 Pilatus planes use those weapons. The 753 that are in existence would last in air-to-land combat for one day. The 87,740 20mm grenades for F-5 jets would combat internal or external enemies for six days. Finally, the National Defense Ministry reveals that the air-to-air missiles for the F-5 planes only number 45, which represents only one day of aerial fire." -- Jorge Alejandro Medellín in "El Universal", Mexico, January 2, 2009.

This was made known in 2009, two years after the federal government's so-called "war." Let's leave aside the obvious question of how it was possible that the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, could launch a war ("long-term" he says) without having the minimal material conditions to sustain it, let alone "win it." So let's ask: What war industries will benefit from the sales of weapons, equipment, and vehicles?

If the main promoter of this war is the empire of stripes

and cloudy stars (keeping note that, in reality the only congratulations that Felipe Calderón Hinojosa has received have come from the US government), we can't lose sight of the fact that north of the Rio Grande, help is not granted; rather, they make investments, that is, business.

Victories and Defeats

Does the United States win with this "local" war? The answer is: yes. Leaving aside the economic gains and the monetary investment in weapons, vehicles, and equipment (let's not forget that the USA is the main provider of all of this to two contenders: the authorities and the "criminals." The "war on organized crime" is a lucrative business for the North American military industry), there is, as a result of this war, a destruction/depopulation and a geopolitical reconstruction/rearrangement that benefits them.

This war (which was lost from the moment it was conceived, not as a solution to an insecurity problem, but rather a problem of questioned legitimacy) is destroying the last redoubt that the Nation had: the social fabric.

What better war for the United States than one that grants it profits, territory, and political and military control without the uncomfortable body bags and cripples that arrived, before, from Vietnam and now from Iraq and Afghanistan?

Wikileaks' revelations about high-ranking US officials' opinions about the "deficiencies"

in the Mexican repressive apparatus (its ineffectiveness and its complicity with organized crime) are not new. Not only amongst the people, but also in the highest circles of government and Power in Mexico, this is a certainty. The joke that it is an unequal war because organized crime is organized and the Mexican government is disorganized is a gloomy truth.

On December 11, 2006, this war formally began with "Joint Operation Michoacan." Seven thousand soldiers from the army, the navy, and the federal police launched an offensive (commonly known as the "michoacanazo") that, when the media's euphoria passed, turned out to be a failure. The military official in charge was Gen. Manuel García Ruiz, and the man in charge of the operation was Gerardo Garay Cadena of the Ministry of Public Security. Today, and since December 2008, Gerardo Garay Cadena is imprisoned in a maximum security prison in Tepic, Nayarit, accused of colluding with "el Chapo" Guzmán Loera.

And, with each step that is taken in this war, the federal government finds it more difficult to explain where the enemy is.

Jorge Alejandro Medellín is a journalist who collaborates with various media outlets--Contralinea magazine, the weekly Acentoveintiuno, and Eje Central, amongst others-- and he's specialized in

“ The joke that it is an unequal war because organized crime is organized and the Mexican government is disorganized is a gloomy truth. ”

militarism, armed forces, national security, and drug trafficking. In October 2010 he received death threats because of an article where he pointed to possible between drug traffickers and Gen. Felipe de Jesús Espitia, ex-commander of the V Military Zone and ex-chief of the Seventh Section--Operations against Drug Trafficking--during Vicente Fox's administration, and in charge of the Drug Museum located in the offices of the Seventh Section. Gen. Espitia was removed as commander of the V Military Zone following the tumultuous failure of the operations he ordered in Ciudad Juarez and for his poor response to the massacres committed in the border city.

“...war from above is a business, and like any other business, it is maintained as long as it is profitable. ”

But the failure of the federal war against "organized crime," the crown jewel of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's government, is not a destiny that the Power in the USA laments: it is a goal to reach.

As much as corporate media tried to present resounding successes for legality, the skirmishes that take place every day in the nation's territory aren't convincing.

And not just because the corporate media have been surpassed by the forms of information exchange used by a large portion of the population (not only, but also the social networks and cell phones), also,

and above all, because the tone of the government's propaganda has passed from an attempt to deceive to an attempt to mock (from the "even though it doesn't appear as though we're winning" to "[drug traffickers are] a ridiculous minority," which pass as bar room boasting for the president).

About this other defeat for the written, radio, and television press, I will get back to that in another missive. For now, and regarding the current issue, its enough to remind people that the "nothing's happening in Tamaulipas" that was extolled by the media (namely radio and television), was defeated by the videos shot by citizens with cell phones and portable cameras and shared on the Internet.

But let's get back to the war that, according to Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, he never said was a war. He never said it, right?

Let's see if this is or isn't a war: on December 5, 2006, Felipe Calderón said: "We work to win the war on crime...". On December 2007, during breakfast with naval personnel, Mr. Calderón used the term 'war' on four occasions in a single speech. He said, "Society recognizes in a special manner the important role our marines play in the war my Government leads against insecurity...", "The loyalty and the efficiency of the Armed Forces are one of the most powerful weapons in the war we fight...", "When I started this frontal war against crime I stated that this would be a long-term struggle," "...that is precisely how wars are...". But there's more: on September 12,

2008, during the Commencement Ceremonies of the Military Education System, the self-proclaimed "president of employment" really shined when he said war on crime a half a dozen times: "Today our country fights a war that is very different from those that the insurgents fought in 1810, a war that is different from that which the cadets from the Military College fought 161 years ago..." "...it is the duty of all of Mexicans of our generation to declare war on Mexico's enemies... That's why, in this war on crime..." "It is essential that all of us who join this common front go beyond words to acts and that we really declare war on Mexico's enemies..." "I am convinced that we will win this war..." (Alberto Vieyra Gómez. Agencia Mexicana de Noticias, January 27, 2011).

By contradicting himself, taking advantage of the calendar, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa neither corrects his mistakes nor corrects himself conceptually. No, what happens is that wars are won or lost (in this case, lost) and the federal government doesn't want to recognize that the central focus of this administration has failed militarily and politically.

Endless War? The Difference Between Reality... and Videogames

Faced with the undeniable failure of his warmongering policies, will Felipe Calderón Hinojosa change his strategy?

The answer is NO. And not just because war from above is a business, and like any other

business, it is maintained as long as it is profitable.

Felipe Calderón de Hinojosa, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the fervent admirer of [former Spanish Prime Minister] José María Aznar, the self-proclaimed "disobedient son," the friend of Antonio Solá², the "winner" of the presidential elections by a half a percentage point thanks to Elba Esther Gordillo's alchemy³, the man of authoritarian rudeness that is close to a tantrum ("Get down here or I'll make them bring you down here!"⁴), he who wants to cover up the murdered children in the ABC Daycare Center in Hermosillo, Sonora, with more blood⁵, he who has accompanied

Translator's Notes:

² Antonio Solá is a Spaniard who was in charge of Felipe Calderón's "Image" during his presidential campaign.

³ Elba Esther Gordillo is the despised (and arguably self-imposed) president of the National Education Workers Union (SNTE), one of the largest unions in Mexico. Critics argue that thanks to Gordillo, the teachers' vote gave Calderón the 0.5% advantage he needed in the 2006 elections.

⁴ In October 2007, Calderón visited Villahermosa, Tabasco, to inspect flood-damaged areas. He helped fill sandbags for a few minutes, then yelled, "Get down here or I'll make them bring you down here!" to observers on a bridge. He then sent the military to get them so that they would help fill sandbags. http://www.tabascohoy.com.mx/noticia.php?id_notas=144019

⁵ On June 5, 2009, the ABC Daycare Center in Hermosillo, Sonora, caught on fire, killing 49 children and injuring another 76, all between five months and five years old. The daycare caught fire when an adjoining file warehouse belonging to the Sonora state government caught on fire. A lack of fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and emergency exits lead to the enormous loss of life. The children's parents

his military war with a war on dignified work and just salaries, he who has calculated autism when faced with the murders of Marisela Escobedo⁶ and Susana Chávez Castillo⁷, he who hands out toe tags that say "members of organized crime" to little boys and girls and men and women⁸ who were and are murdered by him because, yes, because they happened to be in the wrong

continue their fight for justice and accountability.

http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incendio_en_la_Guarder%C3%ADa_ABC

⁶ Marisela Escobedo fought for justice in the disappearance and murder of her daughter, Rubí. Rubí's boyfriend admitted to murdering her and directing authorities to her body, but he was released for lack of evidence. Marisela campaigned unsuccessfully to have him imprisoned until she herself was assassinated in front of the Chihuahua municipal palace on December 16, 2010.

⁷ Susana Chávez Castillo was a poet from Chihuahua who coined the slogan "Not one more [murdered woman]" ("Ni una más"). She was mutilated and murdered in January 2011.

⁸ Mexico is in the midst of a "false positive" scandal in which soldiers murder civilians and then the government issues press releases arguing that the dead were members of organized crime who attacked the soldiers. Such is the case of five-year-old Bryan and nine-year-old Martín Salazar, shot by soldiers at a checkpoint and accused of being members of organized crime

<http://mywordismyweapon.blogspot.com/2010/04/mexican-soldiers-murder-two-children-us.html>; and US citizen Joseph Proctor. Soldiers murdered Proctor at a checkpoint and then planted a weapon in his hands to argue that he had opened fire on the soldiers...except that the gun was registered to the soldiers, and not even Rambo can drive a minivan and shoot an assault rifle at the same time. <http://mywordismyweapon.blogspot.com/2010/09/mexican-military-kills-us-citizen.html>

calendar and the wrong geography, and they aren't even named because no one keeps track, not even the press, not even the social networks.

He, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, is also a fan of military strategy video games.

Felipe Calderón Hinojosa is the "gamer" "who in four years turned the country into a mundane version of The Age of Empire--his favorite videogame--,(...) a lover--and bad strategist--of war." (Diego Osorno in Milenio, October 3, 2010).

It is he who leads us to ask: Is Mexico being governed videogame-style? (I believe that I can ask these sorts of controversial questions without them firing me for violating an "ethics code" that is determined by paid advertising⁹).

Felipe Calderón Hinojosa won't stop. And not only because the armed forces won't let him (business is business), but also for the obstinacy that has characterized the political life of the "commander-in-chief" of the Mexican armed forces.

Let's remember: In March 2001, when Felipe Calderón Hinojosa was the parliamentary coordinator of the National Action Party's federal deputies [in Congress], that unfortunate spectacle took place when the National Action Party (PAN) did not let a joint indigenous delegation from the National Indigenous Congress

⁹ Radio and TV journalist Carmen Aristegui, a critic of Calderón, was fired in February 2011 for having asked on air if Calderón has a drinking problem. <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/02/201121316295645310.html>

and the EZLN take the podium in Congress during the "March of the Colour of the Earth."

Despite the fact that he was making the PAN out to be a racist and intolerant political organization (which it is) by denying the indigenous people the right to be heard, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa stood firm. Everything told him it was an error to take that position, but the then-coordinator of the PAN deputies refused to cede (and he wound up hiding, along with Diego Fernández Cevallos and other distinguished PAN members, in one of the chamber's private halls, watching on television as the indigenous people spoke in a space that the political class reserves for its comedy sketches).

"No matter the political cost," Felipe Calderón Hinojosa would have said at the time.

Now he says the same, although now it's not about the political costs that a political party assumes, but rather the human costs that the entire country pays for that stubbornness.

At the point of ending this missive, I found the statements of the US Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, speculating about the possible alliances between Al Qaeda and Mexican drug cartels. One day prior, the undersecretary of the United States Army, Joseph Westphal, declared that in Mexico there is a form of insurgency lead by the drug cartels that could potentially take over the government, which would imply a US military response. He added that he didn't want to see

a situation in which US soldiers were sent to fight an insurgency "on our border...or having to send them to across the border" into Mexico.

Meanwhile, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa was attending a rescue simulation in a simulated town in Chihuahua, and he boarded an F-5 combat plane and he sat in the pilot's seat and joked with a "fire missiles."

From the strategy video games to the "aerial combat simulation" and "first-person shots"? From Age of Empires to HAWX?

HAWX is an aerial combat video game where, in a not-so-distant future, private military companies have replaced governmental militaries in various countries. The video game's first mission is to bomb Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, because the "rebel forces" have taken over the territory and threaten to cross into US territory.

Not in the video game, but in Iraq, one of the private military companies contracted by the US State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency was "Blackwater USA," which later changed its name to "Blackwater Worldwide." Its personnel committed serious abuses in Iraq, including murdering civilians. Now it has changed its name to "Xe Services LLC" and is the biggest private security contractor the US State Department has. At least 90% of its profits come from contracts with the US government.

The same day that Felipe Calderón Hinojosa was joking in

the combat plane (February 10, 2011), and also in the state of Chihuahua, an 8-year-old girl died when she was hit by a bullet from a shoot-out between armed people and members of the military.

When will this war end?

When will "Game Over" appear on the federal government's screen, followed by the credits, with the producers and sponsors of the war?

When will Felipe Calderón be able to say "we won the war, we've imposed our will upon the enemy, we've destroyed its material and moral combat abilities, we've (re)conquered the territories that were under its control"?

Ever since it was conceived, this war has no end, and it is also lost.

There will not be a Mexican victor in these lands (unlike the government, the foreign Power does have a plan to reconstruct-reorganize the territory), and the defeat will be the last corner of the dying National State in Mexico: the social relations that, providing a common identity, are the base of a Nation.

Even before the supposed end, the social fabric will be completely broken.

Results: the War Above and the Death Below

Let's see what the federal Ministry of the Interior reports about Felipe Calderón Hinojosa's "not-war":

"2010 was the most violent year during the current

administration, accumulating 15,273 murders linked to organized crime, 58% more than the 9,614 registered during 2009, according to statistics published this Wednesday by the Federal Government. From December 2006 up to the end of 2010 34,612 murders were counted, of which 30,913 were reported as "executions"; 3,153 are listed as "clashes" and 544 are listed as "homicides-attacks." Alejandro Poiré, the National Security Council's technical secretary, presented an official database created by experts that will show, beginning now, "monthly disaggregated information at the state and municipal level" about violence in the whole country." (Vanguardia, Coahuila, Mexico, January 13, 2011)

Let's ask: Of those 34,612 murders, how many were criminals? And the more than one thousand little boys and girls murdered (which the Secretary of the Interior 'forgot' to itemize in his account), were they also organized crime "hitmen"? When the federal government proclaims that "we're winning," against which drug cartel are they referring to? How many tens of thousands more make up this "ridiculous minority" that is the enemy that must be defeated?

While up there they uselessly try to tone down this war's murders with statistics, it is important to note that the social fabric is also being destroyed in almost all of the national territory.

The Nation's collective identity is being destroyed and it is being supplanted by another.

Because "a collective identity is no more than an image that a people forges of itself in order to recognize itself as belonging to that people. Collective identity is those features in which an individual recognizes himself or herself as belonging to a community. And the community accepts this individual as part of it. This image that the people forge is not necessarily the persistence of an inherited traditional image, but rather, generally it is forged by the individual insofar as s/he belongs to a culture, to make his/her past and current life consistent with the projects that s/he has for that community.

So identity is not a mere legacy that is inherited, rather, it is an image that is constructed, that each people creates, and therefore is variable and changeable according to historical circumstances." (Luis Villoro, November 1999, interview with Bertold Bernreuter, Aachen, Germany).

In a good part of the national territory's collective identity, there is no (as they wish us to believe) dispute between the national anthem and the narco-corrido ["narco-ballad"] (if you don't support the government you support organized crime, and vice-versa).

No.

What exists is an imposition, by the force of weapons, of fear as a collective image, of uncertainty and vulnerability as mirrors in which those collectives are reflected.

What social relationships can be maintained or woven if fear is the dominant image with which a social group can identify itself, if the sense of community is broken by the cry "Save yourself if you can"?

The results of this war won't only be thousands of dead... and juicy economic gains.

Also, and above all, it will result in a nation destroyed, depopulated, and irreversibly broken.

(...)

Alright, Don Luis. Cheers, and let critical reflection inspire new steps.

From the mountains in the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.
Mexico, January-February 2011.

Reprinted from:
<<http://mywordismyweapon.blogspot.com/2011/02/about-wars-fragment-of-first-letter.html>>

Part 2 of the 4 that make up the first letter, which will appear in its entirety in the next issue of *Rebeldía* magazine.

GABINO CUÉ AND FELIPE CALDERÓN REPRESS THE TEACHERS AND PEOPLE OF OAXACA

15 FEBRUARY 2011.

BY OAXACAN VOICES CONSTRUCTING
AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM (VOCAL)

Today, February 15, federal and state police, thugs dressed in civilian clothes, and snipers located on the roofs of various buildings in the historic center of Oaxaca provoked and repressed the peaceful teachers' and Oaxacan peoples' protest against the presence of Felipe Calderón in Oaxaca.

On the afternoon of Monday, February 14, an enormous deployment of federal and local police bodies, together with the army, took the Zócalo and the adjacent streets of the historic center. At 11:30 in the morning today, February 15, a group of teachers belonging to Section 22 of the SNTE-CNTE carried out a peaceful protest in one of the intersections leading to the Zócalo when the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) attacked, leaving two teachers wounded, one of them the union's press secretary – Melitón Santiago – and a compañero from the social movement who was shot in the head.

In the face of this aggression, the teachers defended themselves and as a means of protest detained three members of the PFP, which later resulted in a PFP operation where the PFP occupied the union's building – CEPOS 22 – where the teachers had held the PFP agents, resulting in the violent detention of four professors who were in the building. Upon regrouping at around 2pm, the teachers and the people in general continued their protests in the area while more professors and members of the general public headed towards the Zócalo, where they were dispersed with tear gas and gunfire from snipers located on the roofs of various buildings in the historic center. On Cinco de Mayo Street, still several blocks away from the site of the protests, compañero “kalamar,” who is a member of the Hormigas Libertarias Collective, was hit with gunfire to the head. We feel obligated for the moment to withhold the

name of the compañero for legal and security reasons.

On the roof of the Casa Azul Hotel, located on Fiallo Street in the historic center, the repressive police chief Daniel Camarena – an inheritance of Gabino Cué from the murderer Ulises Ruiz – was seen in the company of individuals dressed in civilian clothes who were carrying large firearms, likely sniper rifles.

After two in the afternoon, tens of SUVs drove at high speed through the tourist pedestrian area towards the former Santo Domingo convent where 50 meters from the entrance there was a blockade consisting of 12 soldiers. These SUVs carried some of the committee members of the state and federal governments, who entered the patio of Santo Domingo surrounded by tens of federal police. At approximately 2:30pm at least 50 federal police were in the tourist walkway to reinforce the siege.

Meanwhile, confrontations with the police stretched from the Zócalo to the nearby streets. During this time on Hidalgo Street at Mier y Teran Street, a black car with Puebla license plates TWM 9318 was seen leading a caravan of eight military transport vehicles which carried tens of soldiers and tens of individuals dressed in civilian clothes (at least 100) with striped t-shirts and dark glasses who were “released” into the historic center to carry out destructive acts in order to attribute them to the protesters, among them the burning of a PFP trailer in the Zócalo and apparently a bus on the road to Xoxocotlan. At the

same time, the arrival of a PFP airplane at the city airport carrying more federal reinforcements was observed.

As of the time of writing this communiqué, 14 people have been confirmed wounded, two with wounds to the head, the result of shots fired from snipers located on the roofs near the Zócalo of Oaxaca, and one other individual wounded with a live round to the body, as well as two other people who have wounds as a result of being hit by tear gas canisters, all of whom have been hospitalized as a result of the wounds they received.

In ISSSTE hospital in the city of Oaxaca four members of the teachers' union – two wounded by gunfire and two by tear gas canisters – were admitted. In the same hospital the PFP carried out an impressive operation including patrol vehicles, ambulances and fire trucks to “remove” four wounded members of the PFP who had also been admitted to the same hospital.

This evening, tens of police officers and soldiers are based at Hotel Parador Crespo, located on Crespo Street in the historic center, a location which is less than two blocks from CASOTA, the building where our organization, VOCAL, is based out of.

We denounced these events and hold Felipe Calderón and Gabino Cué Monteagudo directly responsible. Cué has very quickly betrayed the trust of the people of Oaxaca who believed in his promises that never again would the police be used to repress protests.

We denounce the gravity of these events, above all the use of paramilitary shock groups and snipers, as part of a clearly fascist strategy to repress and intimidate the people of Oaxaca and its organizations and organized sectors.

We denounce the institutional and media siege which have roundly denied and ignored the presence of snipers and paramilitary shock groups who infiltrated today's protests.

We denounce the cynical and perverse attitude of Gabino Cué, who has immediately called for dialogue with the Oaxacan teachers' union and we point out the danger and strain that the entire Oaxacan social movement may be faced with if these grave events remain unaddressed as a result of political agreements between the government and the leadership of the teachers' union.

We call for international and national attention to be paid to these events in Oaxaca which appear to inaugurate an era of state fascism on behalf of Felipe Calderón and his flunky in Oaxaca, Gabino Cué Monteagudo.

Today on the streets of Oaxaca it was heard: He's fallen, Gabino has fallen!

Fraternally

Oaxacan Voices Constructing
Autonomy and Freedom
(VOCAL)

Oaxaca de Magón, City of
Resistance, February 15, 2011

Reprinted from:
<<http://elenemigocomun.net/2011/02/gabino-cue-felipe-calderon-repress/>>



“Today on the streets of Oaxaca it was heard: He’s fallen, Gabino has fallen!”

THE MURDERED WOMEN OF JUAREZ

20 JANUARY 2011

BY LAURA CARLSEN

Trail of Impunity

Marisela Escobedo's life changed forever in August 2008 when her 16-year-old daughter Rubi failed to come home. What was left of Rubi's body was found months later in a dump — 39 pieces of charred bone.

Rubi became one more macabre statistic in Ciudad Juarez's nearly two-decade history of femicide. The murder of young women, often raped and tortured, brought international infamy to the city long before it became the epicenter of the Calderon drug war and took on the added title of murder capital of the world.

But Rubi never became a statistic for her mother. Marisela knew that a former boyfriend, Sergio Barraza, had murdered her daughter. As authorities showed no interest in investigating the case, she began a one-woman crusade across two states to bring the murderer to justice. The Mexican magazine *Proceso* recently obtained the file on her case. Marisela's odyssey tracks a murderer, but it also tracks a system of sexism, corruption, and impunity.

It's an odyssey that ends with Marisela—the mother—getting her brains blown out on December 16, 2010 as she continued to protest the lack of justice in her daughter's murder two years earlier.

Marisela Escobedo eventually tracked down Barraza. She had him arrested and brought to trial, and finally saw a chance for the hard-sought justice that could at least allow her to move on with her life.

But in Ciudad Juarez, the term “justice” is a bad joke, especially if you're a woman. Despite the fact that Barraza confessed at the trial and led authorities to the body, three Chihuahua state judges released him. Marisela watched as the confessed assassin of her daughter left the courtroom absolved of all charges due to “lack of evidence.”

As pressure from women's and human rights organizations mounted, a new trial was called and Barraza was condemned to 50 years in prison. But by that time, he was long gone and still has not been apprehended, despite Marisela's success in discovering his whereabouts and providing key information to police and prosecutors.

The story doesn't end there. Every day, Marisela fought for justice for her daughter and sought out the killer. She received multiple death threats. She responded saying, “If they're going to kill me, they should do it right in



front of the government building so they feel ashamed.”

And they did. Marisela took her demands for justice from the border to the state capital where a hit man approached her in broad daylight, chased her down, then shot her in the head.

A family's story had come full circle. By all accounts, Rubi's death came at the hands of an abusive boyfriend. Marisela's death, however, was caused by an abusive system that sought to protect itself from her determination to expose its injustice. The gunman's identity is unknown, but responsibility clearly lies with members of a state at best incapable of defending women and at worst culpable of complicity in killing them.

Gender Violence and Drug Violence

Ciudad Juarez in recent years has been described as a no-man's land, where legal institutions have lost control to the armed force of drug cartels. The femicides show us, though, that the causal chain is really the reverse.

Seventeen years ago, Ciudad Juarez began to register an alarming number of cases of women tortured, murdered, or disappeared. Over the decades, national and international feminist organizations pressed the government for justice. The government in turn formed commissions that changed directors and initials with each new governor. They all shared one distinct feature: never getting anywhere on solving the crimes of gender violence, much less preventing them. Recommendations to the Mexican government piled up alongside the bodies: missions from the United Nations and the Organization of American States provided over 200 recommendations on protecting women's rights, with fifty for Ciudad Juarez alone.

Marisela's murder marked a year since the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued a ruling calling the Mexican government negligent in the murders of young women. The ruling on the "Cotton Field" case— named after the lot where the bodies of three women were found on Nov. 21, 2001— includes a list of measures and reparations, most of which have been rejected or ignored.

Since the cases analyzed in the Court ruling, the drug war in Ciudad Juarez waged by the Mexican government with the support of the U.S. Merida Initiative has led to a record number of 15,273 homicides in 2010 (with a total of 34,612 over the four years since Calderon launched the offensive). The strategy has focused on violently confronting drug cartels to interdict shipments and capture drug lords. It relies on the militarization of the city, which has brought more violence to the region than anyone imagined.

Ironically, President Felipe Calderon says the goals of the drug war are to increase public safety and strengthen legal institutions. But the history of gender crimes and government response reveals the fundamental flaws of the current counter-narcotics efforts and of a system that practically guarantees impunity through a combination of institutional corruption, sexism, racism, incompetence, and indifference.

Given that background of institutionalized injustice, the drug war in Juarez short-circuited from the start. The logical sequence of investigation, arrest, prosecution and punishment simply does not exist in the absence of a functioning justice system. By destabilizing the drug cartels' cross-border business and setting off turf wars, the government unleashed a storm of drug-related violence that can't be dealt with by police and legal institutions because those institutions are dysfunctional. In the absence of supporting institutions or a coherent

strategy, the resulting explosion from this direct confrontation with drug cartels could have been predicted. If the tragedy of the pink crosses erected in the desert to mark the unsolved cases of murdered women showed us anything, it was that the fundamental problem in Juarez traces back to the government itself. Until impunity ends, the region will continue to attract crime— common, organized, or just plain perverse.

In this environment, the femicides in Juarez have not only never been solved, they've risen dramatically — to nearly 300 in 2010 — alongside overall homicide rates. The government's drug war has stimulated more gender violence instead of less. It shelters those who commit murder and other barbarities against women by making murder a normal part of daily life. It promotes an armed society where people too poor to move have no choice but to bunker down against all sides. Not only does Juarez shelter murderers, torturers, and rapists of women, it attracts them.

Women's vulnerability increases. For years, impunity gave free rein to women-killers who found women workers at the maquiladoras to be particularly easy targets for torture, acts of sadism, rape and murder and other acts possibly related to snuff films and international crime rings, all covered up by government officials. Lately women human rights defenders have become the targets. Shortly after Marisela's assassination, Susana Chavez was found murdered

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The strategy has focused on violently confronting drug cartels to interdict shipments and capture drug lords. It relies on the militarization of the city, which has brought more violence to the region than anyone imagined.

”

with her hand cut off. Chavez was a feminist poet who coined the phrase “Not One More Death!” — which became the slogan of the Juarez women’s movement. Women activists feel as though open season has been declared on them.

Women of the Attorney General’s Office, I noted clearly that I did it out of the shame I felt for belonging to the corrupt system of justice of our country. Today that shame comes back and burns in my skin and conscience, so I must join in the indignation of all women in this country who, when they found out about the assassination of Marisela Escobedo Ortiz and the attacks on her family of the recent days, demand justice...

No one in the Mexican government acknowledges these relationships. The same holds true for the U.S. government. The last State Department report gave Mexico a pass on human rights to authorize more Merida Initiative support for the drug war. The current indignation over Marisela’s murder and the new “No More Blood” campaign demonstrate that the Mexican public has had enough excuses for the violence it has been forced to live with.

Until both governments turn their sights to the hypocrisy of their legal systems and policies, the downward spiral of violence will only continue. To honor Marisela and all the others who have dared to defend human rights and justice in Mexico, it is time for civil society on both sides of the border to demand an end to bloodshed.

*Laura Carlsen
(lecarlsen@gmail.com) is a
FPIF Columnist and director of
the CIP Americas Program.*

Women and men have demonstrated throughout the country to demand that Marisela’s and Rubi’s cases be solved, to call for an end to the impunity that protects murderers in hundreds of other cases, and to force the government to comply with recommendations to protect women and prevent more deaths. Their protests have united with a new nationwide citizens’ movement called “No More Blood” to reject the current drug-war strategy. A tipping point has finally been reached.

Marisela’s murder practically at the steps of the State Capitol symbolizes the relationship between gender violence in the private and the public spheres, between the lethal sexism of men who kill women and of governments who let them get away with it, between an out-of-control counter-narcotics war and the long-boiling situation of unpunished gender crimes.

“

The government’s drug war has stimulated more gender violence instead of less. It shelters those who commit murder and other barbarities against women by making murder a normal part of daily life. It promotes an armed society where people too poor to move have no choice but to bunker down against all sides.

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Civil Society Responds

The only ray of light has come from the response of Mexican civil society. Following Marisela’s murder, a former head of one of the government commissions, Alicia Duarte, wrote in an open letter to President Calderon:

Three years ago, when I quit my post as Special Prosecutor for Attention to Crimes Related to Acts of Violence Against

STATE TERRORISM AND PUBLIC INSECURITY STOCKS POLICE IN RIO DE JANEIRO:

STATEMENT ON THE RECENT POLICE ACTIONS

BY FARJ (ANARCHIST FEDERATION OF RIO DE
JANEIRO)

After taking a house that served the traffickers in Vila Cruzeiro (favela of Rio), a policeman was asked what would be the fate of the property. The answer was that, as a symbol of what is happening in the community, a battalion of the PM (Military Police - *Polícia Militar*) would operate from the premises. This 'change' in the function of the building is quite emblematic of what happens today in the lives of the slum population. Where before there were gunmen intimidating the people there will now be... gunmen intimidating the people, only now uniformed and paid from public funds. The population is going to be oppressed by dictators in uniform and not by well-known retailers of the drug.

On Thursday, November 25, 2010, a move involving three thousand police and armed forces personnel took both the communities of Vila Cruzeiro (a complex of 10 slums of the Rock) and the German Complex (consisting of 12 slums), both in the state capital- a the region

home to more than 400 000 people. And what is the profile of these people? Is what they need more weapons and state brutality? What are their demands?

Well, the German Complex is considered by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) as the district with the worst indices of Social Development (IDS) of Rio de Janeiro. Also calculated by the suspect Instituto Pereira Passos (IPP), the index takes into account the population's access to basic sanitation,

**Where before there were
gunmen intimidating the
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housing, school and the labour market. According to the data of 12 communities in the largest complex in the city slums: 15% of households have no sewerage system; 36.43% of residents have

less than four years of study; one in every 11 residents over 15 years of age is illiterate; 11.37% of girls aged between 15 and 17 years are already mothers; 60.55% of workers earn, at most, two minimum wages; 27.83% of youth aged between 15 and 17 years are not attending school.

Even so, the actions we see from the government continue to do nothing to reverse this tragic picture. Instead, successive governments, through the Municipal Guard, rob and beat up vendors, repress the landless, and thus favour the rural exodus and the increase of slums. The same rule that says it wants to solve the problem of slums attacks the squatting movement, therefore families can no longer live in harmony and in a communal way; and occupants are required to reside in labyrinthine hills easily dominated by traffickers and oppressive militias. The truth is that the State failed to solve the problem of poor communities, instead promoting the interests of big merchants, landlords and real estate speculation.

The odd thing is that some politicians, even those that are notable for the defense of humanitarian policies, have not done much to prevent the rise of a police state. This is the case of State Rep. Marcelo Freixo (PSOL-RJ) - indeed the star, in character 'Fraga', the 'comemoradíssimo Tropa de Elite 2', not least the 'celebrated' liberal José Padilha - who preached in his recent speech in ALERJ: more public resources to the PM, more weapons, more brains and higher salaries for police officers. Thus, judging

by Freixo's speech, despite some other suggestions provided in a context of 'rule of law', it prescribes measures aimed at improving the main repressive institutions (police, armies, etc...), all functioning in the defense of private property and bourgeois legality. Within the capitalist perspective, these proposals are consistent, but to call it Socialism is clear hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is what we see in most of the coverage that the press has done lately. The bourgeois media in Brazil (Rede Globo, SBT, Record and other junk) have transformed the coverage of police raids in actual shows, where the hype and adulation of the government and their police are of a markedly strong presence. But, for most of the residents of Rio's favelas, the police raids on communities are hardly heroic, beautiful or *glamorous*.

In an interview with the newspaper *Correio Brasiliense*, the sales representative Ronai Braga, 32, a resident of Vila Cruzeiro, denounced the invasion of his home by police who destroyed furniture and appliances and stole about 30 thousand dollars. The money was the fruit of a retrenchment package and would be used to buy a property, said Ronai. In general, the press is creating a general hoopla surrounding the alleged defeat of 'organized crime'. But have a close look at this issue, just see what kind of person is being arrested and we notice something wrong with this whole story. The prisoners - just watch - all slum dwellers are black and brown. However,

organized crime is one that permeates the state apparatus, has international ramifications, with representatives from parliaments in the outside world, elect national governments and tips, i.e. is the work of people of the elite.

Those who are being arrested today in Rio are just small retailers of drugs or, at most, 'micro-entrepreneurs' of narcotics, which have followed the logic of 'entrepreneurial' (read individualistic and non-supportive) propagated by the very capitalist ideology supported by the Brazilian press.

Another conjuncture, one that reminds us of the importance of Rio de Janeiro for the events of 2014 and 2016 World Cup and Olympics respectively, is located in the real estate speculation and the major infrastructure projects underway in the state capital. The project "Porto Wonder", revitalisation of the port area of downtown Rio, the ring roads that are already justifying the removal of various poor communities in the West, as well as actions orchestrated by the PAC, form the set of actions to compose the mosaic facade of the bourgeoisie which should replace the real city, one formed by the immense human mass of exploited and oppressed. And the war of classes, concealed by combating drug trafficking, in Vila Cruzeiro and the German Complex is just one symptom.

Thus, in capitalism, the alternatives left to the poor people, black, oppressed, are really quite scarce. 122 years after the official end of slavery in Brazil, 100 years after the Revolt of the Whip, blacks and browns

“ But, for most of the residents of Rio's favelas, the police raids on communities are hardly heroic, beautiful or *glamorous*. ”

are still the immense majority in slums and prisons. So we must ask: what is the chance for the rise of what 'democracy' ensures, equal opportunities?

Capitalism has historically reserved the very worst for workers, especially when they can be identified with crime and misdemeanour. What we are witnessing today in Rio de Janeiro, in addition to what was exposed here, is the didactic partnership between the media, the 'government' and the business sector. As at other times, such an agreement always costs the people a lot. In the current case, most obviously, the accounts can be measured in lives.

Reprinted from:
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<<http://www.alquimidia.org/farj/index.php?id=3754&mod=noticia>>

[Poorly Translated by Kurt Wilkens]

JANUARY 2011

HONDURAS COUP

UPDATE

A SNAPSHOT OF THE RESISTANCE AND SOLIDARITY IN HONDURAS AND INTERNATIONALLY THIS MONTH:

BY ROSANNA WONG

In Honduras: the Resistance and its sectors returned to the streets after the Christmas break:

- 20,000+ marched on 27 January 2011 demanding the unconditional and safe return of President Zelaya.
- Youths organised an emergency protest on the 10th demanding Juan Chinchilla be released alive and received news of his escape during the protest.
- The LGBTI community organised a march on 13th and announced monthly marches demanding an end to impunity on LGBTI killings including against Walter Trochez.
- Teachers mobilised on 11th, 24th, 25th and 27th defending their rights and public education.
- Women marched on 23rd and 25th, celebrating women in resistance.
- Campesinos organised a series of protests including highway occupations at several parts of the country on 25th and protests in the capital city on 25th, 26th and 27th.

- New resistance collectives have been organised - Children in Resistance and the Grandmothers and Grandfathers Resistance Front. When asked what the children would like to be as adults: 'I want to be a doctor to help people who suffer repressions' 'an architect, astronaut, engineer, whatever, have a good future but always in resistance.'

Internationally, Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and the UN Special Rapporteur for the freedom of opinion and expression expressed their concerns about recent harassment and violence in Honduras against community radio stations, and IACHR expressed deep concerns about many recent killings against members of the transgender community in Honduras. Save the Forest/Biofuel Watch launched a sign-on campaign to reject the Clean Development Mechanisms projects in Bajo Aguan for contributing to human rights violations and

benefiting Dinant Corporation (Facusse), Atlantical Export company and EDF Trading (carbon trading buyer), projects authorised by the British government.

Lobo regime

The Lobo coup regime keeps campaigning for funds, including from the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (for which they failed this round), by pretending to the international community to be democratic by:

1. Reforming article 5 of the constitution to supposedly legalise referendums, and
2. Hiring a coup-supporting lobbyist from US to create false images.

While pretending to be democratic, Honduran authorities imposed (despite massive protests and without consultation) many neoliberal policies, decisions and plans in this month alone. New studies show Honduras is increasingly becoming one of the most dangerous places in the world, and a new Wikileaks report shows Lobo has a habit of consulting the US Embassy before making important decisions.

Article 5 Reform

Article 5 of the Honduran Constitution restricts the exercise of referendums. This article was used as the main excuse for executing the military coup on 28 June 2009. On 11 January 2011, the Congress

voted 103 in favour and 16 against proposed reforms to this article to make it more flexible. While the reform opens up wider avenues than before to obtain changes via referendums, and people can and will try to use it, it does not automatically give greater power to the grassroots:

- It reduces numbers of citizens needed from 6% to 2% to petition for a referendum, but now 10 parliamentarians with the president & ministers can do the same.
- Once a petition is made, the Congress has the power to decide whether or not to carry out the referendum and the Congress writes the question, and the rules for the referendums will be set by a special law to be approved by two-thirds of MPs
- Only the Supreme Electoral Board (TSE) can administer the referendums, the same authority that contributed to the coup and organised the 2009 electoral farce.
- If a people's project gets a referendum & wins the vote, the Prosecutors and Supreme Court can still stop it by declaring the result to be 'unconstitutional'.
- In reverse, neoliberal projects that have Congress's support can be passed and legitimised through a referendum process, & results can be manipulated using mass media and fraud.

Hiring of lobbyist Lenny Davis and failure to obtain the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funds

The Lobo regime is paying lobbyist Lanny J Davis & Associates for a public relations campaign 'to strengthen US-Honduras relations' from the public budget: \$20,000 a month plus any travel expenses until the end of March. According to a memorandum to Lobo, the work plan includes improving the image of Honduras through working with media and with US diplomats, and lobbying for more aid including from the MCC. Davis was previously hired by the Latin American Business Council to support the efforts to depose president Zelaya. His reappearance and new association with Lobo further proves that the government of Honduras is an extension of the coup regime.

Davis failed in his main goal of helping Honduras renew aid with the MCC. The MCC gave \$6.5 million to the coup regime but now disqualified Honduras due to 'low indices of constitutionality'.

What support is there for participative democracy? Policies and plans imposed this January:

- The Supreme Court declared the decree 18-2008 unconstitutional in favour of the applicant National Federation of Agriculture and Cattle Industries of Honduras and detrimental to over 10,000 campesino families and concerning 40,000 hectares of land.

Decree 18-2008 was approved under Zelaya to allow farmers to legalise their land titles if they have been occupying and working on idle land. Farmers say they will not vacate and expect violent mass evictions now.

- Supreme Court declared decree 49-2008 unconstitutional. This Decree had empowered the Congress to investigate and dismiss the Prosecutor General (currently Luis Rubi, amongst 18 accused of political persecution at the International Criminal Court).
- The teachers' award was 'accidentally' suspended; in October when the de-indexing of the teacher's award to the minimal wage was published in the 'Gazette', a clause appears saying the teacher's award is suspended. Lobo claims it was a transcription error and will be corrected without saying how or when.
- The Council of Ministers approved renewable energy projects in its strategy; meaning 2011 will see even more concessions of natural resources to national and foreign companies in addition to the 40 hydroelectric dam contracts in September 2010 against the opposition of the affected communities. The Council also decided to limit the electricity energy allowances to only those consuming less than 100kw an hour; Zelaya gave this allowance to consumers of 0-300kw an hour.

- A bill was rushed into the Congress to reform the Constitution to allow the creation of ‘Special Administrative Regions’ or ‘Model Cities’ which would literally be zones of foreign occupation or the privatisation of entire cities. The companies or country hiring the cities are to be exempt from most Honduran laws (submit to only defence, voting, and identity documents laws) – they can bring or create their own currency, laws, police, migration regime, courts, tax system etc. It is an experimental project and can be detrimental to workers, environment, sovereignty, and further impunity. There is also little information publicly available on how jobs would be created. Target cities are Olancho, Colon, Gracias a Dios, Agalta Valle, Amapala, starting with 33km² and to expand to 1000km².
- Congress plans to create a Judiciary Council within the Congress, taking over and politicising appointments, promoting and disciplining judges from the Supreme Court according to party affiliation.
- Constitutional reforms have been presented to Congress making the Honduran Autonomous University (UNAH) share its power and budget to organise, direct and develop university education with private universities, which will also be tax exempt.

Decisions made this month to foster impunity

- The Prosecutors resolved to close the (never opened) case against Cardinal Rodriguez and ex-President Carlos Flores Facusse. The Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice had sought an investigation of the two for abuse of authority and abuse of public funds. Facusse made a decree in 2001 granting the Cardinal’s office permanent monthly payments of 100,000 lempiras (stopped during Zelaya’s term and resumed after the coup). Prosecutors said they closed the case because of insufficient evidence though it never investigated the complaint.
- Lobo promoted General Rene Arnaldo Osorio Canales as the new head of Armed Forces of Honduras. Osorio Canales headed the illegal armed operation to invade President Zelaya’s home and force him onto a plane to Costa Rica. Osorio is a graduate of the School of Americas.
- New studies show Honduras is increasingly becoming the most violent place in the world. Globally, San Pedro Sula is placed 3rd and Tegucigalpa 6th most dangerous city in the world, by the Centre of Study of Analysis of Citizen Security. The Global Peace Index qualifies Honduras the 2nd most violent of Latin America. Globally, Honduras went down 13

places with the surge of violence since the coup.

- New Wikileaks reports show US influence – Lobo’s habit of consulting the US Embassy before making important decisions. A cable dated 5 January 2010 showed that Lobo met with US Ambassador of Honduras, Llorens, and that Llorens advised Lobo on decisions that impact how Honduras is seen by the international community; e.g. it would not be acceptable for the ex-head of the army, Vasquez, to be Security Minister or head of electricity, although Lobo made him head of telecommunications. It showed the US government had a lot of interest in Honduran government being accepted by the international community using superficial changes that do not upset current power structures. It also showed the power the US has as it documented that on 8 January 2010 Vasquez told Llorens that the military

“ A bill was rushed into the Congress to reform the Constitution to allow the creation of ‘Special Administrative Regions’ or ‘Model Cities’ which would literally be zones of foreign occupation or the privatisation of entire cities. ”

hopes the congress approves an amnesty, and the amnesty was passed on 26 January 2010.

- Persecution continues in January 2011 – Cofadeh notes 64 political assassinations during the Lobo regime in its first year, and 253 files of women in resistance suffering human rights abuses since the coup.

Political assassinations in January 2011

- **01/01/11:** Jose Luis Sanabria (45) was found dead with a shot in the head and decomposed body. He disappeared on 30 December 2010 when he was driving to Quimistan, Santa Barbara. He is a school director, leader of Youth Western Institute, educator of regional pedagogical university and a resistance activist.
- **04/01/11:** the body of UNAH student Edy Gabriel Betancourt (23) was found in El Paraiso. He was kidnapped in Comayagua on 27 December 2010 outside his home by four hooded men with a double-cabin pick-up, polarised windows and no number plates. His family rushed to stop these four, but they claimed to be police and showed a capture order and took him away. His family is terrified to denounce.
- **15/01/11:** Jose Ricardo Dominguez Hernandez, a resistance member, was assassinated. His body was found with several stab wounds, his hands were a different colour to the rest of

his body and would have been tied with hemp or rope. He had been detained in February 2010 with other resistance members and was a court witness in a kidnapping and torture case for 2 Globo TV journalists. He applied to the IACHR for cautionary measures and IACHR requested the Supreme Court for information about his situation but never received a response.

- **6pm, 31/01/11:** Dr Jose Maria Turcios was assassinated while he travelled from an organising meeting of the Resistance, at Quimistan, Santa Barbara. The killers riddled him with bullets. His body was found the next morning with a gunshot in the head. Some people who went to the meeting said he drove off with unidentified persons. Dr Turcios is an ex-director of IHSS hospital.

Attacks against journalists and community radios

- **05/01/11:** Channel 36 Director and Owner, Esdras Amado Lopez, said that he was threatened and followed by Coronel Rodolfo Mendez Martinez while Esdras was driving. The colonel and his bodyguard were filming and taking photos of Esdras from a car similar to one the Coronel used last year to distribute pamphlets with death threats signed Comando Alvarez Martinez (A. Martinez was the head of the armed forces and death squad 3-16 in the 1980s). The colonel yelled, 'I'm not scared of you, son of

a...not of you or of your media' and showed him the pistol, loaded it and complained to Esdra about his support for the Resistance.

- **10:40am, 05/01/09:** employees of Semeh (electricity measurement company which has a million dollar contract with the government and of which the main shareholder is defacto Planning Minister Arturo Corrales Alvarez), entered and attacked the community radios of Copinh (Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras – an organisation in resistance), without showing any orders; cutting off the electricity and screaming, '... must cut off the electricity to these revolutionary sons of...we don't want to hear these radios anymore' and gave death threats; when driving away they tried to drive into those who were on the street: Berta Caceres, Salvador Zuniga, Juan Vasquez, Leonel Andino, and Cruz Alfaro. They also physically attacked Copinh member Nestor Sorto.
- 2 reporters of community radio La Voz de Zacate Grande were amongst 14 people being judicially persecuted for covering the violent action of the police, army and naval force against the Coyolito villages. They face 1-3 years prison.
- **14/01/11:** Garifuna community radio Faluma Bimetu (Coco Dulce) was forced to close temporarily because of increased harassment and threats including of having its building and equipment set on

fire again after last year's incident. Its director Alfredo Lopez was judicially persecuted for a shootout on 11 January 2011. There is no evidence of his participation and the case was suspended. This radio promotes land rights and is seen as inconvenient for the mega tourism project interests that want to appropriate Garifuna community land.

- **31/01/11:** CONATEL (National Commission of Telecommunications) announced a 'consultation', about plans to suspend the granting of licences for new radio stations that operate under low bandwidths (*i.e.* community radio stations).

Persecution against communities in land struggle

- The Garifuna community Triunfo has been defending its community land from ongoing illegal sales to foreigners under conditions of persecution and threat, with the complicity of the council, police and judicial authorities. On 12 January 2011, council members accompanied by police elected an illegal parallel community trust board to legitimise illegal land sales. There is a paramilitary group, 'Ninjas', contracted by enforcers of illegal land sales Zaccaro and Braulio Martinez, and a hitman living on Mrs de Ochoa's land where the court ordered an eviction. The Pro-Improvement Community Trust elected a new board on 28 January 2011 and declares that only this trust now

presided by Morales is to be recognised. Community leaders threatened are Teresa Reyes, Angel Castro, Secundino Torres, and Alfredo Lopez.

- **4pm, 03/01/11:** youth Franklin Padilla of Cooperative Despertar was shot and gravely wounded in the abdomen; reports said the attackers were private guards of Morales & Facusse or the police. Prosecutors did not come investigate.

- **06/01/11:** farmer Jorge Lainez of Cooperative Despertar was kidnapped in full daylight, by guards of Morales and Canales and police. He was beaten, tortured and detained in the Trujillo police cells.

- **4pm, 06/01/11:** La Concepcion: there were attempts against several campesinos' lives, with AK47 shots fired.

- **08/01/11:** high profile leader of United Aguan Campesinos Movement (MUCA) and Youths Resistance Front, Juan Chinchilla, was riding his motorcycle to La Concepcion when hooded people pointed guns at him, grabbed him, shot at his motorcycle and forced him into their vehicle and drove him to an isolated warehouse. He saw many people including uniformed soldiers, police, Facusse's guards; some spoke English, and presumably Israeli. He was interrogated about arms, numbers of campesinos organised, where they obtained the information they diffused. They showed many photos of

him and others. On 9 January 2011 they showed him a table with torture tools and began to say 'what will we do first? Will we arrange a nail or burn him?' They beat his face and back, burnt his hair, and said they were going to put gasoline on his head and burn him. He overheard that the order was not to kill him. 48 hours after being kidnapped, as they took him for a walk in the dark to transfer him, he ran away, hid, found help and went into hiding. For MUCA, he works with the media, blog, communications and has participated in many negotiations.

- **11/01/11:** 14 people (8 women) charged with 'disobedience and sedition' for protesting an illegal eviction in Coyolitos Zacate Grande appeared at Amapala local court; this hearing was suspended for January 14th. On the 14th, Judge Berrilos ruled automatic prison for the 14 with sentences of 1-3 years. COFADEH appealed and they are given substitutive measures meanwhile of not leaving Honduras, having to seek permission if they want to leave Coyolito, to sign at the court every 15 days, and prohibition to attend public protests.

- **17/01/11:** in a kidnap attempt, Sergio Pineda was followed for 10 minutes by Facusse's guards when he went to visit friends at the La Confianza campesinos settlement and as he arrived they fired several shots until he got out of his car, and when the youth Celeo Rodriguez

(MUCA leader) left his home on hearing the shots, they ferociously unleashed shots of AK and M16s at him, but he escaped.

- **18 & 19/01/11:** hitmen parked in front of the home of Colon FNRP Coordinator Wilfredo Paz, while he transmitted his news program.

- **22/01/11:** 4 vehicles of heavily armed men arrived at the Buenos Amigos campesinos settlement of Elixir Colon (of 100 families) and began shooting. They followed a youth Jorge Santos of the community and shot at him in a kidnap attempt with AK and 9mm, but he escaped. They are on 360 hectares held by Cesar Velasquez, land the state considered neglected and available for agrarian reform and was occupied and applied for by the community for this. They have been there 2 months and evicted 4 times. Attackers could be Cesar Velasquez, police, army, guards of Standard Fruit Company, or other large landholders. Community president Blanca Espinoza said they had to remove their children from the land because many became sick from fear. The contingent of 50 stayed till the evening.

- **9pm, 25/01/11 & 6am, 26/01/11:** the same community received threatening calls of immediate eviction. Minister Cesar Ham did not answer or return calls.

- **4pm, 27/01/11:** an operation headed by large landholders Velasquez and Barahona was carried out without official eviction or

capture orders by 80 police and soldiers accompanied by hitmen with balaclavas. They violently evicted the Buenos Amigos Elixir community of Saba. They captured, tortured, beat and detained Santos Tomas Rios, Santiago Rodriguez and the youth Jorge Reynaldo Santos and applied psychological torture to the other youths at the settlement. They burnt the makeshift homes and clothes, and took away food, goods and cooking utensils. They militarised the community and held a list of 11 leaders wanted for capture, including president Blanca Espinoza.

Information theft

- The home of Scarleth Romero and Marlon Interiano was broken into but only the computer was taken. They are of the New Democracy Movement (part of FNRP) and collaborate with Virtual Radio Honduras Insurrecta.

- **7am, 23/01/11:** Araminta Pereira's home was assaulted by three armed hooded men, and one unhooded. They waited for her at the patio, ambushed her when she was leaving, and made her take them inside where they took her computer, internet modem, mobile phone, and some personal items and vehicle. Before leaving, the intruders searched and messed up the rooms and muttered death threats against her. Araminta is a local resistance and teachers union leader.

- **10am, 29/01/10:** an information thief Jose Bertin

Andino broke the door and entered the Centre of Studies and Action for Development in Honduras (Cesadeh), leaving several computers switched on - presumably he was copying information from these.

Before he left he was caught by a watchman who trapped him and took him to the police.

Cesadeh's administrative director Melba Reyes has been subject to harassment since the coup, her spouse Alan Fajardo was one of Zelaya's advisors.

A week prior, their apartment was broken into and they took Fajardo's computer and left more valuable items untouched.

Repression at and after protests

- **10/01/11:** at the protest demanding that Juan Chinchilla be released alive, Jacqueline Foglia came to threaten and intimidate. She accelerated her vehicle several times and then parked watching the protesters with disdain. Protesters asked aloud, 'what is this ex Death Squad 3-16 doing here, & being one of the main executors of the military coup against president Manuel Zelaya?'

- **11/01/11:** at the teachers' march, unidentified person in a Mitsubishi with PCV2021, pointed a 3.57 calibre gun at resistance activist 'Emo', who responded, 'well shoot then, coward!' - the attacker drove off.

- **25/01/11:** as teachers planned to march to the Congress, the streets and bridges around it were closed

“ In just the first 3 weeks of 2011, 7 killings of LGBTI community members have been registered, mostly of the transsexual community. ”

off by the police in an apparent operation of ‘special security on the occasion of the opening of the second session of congress’. Helicopters flew above constantly like it was a war zone. Teachers found each bridge they passed to get to the congress was blocked with hundreds of police and military and a tank followed them. Police then chased, beat, and shot tear gas at hundreds, with teargas bombs thrown at people’s bodies including at Copemh Secretary Carlos Alfaro - ‘my only sin was taking photos and they launched a teargas bomb against my body and it exploded in my face, if I hadn’t had my glasses on my eyes would have been affected.’ Following the protest, police patrols followed 4 teachers, Elmer Tejada, Darwin Funes, Jesus Isidro and Ansar Torres, who drove in a Copemh vehicle trying to head to the Copemh teachers union building. Police pointed weapons at them, stopped, captured, beat and illegally detained them at noon. Police invented a story saying the fireworks and old tyres were ‘proof’ for accusing them of sedition and terrorism and that

‘they almost killed a police officer’. On January 26, anti-riot police sealed off the street around the police station in the morning to prevent solidarity by dozens of teachers and 2 international human rights delegations with the detained teachers there. They were released at 10am and taken to the penal court at 11am. At the hearing the court ruled bail but the defence sought and received substitutive measures – of signing at the court every Friday until the initial hearing and prohibition from leaving the country and from protests.

Persecution against the LGBTI community

In just the first 3 weeks of 2011, 7 killings of LGBTI community members have been registered, mostly of the transsexual community.

7.45am, 20/01/11: as human rights defender Alex David Sanchez Alvarez headed towards the office of Centre for Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation of Torture and crossing a street, a white tourist van gave way to him, and a motorcycle with 2 people stopped in front of him and the one sitting behind hit Alex in the face with the butt of the pistol, and left, taking nothing from him. On 14 January, Alex and another LGBTI comrade were near Violeta Colectivo office when a person in a white tourist van PCC 1964 wound down a window, looked at them and said, ‘We are missing you (you are the

ones we are looking for)’ then closed the window and left.

Resistance member persecuted

On the night of 1 January 2011 in Tela, Edgardo Valeriano was stopped by the police and accused of drink-driving. When the police saw he had no blood alcohol, they started to beat him and say ‘he is from the resistance, take him to the police station.’ He was taken, beaten and bruised in the back and spent the night in prison and was freed on 7am the next day. A police officer anonymously told his partner Divina Alvarenga not to leave because the police want to beat him and that they did not disappear him because Divina was there recording, and many knew he was being detained. Valeriano is a doctor and resistance member who was one of many beaten on 12 August 2010 in protests repressed by police and army.

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KULON PROGO UPDATE

BY SAKSI

Dear Comrades,

We are a small loose collective (informal) in Yogyakarta, located in central Java, a region considered a 'special territory' inside the democratic state due to its historical role as the Kingdom of Java, and for the same reason, some of the old feudal rules are still preserved inside the so called democratic state.

Since 2007 we have been involved in creating solidarity with the peasant struggle in Kulon Progo, located in the Yogyakarta region. The struggle is about resisting a proposed iron mine, which is a joint undertaking by [Indomines Limited]¹ and its local 'puppet' branch company named Jogja Magasa Iron (Mining). Jogja Magasa Iron is owned by the Sultan of Yogyakarta's (Sri Sultan Hamengkubowono X) daughter, GKR Pembayun.

“Laws are easily made up by the ruling class.”

¹ An Australian firm, formerly operating as Kimberley Diamonds - the name used by the authors.

The Mega-Project

The planning of iron mines is just a gateway for other mega-projects to come, one we recognise as a development proposal from the Asian Development Bank. Kulon Progo territory is a crucial point in making further capitalist infrastructure in Java, to create alternative highways, an international airport, and other industrial infrastructure that would be pivotal for other mining and industrial projects in the surrounding area. These projects involve companies and investors from other countries including: the Czech Republic, Australia, and South Korea (some of the foreign investor that we already acknowledge).

Agrarian Conflict

Laws are easily made up by the ruling class. The former agrarian laws that protects peasants' land after the independence are threatened to change due to the political-economic interest of the elites.

In accordance with the original state laws, the peasants have a legal entitlement to cultivate the land. However, it is not really permanent since there is also a law that says: "every natural resources are owned by the state". Feudal claiming of the land by the Sultan also creates a mystification of 'Special Territory' and its historical justification as a kingdom. Until now, fortunately, no laws were officially justifying the Sultan's need to own all of the land in Yogyakarta: Wonosari, Bantul, Sleman, and Kulon Progo.

Political Atmosphere

Recently there have been a political 'fight' between the pro's and con's of the democratic-state's take over of Yogyakarta since the Sultan wanted the government to approve its feudal inheritance of land (so that the mining project and other mega-projects would be smoothed by him and he himself will play the major role for other mega-projects planned in Yogyakarta).

This creates an illusion of the democratic state versus the special territory of Yogyakarta. Some important points to be considered is that Yogyakarta accommodates intellectual life and the city has the reputation as a student city due to the existence of the most good education and universities across Indonesia. For example, in urban areas of Yogyakarta, most of its inhabitants are students from all over Indonesia. This creates a multicultural relationship and a growing intellectual life and lively art scene. In the recent spectacle of opposition between Sultan and President, the Sultan were praised by the 'bribed' progressive academics, the so called 'radical artists', and the opportunist leftists, as more democratic, progressive, pluralist (and other nonsense) than the president. This tendency was falsely seen by many 'progressives' as true fight against the regime and most of them were rallying in solidarity for the 'ETERNAL' preservation of special territory of Yogyakarta, the eternal authority of the Sultan's blood to rule Yogyakarta inside the Indonesian democratic state, and, of course, with some hidden from public laws, that is: an eternal ownership of the so called Sultan and Paku alaman's ground. To our view, as one of its inhabitants, if pluralism and multiculturalism, and also the freedom of expression were really to exist, it has nothing to do with the Sultan. It simply an urbanised life of the students with various backgrounds of culture that made it possible, and

in some cases cultural and ethnic clashes also appear, just as in other major cities in Java. But since most of Yogyakarta's inhabitants are students and not workers, free-time can create a 'special' atmosphere and not because of a feudalistic special territory where a very low-wage was/is praised as dedication and loyalty to the Sultan.

“...the peasants' council have made it clear that to maintain their solid unity, the PPLP-KP and the struggle of Kulon Progo's peasants should be controlled by the peasants themselves and not some organisation or other specialist.”

The Struggle²

Approximately ten thousand people will lose their land and homes due to the feudal claims

² See also: SAKSI, 'A Tale of Sand, and Those Who Feed From It: History and Ethnographic Explanation of Kulon Progo's Village and Resistance', translated from *Amor Fati*, No. 3; available in English at <<http://hidupbiasa.blogspot.com/2009/12/tale-of-sand.html>>; & in *Melbourne Black*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Oct. 2010, pp. 22-32, <<http://melbourneblack.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/mb4-print-version1.pdf>> See also: 'The Government Forces Us to Fight Back' <<http://hidupbiasa.blogspot.com/2010/11/kulon-progo-government-forces-us-to.html>>

of Sultan and Paku alaman. Ever since the issue of the mining project and its preliminary operation were conducted, the peasants of Kulon Progo have been resisting very fiercely. These peasants notably come from several villages: Trisik, Karangwuni, Bugel, Pleret, Garongan, and Karang Sewu. The mining projects threaten to make use of as much as 2987-3000 acres of land. The struggle, started in 2007, has seen the creation of a peasant umbrella group named PPLP-KP (Coastal Farmers Association of Kulon Progo). PPLP-KP is involved in the daily organizing of the noted Kulon Progo villages, though it still has an informal hierarchy (such as those who are considered elders), thus is very horizontal in nature. These villages have their tradition of consensual meetings where every village send their delegates, whom are responsible back to its people and don't function as leader. Often, in serious events, these informal leaders cannot do anything to calm down the peasants' anger.

PPLP-KP have conducted lots of demonstrations, and in almost every demonstration, thousands of people have always turned up. These solid networks of village people were pure and sterilized from outside interference such as NGOs, political parties, and leftist organisations. And the peasants' council have made it clear that to maintain their solid unity, the PPLP-KP and the struggle of Kulon Progo's peasants should be controlled by the peasants themselves and not some organisation or other specialist.

This strategy were seen as crucial so as to avoid any danger in the future if there's any hidden political interest in any political organisation that would want to interfere in the struggle. Over time this has been proven right, as the struggle became more solid and some of the political organisations have showed their true face. Further, since the struggle has emerged, local authority belonging to the local or central state are no longer functioning as the villagers have decided to control everything with their own hands.

Criminalisation and the so-called 'Independent Advocates' (LBH)

In recent cases of struggle, some incidents have occurred. Every night and day, men and women patrol their villages, to see if there is any government or other institution responsible entering their village without permission from the villagers. During December last year and January this year, two incidents happened where the investor's cars were damaged and some of the persons inside the car were held hostages for three hours.

“ since the struggle has emerged, local authority belonging to the local or central state are no longer functioning as the villagers have decided to control everything with their own hands. ”

The villagers have made their own laws, and according to them, if any institution wants to come to the area, especially those who are involved in the mega-project, they should face the community first, otherwise it would be an offence to the community law.

- 16 December 2010: six cars belonging to the investors are held hostage and damage occurs to some of the cars.
- 17 December 2010: the outraged community destroyed the mining office and made sure it can't be made operational again.
- 12 January 2011: community destroyed researchers of the company's car.

These actions conducted by the villagers were criminalised and the company have hired a well-known lawyer in Indonesia to sue the community. Every time there's a case such as this, the law aid institution officially named LBH (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum) have tried to convince the community that a successful struggle would be inside the law and further illegal acts should be stopped—although police only issue a warrant and are unable, nor dare, to pick-up the suspect or witness, as the community would be the human shield if



Photos from A rally of around 2000 farmers connected to the PPLP . 20 October, 2009; Wates, Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

any individuals are made hostages of the state because of defending their own rights.

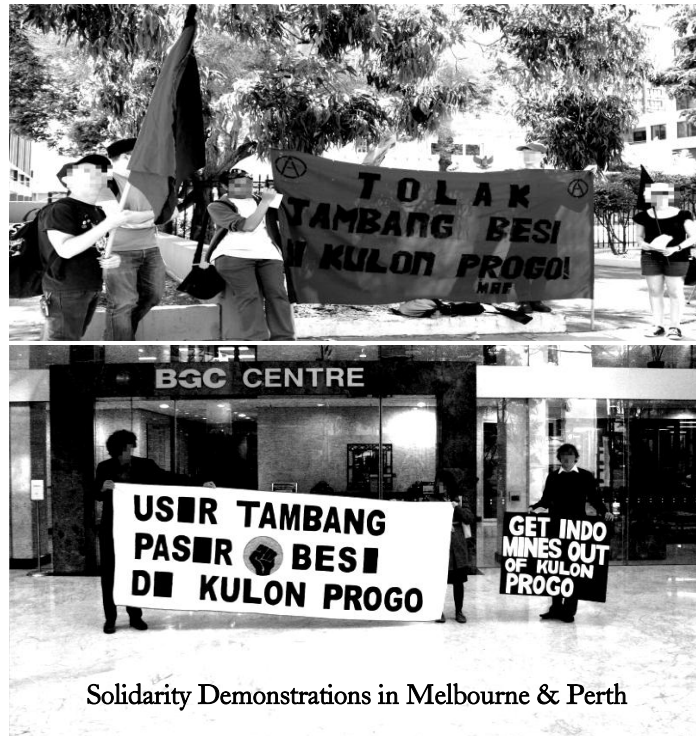
LBH is a problem for the struggle, not only because they believe in political struggle in front of the court, and their firm attachment to the laws and state, but because most of the individual lawyers in that institution are involved in the network of institutional leftist and leftist-environmental organisations which historically have a bad reputation in the grassroots: political intrigues, corruption, dependency, etc. In recent cases they were trying to influence some of the community members to expel the small minority of anti-authoritarians who are deeply involved with the PPLP-KP but didn't have any organisation whatsoever. Fortunately, the conversation was recorded by the community itself, and it was heard in their internal meetings.

The LBH were trying to expel the small minority of anti-authoritarians because of their hostile position to every network of NGOs and other institutional leftists that are so often in close connection with the elites and politicians. LBH were accusing the anarchists of provoking the villagers to conduct illegal actions, all based on lies because most of these actions were conducted spontaneously and the community itself are already hot headed in their position against the mining project and its people. LBH also wanted their network to infiltrate the struggle but were at pains because of the agreement of the PPLP-KP councils to not accept

any interference of NGOs or other political institution. LBH are problematic to the struggle, its narrow political interest cannot be an independent help for the movement. It only can make intrigues to the whole movement and threaten its solid and self-organised struggle.

Global Solidarity

Considering the political implications and the revolutionary tendency of the peasant struggle, we urge to have a solid international solidarity. And on the behalf of the peasants, we need input on how to challenge these laws on an international scale. We have made infrastructure of struggle in the village: namely a community radio and a social centre. And also there has been solidarity actions conducted by our comrades in Melbourne and



Solidarity Demonstrations in Melbourne & Perth

Perth³ (due to the involvement of Indomines Limited). We are in dire need for help to make this struggle successful without any interference of the leftist institution and its disgusting network. Please contact us for further collaboration and we will update you with a more extensive and comprehensive data of the struggle. This letter is not our own initiative but rather a result of our meetings with the PPLP-KP.

On behalf of the peasants,

Kulon Progo Solidarity Network

SAKSI (Free Association of Anarchists & Friends of Kulon Progo's Brave Peasants)

website: <http://petanimerdeka.tk>

³ Further Details via: <kpsolidarity.wordpress.com> & <KPSolidaritas@riseup.net> respectively.

THE FIRST ABORIGINAL RESISTANCE LEADER PEMULWUY (C.1750–1802)

BY MALCOLM TULLOCH, SECRETARY
CONSTRUCTION FORESTRY MINING AND
ENERGY UNION (NSW BRANCH)
CONSTRUCTION AND GENERAL DIVISION

The Darug people are a language group (sometimes called a nation) of Aborigines, who are the traditional custodians of much of what is modern day Sydney. Pemulwuy was an Aboriginal warrior and resistance leader of the Darug people. The Darug were the first Aborigines to encounter the British colonialist occupation.

Pemulwuy was born near what was later named Botany Bay. His name was derived from the Darug word *pemul*, meaning earth. He spoke a dialect of the Darug language. The British colonists first occupied the Sydney region in 1788. Blankets from the ships were distributed to the local Aborigines as a sign of goodwill but were contaminated with Smallpox. This disease decimated the population by as much as 90% in some areas.

In December 1790 Pemulwuy speared John

McIntyre (Governor Phillip's gamekeeper), who later died of the wound. McIntyre was accused of shooting Aborigines on his expeditions into the bush land. His spearing by Pemulwuy was justified under Aboriginal tribal Law. The spear was barbed with small pieces of red stone, confirming that Pemulwuy belonged to one of the 'woods tribes' or Bidjigal clan.

From 1792 Pemulwuy led and organised raids on settlers at Prospect, Toongabbie, Georges River, Parramatta, Brickfield Hill and the Hawkesbury River. A year later David Collins (the colony's Magistrate) reported an attack by Aborigines who 'were of the Woodman's tribe, people who seldom came among us, and who consequently were little known'.

Collins thought Pemulwuy 'a most active enemy to the settlers, plundering them of their property, and endangering their

personal safety'. Raids were made for food, particularly corn, or as 'payback' for atrocities: Collins suggested that most of the attacks were the result of the settlers' 'own misconduct', including the kidnapping of Aboriginal children.

To check at once 'these dangerous predators', military force was used against Pemulwuy and his people. Captain Paterson directed that soldiers be sent from Parramatta, with instructions to destroy 'as many as they could meet of the Bidjigal.

In March 1797 Pemulwuy led a raid on the government farm at Toongabbie. The colonists formed a punitive party and tracked him to the outskirts of Parramatta. He was wounded, receiving seven pieces of buckshot in his head and body. He was taken to the hospital and restrained in leg irons. He was expected to die from his injuries. The next morning he had vanished leaving behind his leg irons.

Pemulwuy's close escapes resulted in the Darug believing that firearms could not kill him and he was invincible. His totem was a Black Crow (*Butu War-gun*) and it was believed that he could fly away from his enemies. Even today the black crow is revered by the Darug as Pemulwuy looking over them and protecting them when they travel through country.

In Collins's words: 'Through this fancied security, he was said to be at the head of every party that attacked the maize grounds'. On 1 May 1801 Governor King issued a government and general order

that Aborigines near Parramatta, Georges River and Prospect could be shot on sight, and in November a proclamation outlawed Pemulwuy and offered a reward for his death or capture.

Pemulwuy was shot dead on 1 June 1802. George Suttor described the subsequent events: 'his head was cut off, which was, I believe, sent to England'. On 5 June Governor King wrote to Sir Joseph Banks that although he regarded Pemulwuy as 'a terrible pest to the colony, he was a brave and independent character'. He further wrote: 'Understanding that the possession of a New Hollander's head...., I have put it in spirits and forwarded it by the Speedy'. The head has not been found in an English repository to date and its return is an outstanding issue for the Darug people.

Historians argue about the nature and extent of Aboriginal resistance to European settlement of Australia, but if one person can be identified who clearly carried out armed struggle against the colonists of early Sydney it was Pemulwuy. The tactics and strategy he used against his well armed enemies were later recognised as guerrilla warfare.

It demonstrates that Aborigines were organised against the invaders of their land and the suppressors of their culture. It is important that we recognise Pemulwuy's struggle for respect, dignity and justice for his people.

PUBLIC DECLARATION:

ON THE APPLICATION OF ANTI-TERRORIST LEGISLATION TO MAPUCHE MINORS [My title -ed]

In Temuco, on January 19, 2011, the institutions and organizations of human and social rights that formed a part of the Mission of Observation to the Center of Provisional Internment and of Closed Imprisonment of Chol Chol (CIP-CRC), in the Region of The Araucanía, declare that:

The above mentioned Mission of Observation aimed to appeal to institutions of human rights, childhood, indigenous peoples, and social organizations, to adopt the situation of three young Mapuche persons charged by the Antiterrorist Law in provisional internment in the above mentioned center.

It is important to note that J.Ñ.P., was released with house arrest on Friday, the 14th of January, 2011. Whereas C.C.M., was also released today, with house arrest. Nevertheless, L.M.C., with whom the Mission of Observation conducted an interviewed, remains imprisoned in this center of provisional internment.

The Mission of Observation was coordinated by Foundation ANIDE (*Fundación ANIDE*) and the network of NGOs of Infancy and Youth – Chile (*Red de ONGs de Infancia y Juventud de Chile*). They took part in the mission, along with the coordinating organizations

the National Institute of Human Rights (*Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos*), Civil Observatory (*Observatorio Ciudadano*), NGO Liberar (*ONG Liberar*), Center of Mental Health and Human Rights CINTRAS (*Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos CINTRAS*), Corporation Option (*Corporación Opción*), NGO La Casona de los Jóvenes (*ONG La Casona de los Jóvenes*), National Indigenous Pastoral Commission of the Episcopal Conference of Chile (*Comisión Nacional de Pastoral Indígena de la Conferencia Episcopal de Chile*), Committee Bishop Oscar Romero (*Comité Obispo Oscar Romero*), Group of Political Ex-prisoners of The Araucanía (*Agrupación de ex Presos Políticos de La Araucanía*), Ethical Commission Against the Torture (*Comisión Ética contra la Tortura*) and Center of Studies Simón Bolívar (*Centro de Estudios Simón Bolívar*).

In the interview with the Mission, L.M.C. claimed to have been arrested April 13, 2010, by unidentified civilian personnel while in class at the Liceo de Pailahueque studying in 11th grade (third year in secondary school), and taken to an unidentified white vehicle, where he was brutally beaten and insulted.

The participating institutions of the Mission qualify the humiliating treatment, used by the police institutions and described by L.M.C., as torture; in addition to beating L.M.C., the police continuously insulted him and interrogated him irregularly about the whereabouts of other Mapuche community members supposedly involved in the so-called 'Mapuche conflict'.

The participating institutions also manifest their concern about the slow development of the process that is being applied to indict L.M.C. With regard to the process, it should be mentioned that the investigation stage was already closed four months ago, in September, 2010, without a date having been set for preparation of the oral proceedings.

L.M.C. also manifested his helplessness for the injustice to which he is subject, on having been charged by the Antiterrorist Law, the reason he remains held, and for being subject to procedures that do not respect the due process, the only proof against him being the testimony of a protected witness. Because of this situation, he is showing depressive symptoms, with variable mood, irritability, emotional fragility and perplexity. In spite of this, L.M.C. expresses his will to withstand with a high psychological cost, according to the diagnosis of the specialists of the Center of Mental Health and Human Rights CINTRAS, who formed part of the mission.

Another relevant aspect is the extreme concern for his

family, composed of his mother and seven brothers, based in the Community Cacique Jose Guiñón, commune of Ercilla. On the one hand, he is worried about the economic situation of his family, since his mother worked formally up until the earthquake of February, 2010, and given that, before his detention, he was a fundamental economic contribution to the family's subsistence. On the other hand is the distance from his loved ones and his community; having had only one visit per month with them has damaged his emotional health, in spite of the fortitude shown in the interview.

Likewise, the mission echoes the concern expressed by L.M.C. on the existence of other Mapuche boys and girls in his community and other communities in the zone that today feel a justified dread of being arrested, beaten, being victims of irregular interrogations and of living through traumatic experiences similar to the ones he has lived through.

Remembering the standards imposed on the states by the international systems of protection of the rights of children, as well as the ones raised by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child with regard to the application of the Antiterrorist law to minors, in a letter sent to the permanent ambassador of Chile in Geneva.

Similarly, the concerns raised to the Chilean State by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child of the Inter-American Commission on

Human Rights. The person who specifically refers to the violation of the articles 1.1, 2, 5, 7 and 19 of the American Convention on Human Rights, where special measures are established that the States must adopt to tend to the best interest of the child, and which also includes the unrestricted respect of the guarantees, guidelines, and principles established in instruments like the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the minimal rules of the United Nations for the administration of justice of minors, for the exercise of the penal action in case of teenagers.

In this context, the assistants to the Mission of Observation express their concern for the persistence of the Attorney General's office in invoking the Antiterrorist Law to apply to minors, in spite of the fact that it is indicated in article 3 that said law cannot be applied in these cases.

Thus, even though the Mission declares its satisfaction with the modification of the precautionary measures taken in the cases of J.Ñ.P. and C.C.M., which allowed them to be released but with house arrest, it will be on alert while L.M.C. continues to be in provisional internment and while these young persons continue being charged by the Antiterrorist Law, as it is the reality that they will have to face when the oral proceedings are carried out, given the aforementioned insistence of the Attorney General's office.

The participants in the Mission call for a hearing be carried out as soon as possible

WORKERS STRIKE AT PASCUA LAMA MINE

that permits the revision of precautionary measures of L.M.C., the only young Mapuche charged for terrorist crimes who, from today, will continue in provisional internment in the Center of Provisional Internment and of Closed Imprisonment of Chol Chol (CIP-CRC de Chol Chol).

We also call on the legislators to reach the necessary agreements that allow new modifications to the Antiterrorist Law that thereby correct the failures that remain in the modifications, making specific reference to the aforementioned special regulation to not apply the law to minors in any stage of the process, during the investigation, provisional internment or the trial itself.

Finally we call on the executive to fully implement the agreements that were established after the Mapuche community members' recent hunger strike, in which these young persons also took part.

Temuco, 19 January 2011

For more information:

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Wednesday 26 January

Almost one month after talks between union leaders and Barrick Gold's (REDPATH CHILENA SA) Pascua Lama mine on the border between Chile and Argentina, to seek better wages plus respective compensatory bonds, workers decided to occupy facilities, located more than 5000 meters high at the mine site, with the aim of pressuring the company to respond to their requests.

The workers are demanding, among other things, better salary, bonus for night shifts, and an annual bonus. Although the requirements are minimal, the company didn't agree to the demands forcing the miners to take action until Barrick Gold mediates with union leaders.

About 50 workers are taking hold inside the tunnel linking Chile with Argentina, 108 in total are striking. The Pasua Lama mine exploits gold considered by experts as one of the greatest on earth.

A repressive state apparatus (police) have travelled from Copiapo to the mine with the intention of stopping the strike through force and oppression.



Workers on strike occupy Barrick Gold's mine on the border of Chile and Argentina

February 1, 2011

Peter Munk, Chairman of the Board
Aaron Regent, President and Chief Executive Officer
BARRICK GOLD CORPORATION
Brookfield Place
TD Canada Trust Tower
3700 - 161 Bay Street,
P.O. Box 212
Toronto, ON M5J 2S1

Dear Sirs:

Re: Strike of Workers at RedPath Chilean, Pascua Lama Mine

This letter is sent to you on behalf of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), the United Steelworkers (USW) and the Latin American Trade Unionists Coalition (LATUC) to express concern about developments at the Pascua Lama Mine in Chile, where workers of RedPath Chilena Construcciones y Cía Ltda. ("RedPath") are on strike. We are writing to ask that Barrick Gold intervene in this dispute in order to ensure that the RedPath workers at Pascua Lama receive a fair collective agreement, consistent with the values and standards of Canadian labour relations.

OFL, the organization of the workers in the province of Ontario, Canada; USW, the preponderant mining union in Canada, and LATUC, a coalition

of Canadian union members of Latin American heritage, are concerned about fair working conditions in Canada and throughout the Americas.

The information that the signing organizations have received is that RedPath is conducting work at the Pascua Lama Mine through a contract with Barrick Gold and that Barrick Gold is in constant communication with RedPath with regard to this strike and negotiations. We also understand that RedPath has adopted positions in collective bargaining that have forced the 108 workers to go on strike. The request by the RedPath workers is for a CPI-adjusted 4% increase in wages, strike resolution pay, a hot lunch and facilities to wash up before lunch. Despite the reasonableness of this position, RedPath has rejected the workers' position.

The signing organizations believe that when Canadian companies operate abroad, they act as ambassadors for our country. We therefore ask that Barrick Gold intervene in this dispute to ensure a fair collective agreement for the RedPath workers at the Pascua Lama site.

We look forward to your early response.

Yours truly,

Ontario Federation of Labour
United Steelworkers
Latin American Coalition of
Trade Unionists

INTERVIEW WITH PAOLA PERIERA FROM BRAZIL'S *MOVIMENTO DOS TRABALHADORES RURAIS SEM TERRA* (LANDLESS WORKERS' MOVEMENT), THE MST.

BY KURT WILKENS

TRANSLATIONS: LUCHO RIQUELME

This is an edited version of an interview I conducted with Paola in early December 2010. Paola was in Australia to attend the Latin American, Australian & Asia Pacific Solidarity Gathering held in Melbourne and Sydney in November 2010, which I was involved in organising as part of my involvement with the Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET). The MST is a peasant movement of around 1.5 million people, the largest social movement in Latin America, with the main objective of obtaining the redistribution of lands from wealthy landowners and corporate interests (Brazil has the highest concentration of land ownership in the world) to the landless and poor people of Brazil, this is generally done through the use of direct action, namely land occupations.

In this interview I make reference to Marta Harnecker's text 'Landless People: Building a Social Movement' (Editoria Expressao Popular, Sao Paulo, 2003), a book that Paola lent me a copy to read, and is a good overview of the organisational structure, aims and methods of struggle of the MST.

When you spoke recently you raised the point that you saw your involvement in the MST within the context of a 500 year struggle. I like the idea that when we talk about the organisations we are involved in and the history of our movement, its not only about something in the past that's distant from ourselves, but that we actually play an active role in creating our own history. So in contrast to Harnecker's text, which is basically an overview of the organisation structure of the MST, I was hoping to look more at your participation within the movement and the way the politics of the MST plays out within your own experiences. Moving beyond that I guess I'll ask about the MST's educational work; and maybe some broader questions that I find interesting about revolutionary politics.

Firstly, could you briefly outline your role within the MST?

P: I'm Paola Periera, I'm 31 years old. At the moment I'm a member of the National Executive of the MST. I'm from the federal district state, a representative of Brasilia, the

capital state of Brazil. Each member of the National Executive has the role of coordinating the MST within the state they represent. The collective of the MST is formed by all the nucleuses¹, or collectives, that exists in the state. And the other comrade who plays the same role is my partner, is a man, because the delegations are always made up of a woman and a man. So we represent our collective, our community in their struggles, and our role is to organise and make links with other workers' organisations within our state, like unions; within universities; with some parliamentarians, especially as our state is the federal capital; with organisations from the country and the city; and internationally.

How did you get involved with the MST to begin with? And from your initial involvement what was the process via which you were elected to the National Executive?

P: The first principle of the MST, to become a member of the MST, is you need to take part in occupying the land. You have to go to a camp, take part in camping in the struggle. From that moment you are a member of the mass front, and then you become a member of a nucleus. From then you start taking part in the decision making process, you contribute to the decisions of the camp and the community. In the camps, the leadership of the MST are looking for those

who are more active, with more clarity or more involvement in decisions- that's the role of the delegates, to look for these people in the camp. So the MST gives tasks to those people who are more active or who speak more in meetings, or who are the most active people. When they find out you have the capacity of leadership or coordination, they take those women or men to attend a training course, a political training course. So, that's were I began and that's how I'm here now. I started working with the MST in 2002, when I was 23.

I was wondering whether you'd like to speak about your personal involvement with a land occupation. Both in terms of whether the action was successful or not, but also the decision making processes like identifying the land to be occupied, who is going to take part, etc...?

P: The taking of the land in an action we prepare beforehand, and with a prior division of tasks. We have people who take care of the infrastructure, the logistics; wood, roofs, tools, food. My role was to take care of the children's education, because the process of taking the land can't stop the process of educating the people, but who makes the proposals is the delegation of the MST. The National Executive proposed three areas, and with all the people that are going to participate in this land, they discuss in their nucleus, because there are lots of families involved. They discuss why

they're going to do it, and they discuss, because they may be there for a year or more, whether they are prepared to struggle, yes or no. And if everyone agrees they decide a date, and then we take it. So because I was in charge of education- we had like a big box, so we put all the books inside. It was my responsibility to take this box... [Laughter at the image of Paola struggling with this huge box] no, the collective, not just me. So I'd sit on the box until sunrise, looking after the box and the books. So the people in charge of logistics would start to take care of the fence, and other people would start to prepare the food. The best time is a night, so they cut the fence; they go in, set up. We don't just cut the fence, we take it down completely, because we're against fences.

Just to clarify, was the three areas proposed just specific to this action or is it the general process?

P: Yeah, they make a search for lands, and for the land owned by farmers that don't produce, so the delegate will propose maybe 2 or 3 places and from those people will make a decision. We also look for those landowners that have big debts with the banks, or big landowners who have land but they obtained it without permission. And we do this because the land hasn't accomplished its social role, as the constitution says in Brazil. So the MST proves by taking the land that the land can be productive and denounces that the latifundista owns land but does not produce. So they are

¹ A Nucleus is an organisational grouping within the MST made up of 10 families

“ We are a resistance movement, we are helping the people by taking small pieces of land, but we are trying to create a system of life outside of Capitalist hegemony ”

taking land also to push the land reform, the agrarian reform.

There is an article in the constitution that says unproductive land should be used for social use.

P: We're saying that the land should be used to accomplish its social role. That's why we're taking the land, to push the agrarian reform, because the agrarian reform is just a slogan, and they've taken a long time to implement it, so they think that way they'll stop the conflict.

What is the specific function of the National Executive? Is it to research potential sites for occupations?

P: A section of the directive looks after all the taking of land. And all the people who take the land, all their friends too, know that this is land is non-productive, or there is slave work, that the owner has slaves, or that there are similar conditions that justify taking the land. The Direction also has to look after the education of the people, explaining why we are doing this or that, that is the main task of the Executive. And also childcare, and we often find that those who participate in taking the land, those in the camps, have better conditions of life within the camps than previously, or from living in the city. We are a resistance movement, we are helping the people by taking small pieces of

land, but we are trying to create a system of life outside of Capitalist hegemony. That's the purpose of these camps, to create these new types of relationships, so we can implement more solidarity between us; so that our production doesn't use GM seeds or pesticides, and that the animals receive good treatment.

As you note that you're seeking to force the government to implement agrarian reform, once you take the land how does the negotiating process start with the landowners and the government? Or do you even seek out negotiation?

P: Each case is different, each has a different history. There are some landowners who don't want to sell off their land, because to have a lot of land in Brazil equals to have a lot of power, kind of like a feudal system. So what happens when we take the land is the Government verifies whether this land is productive, and then to propose to the landowner to buy the land. The Government purchases it, so then that land is in the hands of the State, the Union, they call it the Federal Union in Brazil. So they give the concessions to the peasants, or the land workers, to work there. So the land stays in the hands of the Government, which for us is good because it allows us to continue working there.

Is there any issues of precarity that come out of the State still having control over the land?

P: No. I am a leader of a camp, so I don't know who is the

owner of the land. So they talk to ICRA, the Institute of Colonisation and Agrarian Reform, and they start to deal with them about the electricity and their problems there, but they don't pay anything to the State, they keep working the land, they start working on the roads, making the streets, and they promote technical assistance, like agricultural engineers and vets, in order to help the peasants organise production.

This was something I was thinking about when I was on my way here, like you say, the camps are about setting up a new social relationships, to a large degree, but it is done through requesting the State to uphold its constitutional law, which is basically liberal democratic. What was really highlighted to me from the statement of the recent union delegation to Colombia² was that the demands, in of themselves, are not explicitly revolutionary. But within a Colombian context, one of open class warfare, to implement these demands would require the drastic restructuring of society there. So to have demands such as: stop shooting Colombian unionists or implement the Agrarian Reforms written in the Brazil constitution are actually revolutionary demands. I bring it up because I've found people

² Australian Solidarity Delegation in Colombia, 'Final Statement & Commitments', in *Melbourne Black*, Vol. 1 No.4, October 2010, pp. 11 –14. Also accessible at the LASNET website: <http://www.latinlasnet.org/node/372>

championing the idea that the crisis is great, or that when shit gets worse we're closer to making the revolution. I find there's a dichotomy between those advocating wrestling for concessions from the State and Capital, those who reject make reformist demands, and those who hope for things to worsen so that there can be a 'breaking point' with capitalism, so to speak. I was wondering where you and the MST stand. I think it's a false dichotomy to say there are concessions and then there is revolutionary demands, and that I find it deeply problematic that a lot of people can say that wrestling concessions actually undermines revolutionary action, and I was wondering what your opinion was?

P: Today in the Latin American context, or more specifically the Brazilian context, taking the land is a radical action. We are still fighting against colonisation in Brazil, a struggle that has continued for 500 years. First, it was Indigenous who fought colonisation, based in the forests. Afterwards there was the fight of the slaves, the Afro-Brazilians, whom escaped the slaveholders and went to the forests, where they worked as peasants, working the land in a collective way, and in the 19th century they were called the Messianic struggles, as it was some priests who conducted the struggles, looking for the promised land. In the 20th Century, the peasants organised themselves into 'peasant leagues', which was met by a lot of violence by the dictatorship in order to stop the movement. During the

dictatorship, there was also the introduction of new mode of production, known as the 'green packet'. This was the introduction of pesticides and poisons. They started talking about the development of the country, starting to introduce machinery to the country. So, this was the start of the third process of displacement of the peasants. The cities started to get bigger, specifically the favelas. When the MST formed in 1984, the land was one of the final objectives, the initial idea was that once this objective had been met the MST should disappear, dissolve the movement. That's why the MST now has three main principles: 1. The struggle for the land. 2. The struggle for Agrarian Reform, in the broad sense of reform, inclusive of health, education, the social infrastructure needed for land reform. 3. Social transformation. Those are the three principles we have on our horizon, a society where all the displaced peasants in Brazil have their land. We want a structural change of the country to allow for this, we want to push for the construction of a socialist state by the hands of the workers. So for now, we are only able to achieve the minimums, gaining concessions from the State, but we are providing education and training, political training, for the people, so if there is a big crisis, the people will know what to do, they will know the different means of struggle and know how to make decisions. So some people say we are reformists, some say we are a party, some say we are a

revolutionary vanguard organisation, but we are poor peasants and we are thinking beyond just working the land, we are worried about building new relationships between people, we are worried about building solidarity, we are trying to build new identity of the people, within the country and across the continent. That's why as part of our political education we study the different revolutionary struggles across Latin America, their histories and cultures, to understand the historical and social processes of what is wrong, and what is good; because no one teaches that in bourgeois education.

From my perspective, it is important to have spaces where these new, prefigurative, social relationships can exist, and that these spaces can be good for when these crises hit.

P: We can verify throughout the Left conception of history (well, first off the peasants don't have to be involved in this project, us lumpens) that this crisis has to exist in all the countries, because Capitalism reaches the highest stage of development, and due to this crisis we will have the conditions to make the revolution. But in Brazil, for example, Brazil's economics is much like an *ornitorrinco* [a platypus], because it has a duck's beak and a tail of a horse...whatever, you

“ Today in the Latin American context, or more specifically the Brazilian context, taking the land is a radical action. We are still fighting against colonisation in Brazil, a struggle that has continued for 500 years ”

know, because you have the workers who produce cars with modern technology and you have people on the street selling stuff, informal work. You have an unlevel stage of exploitation. That's why our international coordination with *Via Campesina* is important; we have links not only within Latin America, but also with peasants and poor workers in Canada and the United States.

I was going to talk with your relationships with other groups, and splitting them into three different categories, I guess because you have mentioned Via Campesina, I should ask you about that, as I'm not overly aware of what they do. I was reading something earlier today of your relationship with South African groups.

P: *Via Campesina* is in five continents, originally made up of peasant groups. In Brazil we have lots of groups who are members of the organisation. The MST, a movement fighting against dams, the women peasants' movement, the movement of small farmers, groups of students of agriculture and forestry engineering, also recently joined was the movement of fisherman and also small craftsmen, and the national body of Indigenous people.

What's the international function of Via Campesina? And what are its objectives?

P; We all share similar struggles, for food sovereignty, land, water, the forests (which exist for all humanity), against

Capitalist privatisation of the forests, for workers' rights, to work for a better life, not to be slaves. Now one of the important aspects *Via Campesina* is working on is climate change, because that is happening everywhere. We're losing land due to the change in climate, because we are peasants we know and see the changes in the weather, and the changes of the sea level. So the main perspective of *Via Campesina* is the organisation of poor peasants.

I think it may be interesting, especially for an Australian audience, who when you mention Brazil you often hear two things: the nice beaches and the favelas (especially following the success of films like City of God), to talk about the relationship between the MST and the MTST³.

P: We work with many people in the cities, and we push for them to move back to the country. The city doesn't provide the things needed for a good quality of life, the security of work for everyone. Nearly all the people live in the city of Sao Paulo; the city is so inhumane to live. And when we work with the grass roots organisations working there we find that the people are looking to have houses, not land, but a house.

³ *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto*, Brazil's Homeless Workers' Movement. Website of the organisation (in Portuguese) is <http://www.mtst.org/> (new), or <http://www.mtst.info/> (now out of date, but currently far more extensive).

So they are our comrades in struggle, and we are helping them to create political education they need to understand the structure of the city, how Capitalism works, especially in relation to speculation in housing and the real estate markets. Also, we are doing the training on human rights issues. They also organise occupations, and we support that.

What's your relationship like with the PT⁴?

P: Along with the CUT⁵ and the MST, they are the three organisations of the workers that were created after the dictatorship. These were the organisations that helped create the unity to end the dictatorship, because all the grass roots organisations worked together for this. The PT is a political party, the CUT is the central union body and the MST is a mass movement of peasants, and through our history we find our own way, and achieved autonomy. They started as a progressive electoral group of progressives and workers, and has transformed over time to what we today see as a centre-right party. We have a similar history, we started at the same time and struggled for the same things but we are different. The main difference is with the PT, whilst we support them we

⁴ *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, Brazil's Workers' Party, which has been in a coalition Government since 2003. Currently a member of the PT, Dilma Rousseff, is President of Brazil.

⁵ *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* (Unified Workers' Central)

cannot work with them, because they do not have the courage, or the willingness, to create agrarian reform. For 500 years we've been struggling, as Brazil has the highest concentration of land ownership in the world, that's why we will continue to struggle and confront anyone, including the Government, because we want the democratisation of the land. Now 1% of the population own 56% of the land, and we need to change that.

Most of my understanding about radical education comes from a friend of mine, and his perspective is that the civil rights movement changed how class relationships played out in education. Previously you had a situation where working class people were simply excluded from the education system, but due to the civil rights movement they had to shift to a more 'inclusive' model. His question was how could education function to remain exclusionary within a new 'inclusive' model?

P: When we are talking about Agrarian Reform, we are also talking about education. In Brazil, there is access to public education but this education doesn't prepare the workers for life on the countryside. This is because the education comes as a package, it's the same education for everyone, nor does it respect aboriginal cultures, and that is why many people don't want to study. So the public education is not the education the working class needs. The MST's first land occupation was in 1979, since then a major concern is

education of the children on the occupied land. In the long process of our struggles, we have had some victories, but still ahead of us is the long struggle to change the education in Brazil. What is good for us is now we have links and relationships with fifty universities, to organise classes and courses in different areas. Today we have courses in agriculture, law, journalism, and we start our political education and training from within the MST, at the grassroots, and today we have 9,000 students studying at a university level. And we achieved another aim of the MST, which was to combat illiteracy, because 80% of the population of Brazil don't know how to read or write, the majority from the countryside. So far we have taught 375,00 people to read and write, and we have about 600,00 people doing primary school. We have two schools set up for political training, one at high school level, also for community health, for community administration and for studies in pedagogy. We also have medical students in Cuba, and agro-industry and agro-ecology students in Venezuela. These are some of our victories, but we are 1.5 million people, we still have a long process to go, not only for us within the movement, but for the working class in general.

Also, as it is mentioned in Harnecker's text, the act of occupying land in of itself is a form of political education. I was wondering if you could talk a bit about the MST's praxis, how the political education

connects with land occupations and actions.

P: We build a program for students on the concepts of popular education for the countryside, so we include in our curriculum the history of humanity through interactive methods so that people can become interested in the topic, as we include what situations are happening now in reality, to think and analyse what is happening in our locality, in our reality. So we actively try to have a dynamic and active education processes. We also use different forms of communication, such as music, so people can learn, say, the history of Brazil through music, or theatre. Because the usual process of education is that there is the educator, who knows everything, and the educated who knows nothing. We need to organise education to be able to provide the educator with information. In that way, we are talking about political education. That is not part of the official education system. We want to look at history through the eyes of the workers, the poor people; from the perspective of the oppressed people. In that way we can build our own history.

“ We want to look at history through the eyes of the workers, the poor people; from the perspective of the oppressed people. In that way we can build our own history. ”

CHIXOY DAM REPARATIONS & COMPENSATION CAMPAIGN: 30 YEARS DELAYED & COUNTING; GUATEMALA

LETTER TO THE WORLD BANK & THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

FEBRUARY 24, 2011

BY GRAHAME RUSSELL

Justice, reparations & compensation delayed, 30 years & counting, for Mayan-Achi communities in Guatemala, that were illegally & forcibly displaced, harmed & massacred to make way for the Chixoy hydro-electric dam project.

President Robert B. Zoellick
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433

President Luis Alberto Moreno
Inter-American Development
Bank
1300 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20577
Tel: (202) 623-3100
Office Number: NE1204

Dear Sirs:

With urgency, we write on
behalf of Rights Action
(www.rightsaction.org).

It is sad, distressing and outrageous that the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have not done everything possible to ensure that full compensation and reparations are paid to the thousands of impoverished Mayan-Achi campesinos illegally and forcibly evicted from their villages along the Chixoy river, 30 years ago, to make way for the construction of the Chixoy hydro-electric dam, a project of the WB and the IDB.

This was your project.
This was your investment

financing. Both your banks profited from these “investments”.

It is urgent that the IDB and WB do everything possible to make this right.

Along the Chixoy river in central Guatemala (bordering the departments of Baja Verapaz and Quiche), where your dam was built, some 32 remote, poor Mayan villages were devastated by this project (1975-1983).

Most harmed villages were in the “flood basin”, up river from the 125 meter high dam wall. Many were illegally forced to leave; others lost much of their lands and/or were cut off from and isolated by the existence of the flood basin.

Seven villages are down river from the dam wall. As this “development” project completely diverted the river, drying up some 40 kilometers of the Chixoy river, they have lived in dry conditions ever since. These 7 communities were not “forcibly evicted”, their river and livelihood simply dried up.

COMPREHENSIVE LOSSES & DESTRUCTION – INCLUDING MASSACRES

In varying degrees, the 32 communities lost: homes and personal property; land and territory; access to water and arable land; animals and trees – everything. Not one of the communities was ever properly or legally relocated to homes and lands of equal or better quality than what they were forced to leave.

In the community of Rio Negro – that peacefully resisted being illegally and forcibly evicted -, 444 villagers were massacred over the course of 5 massacres in 1981 and 1982. There is no doubt this targeted repression was linked directly to the level of community organization and opposition to being forcibly relocated.

For all of the above, no justice has been done for the forced evictions and comprehensive losses, let alone for the repression and massacres. No adequate reparations or compensation have been provided to the victims for loss of homes, land and territory, access to water and arable land, animals, trees, personal property.

In every community, their lives today remain considerably worse, in every way, than they ever were before this project.

PARTNERSHIP WITH & PROFIT FROM A MILITARY REGIME

This was your project. There would not have been a Chixoy hydro-electric dam without the investment funds and initiative of the IDB and WB. Between your banks, you provided hundreds of millions in investment funds.

Moreover, you chose to partner in this project with a military regime. At that time, Guatemala was not controlled even by the fiction of a civilian government.

Furthermore, as is widely known, you partnered with the Guatemala military regime during the very worst years of its

State terrorism, repression and genocide carried out against its own population.

The Rabinal municipality, where you built the Chixoy dam, is one of the 4 regions in Guatemala where the United Nations Truth Commission determined (1999) that genocide was planned and carried out by the regime against the local Mayan population.

Your banks should never have invested in and pushed for this project, partnering with this brutal military regime. What kind of “development” do you think this regime was interested in? Once you started this project, your banks should have stopped this project when the repression predictably began in the villages in the dam basin area.

You did not. Well after the massacring of 444 Rio Negro villagers (the last massacre was in September 1982), your banks made further investment dispersals to this project in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

30 YEARS LATER

Now, all this is known. The Chixoy dam case was one of the disastrous hydro-electric dam cases hi-lighted by the World Commission on Dams (1998-2001, <http://www.dams.org/>).

All of this is known by your banks, and yet still you have not done everything in your power and authority to ensure that reparations and compensation are paid to the affected communities and families.

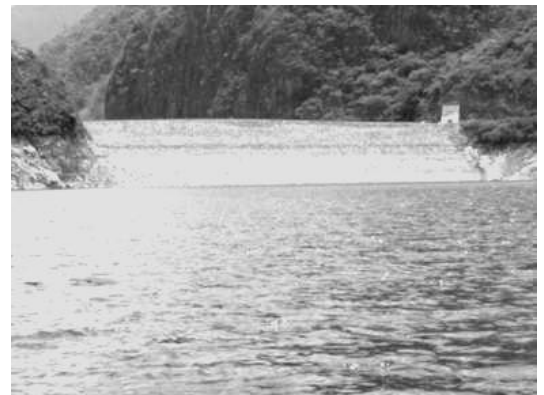
1993 – THE LONG ROAD OF TRUTH, MEMORY & JUSTICE

It has been 30 years since the debacle began and the forced evictions and atrocities occurred.

It has been 18 years since the Rio Negro massacre survivors began to exhume the mass graves where their loved ones were dumped and, in this way, begin to break years of silence since the massacres of 1981-1983, and since the Chixoy dam was completed and their lives and communities were destroyed.

Soon after the exhumations in 1993, the survivors from Rio Negro and other dam-harmed communities began the long process of telling the truth about all that was done to them, about all that they lost, and about getting justice, compensation and reparations.

As your banks probably know, Rights Action has been supporting these efforts since 1994 – beginning first with support for the Rio Negro survivors to build a monument to commemorate the lives of 177 children and women, victims of the 2nd big Rio Negro massacre, March 13, 1982.



The Chixoy dam wall, seen from up-river, on the flood basin. The remains of a number of the illegally evicted communities lie deep below the water. Photo: Rights Action-UNBC delegation, 2010



Dating back 1000 years, Mayan-Achi communities lived along this part of the Chixoy river, also known as the Rio Negro. This photo, taken from the 125 meter high dam wall, shows how the dam project completely blocked off the river, down river from the wall, destroying the local environment and devastating 7 villages. Photo: Rights Action, 2011

1996 – CIRCLING THE WAGONS OF DENIAL & IMPUNITY

In 1996, Rights Action and Witness for Peace went to the first meetings with the World Bank to begin to re-dress the Chixoy dam debacle. Present at that meeting were a number of WB lawyers who sat in on the whole meeting, listening, saying not a word.

Soon after that meeting, the written response of the WB was that -1- the WB had no knowledge of the atrocities and illegal forced evictions, and -2-



Monument, in the Rabinal cemetery, commemorating the lives of 177 Rio Negro children and women, massacred March 13, 1982 – one of the five Rio Negro massacres. Photo: Rights Action, 2004

the WB complied with its responsibilities. Under no circumstances were the WB and, soon after, the IDB going to publicly acknowledge any past or on-going responsibility.

There are words for this: denial and impunity.

The WB and IDB have gotten away with your denial and impunity because of your wealth and influence, and because your banks are agents of the major investor countries. Presumably, the major investor countries do not want any direct and/or secondary liability for crimes, harms and/or violations committed directly or indirectly by WB and IDB projects.

To make a long story short (a story of work and struggle for memory, truth and justice, against denial and impunity), the growing clamour for truth and justice, compensation and reparations continued to grow from 1996 though to 2004. Still the government of Guatemala and your banks denied and delayed.

2004 – PEACEFUL DIRECT ACTION

On September 7, 2004, 3000 Mayan Achi campesinos from the Chixoy-dam harmed communities staged a protest on the Chixoy dam wall. No one was hurt; no property was destroyed; and this time, finally, their voice was really heard. From that moment forward, there began a formal Chixoy Dam Reparations Campaign.

At the same time, the Guatemala government laid trumped up criminal charges (the ‘criminalization of work for

human rights and social justice’) against some of the community leaders, trying to weaken their unity and demands. To make another long story short, this manipulative and abusive tactic of the government failed: national and international condemnation and activism finally got these trumped charges dropped.

Finally, the government of Guatemala agreed to establish a negotiation table, to deal with the Chixoy dam harms and violations legacy issues.

At this time, the WB and the IDB exercised your wealth and clout - your banks refused to sit at the negotiation table as partners alongside the government of Guatemala, across the table from the dam affected communities.

You should have. Your banks partner with the military government of Guatemala to implement this project. Your banks are co-responsible for the entire project, along with the government of Guatemala. The project was your initiative, your investment funds, your oversight.

Even as both your banks profited from your investments, you refused to be considered partners when it came to addressing legacy and liability issues.

However, your banks did agree to sit as “observers” at the negotiation table, moderated by the Organization of American States.

And while you have now “observed” for 7 more years, your banks have still not done everything you can and should to

ensure that due compensation and reparations are paid.

2009 – OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REPORT ON HARMS

In 2009, after 5 long years negotiations (and many delays and deceptions from the government, all “observed” by the IDB and the WB), the government of Guatemala formally accepted the ‘harms and damages’ report that sets out all that was lost, destroyed, stolen or illegally confiscated. (At www.adivima.org, you can find this report: [http://www.adivima.org/documentos/informes/informedeidentificacionyverificacionaprobado-final-\[1\].pdf](http://www.adivima.org/documentos/informes/informedeidentificacionyverificacionaprobado-final-[1].pdf)) Your banks signed on to this report, as “observers”.

2010 – OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REPORT ON REPARATIONS PLAN

In 2010, the government finally accepted a comprehensive reparations plan, complete with financial amounts, community re-building plans and projects, etcetera, setting out what must be done to compensate and provide reparations for the victims. Your banks signed on to this report, as “observers”.

2011 – STILL WAITING

And still your banks “observe”, and refuse to take direct action themselves and/or pressure the Guatemala government to official release and set aside the funds for the plan.

ENOUGH / YA BASTA

It is long over due for the IDB and WB to stop hiding behind their wall of denial, impunity and immunity from legal accountability, and do the right thing.

The harms report and the reparations report are done. The communities are still suffering. They need and deserve to begin rebuilding new lives, 30 years later.

We have lots more information about this issue and would be glad to respond to your questions or queries ... but, in fact, you know very well about this issue, and you know what to do.

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RIGHTS ACTION:

Originally founded in 1983, Rights Action is a not-for-profit organization with tax charitable status in the US and Canada. [The Canadian Rights Action Foundation, founded in 1999, is independent from and works in conjunction with Rights Action (USA)]. Since 1995, Rights Action has been funding and working to eliminate poverty and impunity and the underlying causes of poverty and impunity in Guatemala and Honduras, as well as in Chiapas (Mexico), Salvador and Haiti. We directly fund and work with community-based development, environmental, disaster relief and human rights organizations. We also educate about and are involved in activism aimed at critically understanding and changing unjust north-south, global economic, military and political relationships.



**MAY 1
PHONE IN SIO**

