

PRIMERO DE MAYO 2011  
MAY DAY, 2011

DIAS INTERNACIONAL DE LOS TRABAJADORES' DAY  
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

RESISTE  
MAPUCHE

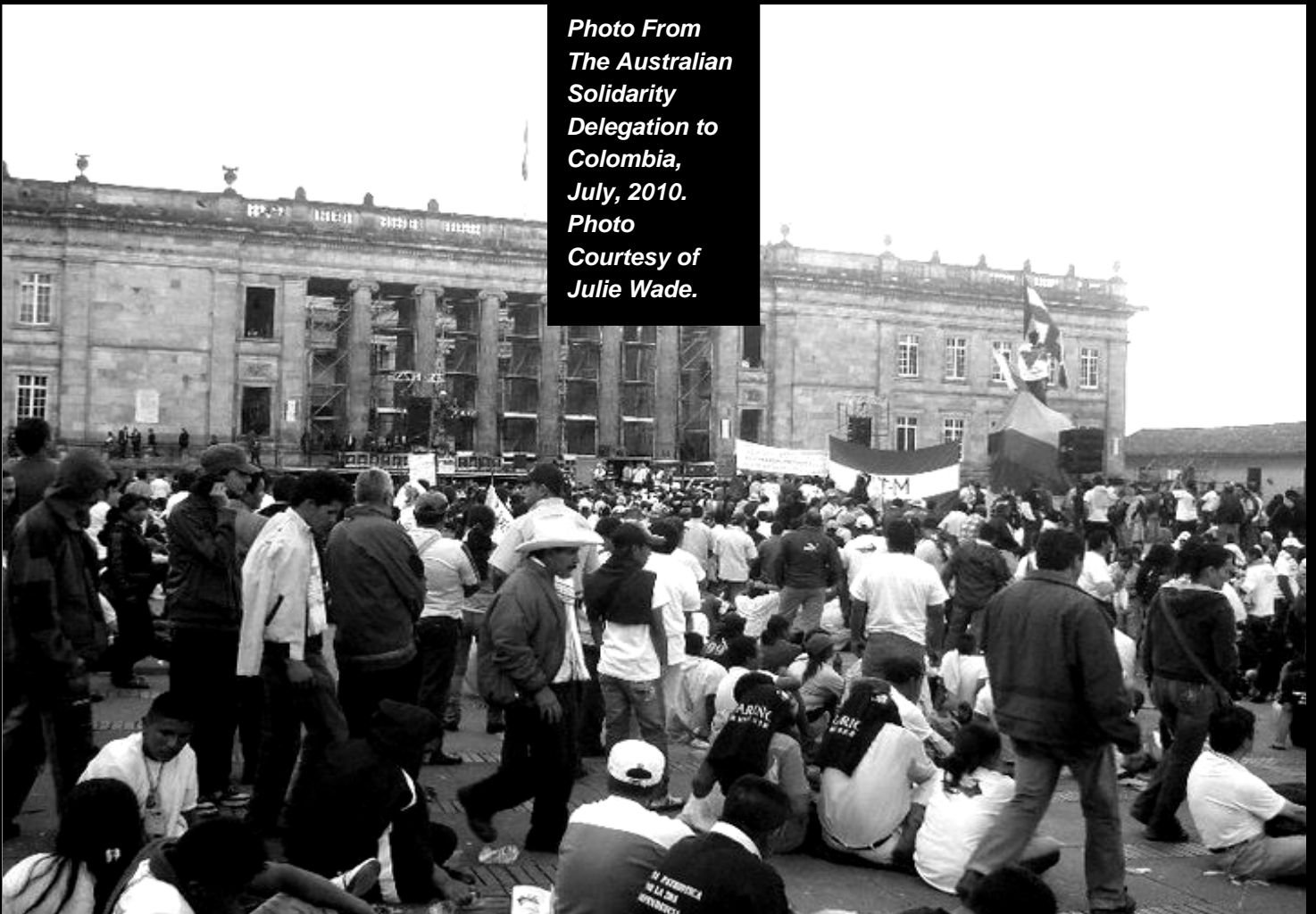


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Tierra y Libertad

RESISTE  
MAPUCHE

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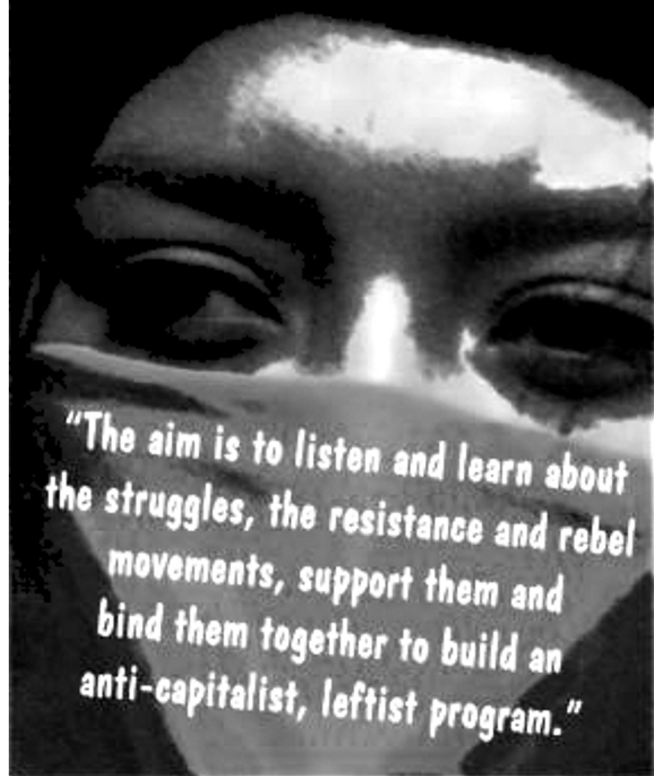
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**The people united will  
never be defeated !!**



**"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."**

# BEFORE THE INVASION ARRIVED

BY LUCHO

Before the invasion arrived, and even for centuries afterward, the verdant forests of southern Chile belonged to the Mapuche people. Today, though, tree farms stretch in all directions here, property of timber companies that supply lumber to the United States, Japan and Europe.

But now the Mapuche, complaining of false land titles and damage to the environment and their traditional way of life, are struggling to take back the land they say is still theirs. As their confrontation with corporate interests has grown more violent, Chile's nominally Socialist government has sought to blunt the indigenous movement by invoking a modified version of an antiterrorist law that dates from the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, 1973 to 1990.

Despite international protests, 18 Mapuche leaders are scheduled to go on trial soon, accused under a statute that prohibits "generating fear among sectors of the population." The charges stem from a series of incidents during the past seven years in which groups of Mapuche have been accused of burned forests or destroyed forestry equipment and trucks.

"Clearly, this is a conflict in which some fairly serious crimes have been committed," against the Mapuche people. They have illegally been deprived of their lands."

To many Mapuche, the current dispute is merely the continuation of a conflict that has existed since the arrival of the

conquistadors in the 16th century. Retreating south of the Bío-Bío River, they succeeded not only in fending off Spanish control but also in having their independence formally recognized in treaties, and were only incorporated into the Chilean state in the 1880's as the result of a series of violent military expeditions.

After that, in a conscious imitation of the American method of dealing with indigenous peoples, Chile put the Mapuche onto reservations so that German, Italian and Swiss colonists could settle in the region. But by the 1920's, policies had changed, and the Mapuche lost title to all but a tiny fragment of their ancestral lands through procedures they now describe as illegal.

"From the moment the Chilean state annexed Mapuche territory, and used violence to do so, the rule of law has never existed south of the Bío-Bío," The Chilean state refuses to recognise that we are a people with rights that were in force even before Chile existed as a nation and which remain in force today."

During the past decade, "the Mapuche have seen this country's economy growing rapidly" as the result of free market policies that have led to an export boom, said José Bengoa, Chile's leading historian of the Mapuche, who account for one million of Chile's 15 million people. "But they are themselves in a state of misery, with an awareness of their situation that drives them to desperation and exasperation."

Though Japanese and Swiss interests are active here in the region that the Mapuche call "Araucanía," both of the main forestry companies are Chilean-owned. On land the Mapuche claim is theirs, the firms have planted hundreds of thousands of acres with Monterey pine and eucalyptus trees, species that are not native to the region and that consume large amounts of water and fertilizer.

"Many Mapuche communities have risen up and said, 'We don't want any more tree farms here,'" said Alfredo Seguel, a leader of a group of young Mapuche professionals called Konapewman. "Productive fields have been turned over to a monoculture that hurts other activities, helps destroy the land, employs very few people and pays low wages."

Yet the signs of a landscape transformed are everywhere here. Highways with billboards that proclaim, "If the forest grows, Chile grows; obey the forestry law," run for mile after mile past fragrant groves of trees that are uniformly spaced and nearly identical in height.





# PUELMAPU COMMUNITIES IN CONFLICT REPORT ASSAULTS AND REAFFIRM THEIR RESISTANCE

## PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE AUTONOMOUS PAICHIL COMMUNITY

11 APRIL 2011

To our people and the general public:

We inform you of new constant and systematic atrocities directed at our people by policemen and civilians, in the service of entrepreneurs and various capitalist interests operating in the area.

For several days, our comuneros have been ambushed and shot illegally by members of the police with ithacas, 9mm caliber handguns and others on internal roads of the community.

The last incident occurring during the night of Saturday, 9 April, where persons maliciously attacked several comuneros of the Autonomous community and tried to enter their premises, resisted briefly with stones until the decision was made to wait inside the homes to prevent any attempted entry whilst the assailants and police continued to make laps around the roads of the community.

For several days this situation had been occurring, this being the most severe. Previously, patrols destroyed a generator light and have killed almost all the chickens of two families and, as a clear threat, left the headless carcasses hanging on a fence.

A few weeks ago, two officers were lurking around the Nguillatuwe community, without

a warrant; they were subsequently evicted.

We understand this is a clear policy of intimidation intend to eject the Peni and Lamuen, the most consistent and succesful in slowing the advance of predatory winka<sup>1</sup> investment.

Unfortunately these events have succeeded in sowing terror in some of our people, but others, like ourselves, are even more convinced of our thinking and attitude of self-defense.

We urge the states, and their national and provincial institutions, to provide real political solutions to the conflict in the Paichil Antreao and Paichil Autonomous communities, and all of the communities in conflict and resistance for political and territorial rights.

In our case, this is based on the return and guarantee of the 222 acres that are still fit for our development. The solution is not in the repression and political persecution in court, but the guarantees for the exercise of our political and territorial rights.

But the oppressive state, at the service of national and transnational capitalism, only applies legal and political repression, and acts as an accomplice in the creation of illegal anti-Mapuche vigilante groups across WalMapu<sup>2</sup>.

Our community will not cease fighting for the recovery of usurped territory and for the reconstruction of our world, any act of violence and its consequences in our territory is the responsibility of the rich winka and the State, because they are the ones that continue with this violent, racist occupation; those with access to machinery and weapons, as well as those who decide laws and policies.

Unfortunately, as recognised in a meeting with officials of the INAI<sup>3</sup> months back, there is no willingness on the part of those who decide, and we can only guarantee our rights through the validation of all forms of struggle.

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1 Roughly translated as denoting non-indigenous persons.

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2 Mapuche land.

3 Argentina's National Institute of Indigenous Affairs.

“ These are the policies of these governments of pseudo-progressive democracy, which keep intact and improve on the repressive organs and intelligence agencies operating under the dictatorship, this time for the advancement of multinational capital on Mapuche territory. ”

**It is the Winka entrepreneurs and their repressive groups who must leave, not us, we have always been part of WalMapu.**

Our community have made concrete proposals to overcome the conflict as the state has power to expropriate land and the resources to pay if necessary, instead of the perpetuation of narrowly targeted 'welfarist' projects for the submission of our people or money to harden the repression.

They have not returned even for the processing of permits to saw dead wood for the construction of housing, while the rich do not cease with the indiscriminate felling of native forest nor the illegitimate appropriation of WalMapu, existing titles that date from the beginning of the 20th century which recognize the Lonko José María Paichil and Ignacio Antreao, who gave services to the oppressor at the end of the war, the also were from the mapuche community Ñizol Lonko Saiweke which organise the last Mapuche resistance at the end of XIX century.

Interculturalism and human rights is a lie for us, because our rights are violated, our land usurped and plundered. Instances of legal recognition, either old and new, such as art.75 paragraph 17 of Argentina's Constitution, the law 26,160 preventing evictions,

Convention 169, and many others, have served only to wash the hands of those who still are complicit in our slow extermination.

Some weeks ago the Mapuche Paichil Antreao/Paichil Autonomous communities in conflict met with international bodies which recognise our complaints, however, in practice, the dispossession has already strengthened not only in Villa La Angostura, but in other areas such as Picún Leufú, Los Repollos, Ñorquinco, bsas Chico and Comallo.

We have data from several areas which recognizes the state intelligence work undertaken by the Ministry of Interior and the SIDE<sup>4</sup>, due to concerns about internal security.

Although the solution should be much simpler, continue to feed the ghost insurgency and subversion dictated by imperialist policies, but not so with gringo citizens like Lewis in Lake Escondido, who encourages vigilante street gangs; or like Fischer in Mount Belvedere who tries to make a water export plant out of Lake Correntoso, a project that required the eviction of three homes in the community and appropriation of an old sacred place.

These are the policies of these governments of pseudo-progressive democracy, which keep intact and improve on the repressive organs and intelligence agencies operating under the dictatorship, this time for the advancement of multinational capital on Mapuche territory.

So, little by little, the members of the police investigation brigades start relating to the conflict in a warlike tone and have offered silver for our withdrawal or betrayal to entrap "the violent

ones", and the landed Criollos have sold off to large nature oil enterprises, for the appropriation of freshwater, or simply as elite tourism, amongst others.

In these days there are eviction orders, harassment and illegal arrest warrants for the Mapuche that act with the sole purpose of continuing to strengthen our identity within our territory.

So our Pu Peñi ka Pu Lamuen<sup>5</sup> need unity in the fight, and understanding the current context where institutional pseudo Mapuche organizations are not, and will not be, able to provide real solutions to our demands, rather we must be a set of mobilized communities and with internal strength we can make a real front against the contemporary invasion.

Bullets will not stop the recovery of our WalMapu, the reconstruction of our people, or the longing for freedom.

No aggression without response. A single people; a single Territory; a single struggle for our freedom.

Laiaingun pu ianakona ka pu weshainma winka, amulepe weichan pu aukache, femuechi tain weichafe iem zeumakulein, weftui pu weichafe, ñielain mapu muleai aukana...

Out of WalMapu, winka; Territorial recuperation and freedom for all our people; Freedom for Mapuche Political Prisoners.

Reconstruction. Liberation. Autonomy. Resistance. Territory.

**Lof en Conflictu Paichil  
Autónoma, Nación Mapuche.**

(Autonomous Paichil Community in Conflict, Mapuche Nation)

Source:  
<http://paismapuche.org/?p=3302>

5 Mapuche brothers and sisters.

4 *Secretaría de Inteligencia del Estado, Argentina's Secretariat of State Intelligence*

International Campaign for the freedom of the Mapuche Political Prisoners, a fair trial without the use of the Antiterrorism act and the revocation of the Cañete Judgement.

8 April 2011.

The undersigned wish to accompany the letter of the relatives of Mapuche political prisoners convicted in the trial in the city of Cañete, we adhere and are in solidarity with the legitimate call for cancellation [of the verdict], and the implementation of a new and fair trial with an independent, competent and impartial tribunal and without the application of Law 18,314 (or anti-terrorism law).

**Mr. Milton Juica**  
**President of the Supreme Court of Chile**

The families of Mapuche political prisoners recently prosecuted and convicted in the city of Cañete, Bío Bío region, want to convey to you our deep concern over the situation of violation occurring throughout the judicial process, which is why our family have maintained a liquid hunger strike since 15th March.

As you know, they form part of the group of 34 comuneros Mapuche who were held for more than 80 days on hunger strike for asking, among other things, that the anti-terror law (18,314 ) not be applied to their cases, that is, to have the possibility of a fair trial. However, despite the agreement with the government [the last hunger strike was stopped due to an agreement stipulating that the anti-terrorism laws would not be used], between the months of November and February an oral trial against 17 Mapuche leaders occurred, to whom this law was fully applied by

# SYMPATHY FOR AND SOLIDARITY WITH MAPUCHE POLITICAL PRISONERS

the Public Affairs Ministry and private plaintiffs: forestry companies and representatives of the government, the latter through its adherence to all the evidence submitted by the Public Ministry, including the use of secret witnesses (the covering of faces) that the anti-terrorism law empowers.

In the judgment of conviction given on March 22, members of the Oral Criminal Court, Carlos Muñoz and Jorge Díaz, expressed they had formed their conviction of the alleged participation in the events investigated and prosecuted primarily through the testimony of a secret witness (called “witness N° 26 ” ). However, the ruling rejected the ‘terrorism’ classification, an obvious contradiction.

An alarming situation is that the Judges considered in their ruling the “hearsay” of a Police Department who allegedly heard the statement “voluntarily ” from one of our family (also charged and convicted), whom has allegedly incriminated themselves and other members of the Mapuche community. In this regard, we stress that this incident was reported to the justice department and general public, because such a declaration was obtained under torture with medical certification to prove injuries caused. However, in an unprecedented move, the Public Prosecutor of Temuco decided not to look into the grievance, instead

archiving the case, and not investigating these serious acts of torture reported by the Mapuche.

Moreover, the largest legal aberration was the fact that our family are subjected to double jeopardy, who for the same offense were prosecuted by the civilian and military justice at the same time. Although the Military Court of Valdivia, 16 December 2010, decided to acquit our family for not finding evidence of the facts investigated. Currently the case is filed in the Court of Appeals of Concepción, without any indication of what the next stage of proceedings are. We are dismayed by the possibility that if the acquittal is not ratified and has a setback, i.e. re-processing each of our relatives, we would again see the situation of double jeopardy. A double jeopardy that has already shown us a trial and acquittal by the Military Courts, yet now a trial and conviction by the Court of Cañete.

You will be aware that the Chilean State has received a report by the Human Rights Commission in November 2010, which established the violation of human rights inherent in the trials and convictions of leaders and members of the Mapuche people under Law 18,314, particularly through the use of “faceless” witnesses (IACHR Report 176/10). Today the State risks international condemnation by an international tribunal such as the Inter-American Court of Human



# INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT: FREEDOM FOR MAPUCHE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Rights, which can only be of concern to this Honorable Court.

Our family, all of our people social activists, Pilquiman Llanquileo Ramón, José Huenuche Reiman, Jonathan Mendez Huillical were sentenced to 20 years in prison and Hector Llaitul Carrillanca to 25 years. We are convinced a violated of rights guaranteed by the constitution has occurred, namely: due process and fair trial.

Therefore, we demand a mistrial and for a new trial by an independent, competent and impartial court, and without the application of Law 18,314 and Terrorism Act. Furthermore, we demand the immediate ratification of the acquittal issued by the Military Court of Valdivia.

We also present you some of the people and organizations who have joined us in this call for justice and solidarity with our just demand.

Sincerely,  
Relatives of the Mapuche Political Prisoners sentenced in Cañete

Sign on to this letter via this link:  
<https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dGxvMDBwRVBkbVhUN3B0ckgwSHIwQkE6MQ>

Translated and reprinted from:  
<http://wichaninfoaldia.blogspot.com/2011/04/campana-internacional.html>



April 15, 2011

We, artists, academics, indigenous organizations, civil, social and popular organisations of various nationalities, we make public our concern about the sentencing of Mapuche political prisoners in Chile: Ramón Llanquileo Pilquiman, José Huenuche, Jonathan Huillical and Hector Llaitul.

We are alarmed by the enormous sentences against them and that they have not had the procedural guarantees to protect the most basic human rights, considering that the criminalisation of social protest can not be the response of the State towards indigenous peoples' demands for land, territory and autonomy.

We call on the Chilean State to ensure due process of the detainees, a fair trial without the use of secret witnesses, the impartiality of the court processing, prison conditions and dignified end to the double jeopardy.

We call on the Chilean State to respect the rights and basic

guarantees of the Mapuche people, to recognize indigenous peoples' rights as enshrined in ILO Convention 169 and urgently respond to the demands of political prisoners on hunger strike.

Finally, we send a message of solidarity from many parts of the world to the prisoners and their families.

1. Rigoberta Menchú (premio Nobel de la paz-Guatemala)
2. Eduardo Galeano (escritor-Uruguay)
3. Manu Chao (músico-España-Francia),
4. Immanuel Wallerstein (sociólogo-EUA),
5. Alfonso Cuarón (cineasta-México),
6. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (sociólogo-Portugal),
7. Aterciopelados (banda de rock-Colombia),
8. Michael Lowy (sociólogo-Francia),
9. Manuel García (músico-Chile),
10. Pablo González Casanova (sociólogo, exrector de la UNAM-México),
11. Pedro Lemebel (escritor-Chile),
12. Theotonio Dos Santos (sociólogo, filósofo-Brasil),
13. Rubén Albarrán (vocalista de la banda Café Tacvba-México),
14. José Emilio Pacheco (poeta-escritor-México),
15. Francisco Fernández Buey (filósofo-Estado Español),
16. Ana Esther Ceceña (economista-México),
17. Emir Sader (filósofo-periodista-Brasil),

18. Marcos Roitman Rosenmann (sociólogo-Chile-España),  
 19. Raúl Zibechi (periodista-Uruguay),  
 20. Amparo Sánchez (músico-Barcelona),  
 21. John Holloway (académico-México),  
 22. Maristella Svampa (socióloga-Argentina),  
 23. Fermín Muguruza (músico-País Vasco),  
 24. Claudia Korol (Equipo de educación popular Pañuelos en rebeldía-Argentina),  
 25. Guillermo Almeyra (académico-periodista-Argentina),  
 26. General Brigadier José Francisco Gallardo (México),  
 27. Vicente Rojo (pintor), Barbara Jacobs (escritora-poeta),  
 28. María Novaro (cineasta-México),  
 29. Gilberto López y Rivas (antropólogo- México),  
 30. Elvira Concheiro (académica-México),  
 31. Hermann Bellinghausen (periodista- México),  
 32. Virgilio Caballero (periodista-México),  
 33. Eduardo del Río RIUS (caricaturista- México),  
 34. Paulina Fernández (docente-México),  
 35. Massimo Modonesi (historiador- México),  
 36. Benjamin Ardití (político-México),  
 37. Alejandro Nadal (economista-México),  
 38. Oscar Oliva (poeta- México),  
 39. Luisa Huertas (actriz- México),  
 40. Leticia Huijara (actriz-México),  
 41. Francisco López Bárcenas (abogado- México),  
 42. Gustavo Esteva (escritor independiente- México),  
 43. Axel Didriksson (académico-México),  
 44. Silvia Soriano H. (académica-México),  
 45. Vanessa Bauche (actriz-México)  
 46. Carlos Aguirre Rojas (historiador- México)  
 47. Fabiola Escárzaga (académica-México)

48. Armando Vega Gil (músico-México)  
 49. Gennaro Carotenuto (periodista-Italia)  
 50. Nello Margiotta (Italia),  
 51. Vincenzo Robustelli (Italia)  
 52. Vicenzo Lavenia (universidad de Macerata-Italia)  
 53. Antonio Zigheldboim (Perú)  
 54. Diógenes Xenos (comunicador-Ecuador)  
 55. Julio César Rincón (México)  
 56. Nicté-Há Dziv Soto (México)  
 57. Gustavo García Rojas (México)  
 58. Agustín Avila (México)  
 59. Irma Estrada Martínez (México)  
 60. María de Jesús Zamarripa (México)  
 61. Jacqueline Peña (Ecuador)  
 62. Patricia Rodríguez (profesora-Nueva York-EUA)  
 63. Alonso Núñez (cantautor de Patagonias Sin Represas)  
 64. Virineya Bertín Mardel (profesora- México)  
 65. Ramón Troncoso (México)  
 66. Tatiana Sule (México)

## ORGANISATIONS

1. Frente de Pueblos en Defensa de la Tierra,  
 2. Frente Popular Francisco Villa Independiente- Unidad Nacional de Organizaciones Políticas de Izquierda Independiente.  
 3. Jóvenes en Resistencia Alternativa  
 4. Consejo Autónomo Regional de la Zona Costa de Chiapas  
 5. Coordinadora Regional de Autoridades Comunitarias de la Montaña y la Costa Chica de Guerrero.  
 6. Comité Ejecutivo de la Policía Comunitaria,  
 7. Unión Popular José María Morelos y Pavón,  
 8. Comité Estudiantil Metropolitano,  
 9. Consejo de Ejidos y Comunidades Opositores a la Presa La Parota  
 10. Cátedra Libre de Estudios Americanistas de la Universidad de Buenos Aires  
 11. Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Francisco de Vitoria

12. Centro de Estudios Sociales Económicos, ambientales y de participación Ciudadana, Centro de Información para Trabajadores y Trabajadores Tijuana-México  
 13. Coalición de trabajadores administrativos y académicos del STUNAM  
 14. Colectivo Acción Inteligente de desempleados y Estudiantes  
 15. Colectivo Cosme Damián-Baja California  
 16. Colectivo FugaEmRede (Galicia)  
 17. Colectivo de Mujeres Tejiendo Resistencias  
 18. Colectivo Utopía-Puebla, Colectivo Votán Zapata  
 19. Cooperativa Máteru Kurhinta-Michoacán  
 20. Frente Amplio contra la Supervía poniente de Cuota  
 21. Frente Nacional de Lucha por el Socialismo (FNLS)  
 22. Frente Único Nacional de Trabajadores activos, jubilados y pensionados del IMSS  
 23. La otra Huasteca-Totonacapan  
 24. La Voladora Radio (Amecameca)  
 25. Maderas del Pueblos del Sureste-Chiapas  
 26. Movimiento por justicia del Barrio-Nueva York  
 27. Xarxa d'intercanvi de Sants Barcelona (Estado español)  
 28. Niñas y niños en la otra campaña-México, regional Surponiente la otra campaña Ciudad de México  
 29. Plataforma de Solidaridad con Chiapas y Guatemala de Madrid (Estado Español)  
 30. Radio Nómndaa- La palabra del Agua  
 31. Regeneración Radio  
 32. Sector de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la Otra Campaña Región Centro y región, Huasteca-Totonacapan.  
 33. Kolectivo de Medios Aztlán Alta California (EUA)  
 34. Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET)

# A TOUR OF DISPOSSESSION & RESISTANCE THROUGH MEXICO'S INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

BY: MARCELA SALAS, SERGIO BIBRIESCA, JOANA  
MONCAU, GLORIA MUÑOZ AND SPENSY PIMENTEL.

VIA:  
DESINFORMEMONOS.ORG

**Mines, highways, tourist attractions, bridges, stores, agricultural business and energy production are just some of the many national and transnational projects underway on Mexico's indigenous territories.**

**Autonomy and collective organising are some of the answers coming from the bottom**

Mexico. The one constant in the mega projects prompted and driven by national and transnational businesses, agreed to by the many villagers and indigenous co-op members in Jalisco, Durango, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Federal District and Michoacán, is that they are planned or put into place without consulting the people, under the banners of progress and development and having as an immediate consequence the dispossession and the destruction of their territories, their culture, their natural resources, their sacred places, and traditions; in other words, the destruction of life.

Over the sacred territory of the village wixárika, in the municipality of Real de Catorce, San Luis Potosí they are under the threat of 22 mining concessions granted to the Canadian company First Majestic Silver.

In another area, co-op members from the town of purhépecha,

from the communities of Nurío and Cherán and the municipality of Uruapan, denounced the invasion of genetically modified avocado crops along with the invasion of department stores such as Wal-Mart and Soriana in their region.

In the Costa-Montaña region and the Sierra Madre of the south, in Guerrero, representatives from Regional Coordinator of Community Authorities (CRAC)-Community Police (Policía Comunitaria), have shown that several international mining companies have already been authorized by the Mexican Government to explore and exploit these lands for up to next 50 years.

José Luis Claro Rosales, member of the coca community of Mezcala, mentions how pervasive the threat to privatise the heart of his village is, which is the island of Mezcala, in the Chapala lake, the largest body of water in Mexico.

In the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Carlos Manzo says, "they have placed up to 500 wind turbines as part of the wind energy production project, promoted over 10 years ago by transnational Spanish companies.

Deforestation, extinction of species, bird mortalities along with the drying of soil, the contamination from oil spills, and the destruction of landscapes, are just some of the grave consequences as a result of such energy mega-projects of this caliber being undertaken currently.

In Santa María Ostula, Michoacán, the plans consist of highways, bridges, tourist attractions, and land privatisation programs. The highway project, explain the co-op members from Ostula, is part of the Sustainable Regional Plan of Michoacán as it plans the construction of a major interstate, hotels, and residential divisions without consulting the communities.

Finally, in Milpa Alta, in the Federal District, it has being proposed to construct a major highway connecting it to Metepec, Puebla which "will affect our territory, Nahua, our forests, our flora and fauna, and will divide our community, not only geographically but our unity since some are against this project and some are for it and this will affect our internal peace".

Autonomy and collective organising is the appropriate response against these programs, agreed all those interviewed. The natural resources, the way of life and the indigenous territories are at risk and they are not willing to yield them.

All interviews included in this report were conducted during the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) held in the community Mezcala coca, 5 and 6 February 2011.

The complete version of this report is available at:  
<http://desinformemonos.org/2011/03/un-recorrido-por-el-despojo-y-la-resistencia-en-el-territorio-indigena-de-mexico/>



# OSWALDO SEVÁ: "THE OFFENSIVE OF CAPITAL AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND FARMERS IS GLOBAL."

EDITED VERSION OF AN INTERVIEW BY SPENSY PIMENTEL.

VIA:

DESINFORMEMONOS.ORG

Truly the struggle that Oswaldo Sevá is most involved in is the movement against the Belo Monte power station on the Xingu River. A paradise of biological and social diversity in the Amazon is now threatened by this giant hydroelectric project. Since the 1980's, Seva has published critical studies of the project, demonstrating its failures and inconsistencies. In the following interview, SevÁi notes that the actual stage of social-environmental conflicts is really global in size, representing a challenge for social movements all over the world.

The offense in communal farming and indigenous land. It's an offensive tactic with its sights set on Central and South America, but it's also devastating diverse regions in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. It is a global, capitalist offensive that tries to overcome one of the biggest structural crises of the capitalist system.

The favourite targets of the offense are the localities and regions with natural resources that are considered strategic. And from there they build money creating projects that are able to generate high yields - which obviously depend on cheapening economic and social costs.

The first step to solidify each of these investments, contrary to what many argue, is not the financing of some global system

that exceeds its capacity to invest, but the conquest of the lands that were already occupied, landlords and land users who are in some cases very old, human groups established centuries ago. Their lands should now be 'liberated' by installing dams, new mines, or large plantations of eucalyptus, palm, or soy, and highways and train systems that connect with the world market. There the residents and their neighbours, chosen for the great capital held within the land, should be transformed into proletariats, a portion of the wage earners that can only find a way to live through the market and for the market. That's the offensive strategy.

## Democratic conquests under threat

Once threatened, the capitalist system reverts to its authoritarian origins, and each time uses more intermediaries to abuse the people, informants that in reality create counter-information, trawling the legitimate and free movements, and acting by way of guards who harass and intimidate dissidents and those who resist.

Capital is reestablished even more solidly inside the government's three spheres: the executive, the legislative, and most of all the judicial system. While the stronghold of the largest businesses keep growing, tough democratic victories will be corroded and will collapse.

The false discourse about the "national interest" confronting the "resistance of the minority".

It's an obsessive attempt at simulation: accuse the others of doing what these same corporations are doing. Numerically they are, yes, minorities that live on the these lands targeted for these investment projects; but those who benefit are not the majority of the country, but rather the much richer minorities, the giant landowners, the financial system.

The future situation will be much more serious when the people around the world are more uninformed, demobilised, and manipulated.

To read the complete interview see:

[www.desinformemonos.org](http://www.desinformemonos.org)

**" There the residents and their neighbours, chosen for the great capital held within the land, should be transformed into proletariats, a portion of the wage earners that can only find a way to live through the market and for the market. That's the offensive strategy. "**

# LATIN AMERICA & THE US: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ARE THE ENGINES OF CHANGE

BY NIKOLAS KOZLOFF

VIA: UPSIDEDOWNWORLD.  
ORG & HUFFINGTON  
POST

13 April 2011

Recently, [I](#) sat down with Benjamin Dangel, author of the recently released *Dancing with Dynamite: Social Movements and States in Latin America* (AK Press), for an interview.

With its plethora of social movements and tangled politics, South America can seem befuddling to the outside observer. Ben Dangel's lucidly argued and dynamite book, however, goes a long way towards rectifying the situation. Though political forces on the ground have made significant gains in recent years, they still face uphill battles as they press ostensibly leftist regimes for more concessions. An astute and level headed observer, Dangel soberly assesses this dynamic while highlighting the very real and practical dilemmas faced by activists moving forward.

**NK: You've written an extremely ambitious book which takes the reader all across South America. One of the most impressive things about the work is that it is largely based on your own personal interviews with political participants at the grassroots as opposed to mere secondary research. How long did it take to research and what was the most fascinating country that**

**you worked in?**

BD: The book is the result of over eight years of research, traveling and interviewing across Latin America. This period of time coincided with the rise to power of most of the region's current leftist leaders, and so the interviews I draw from in the book reflect a lot of the initial hope and subsequent disappointment among many social movements. The most interesting place I've worked in is definitely Bolivia, where the power of the grassroots movements is the strongest, and the impressive relationship between these movements and the government of Evo Morales is constantly changing.

**NK: It can be tough in many ways to conduct research in South America. What prompted your interest in the subject matter and what were some of the obstacles that you encountered along the way?**

BD: The main things that drew me to writing about politics and social issues in Latin America were the impact US foreign policy and corporate activity had on the region, and the hopeful and relatively under-reported social struggles going on. On the one hand, the connection to the US in the so-called war on drugs, and the corporate looting of natural resources, were all issues I thought more readers of English-based media in the US should know

about. And the sophisticated organizing tactics, grassroots strategies and victories of social movements in the region were stories I wanted to help amplify and spread in the US, for the sake of awareness, solidarity and lessons to be learned. The main obstacle in doing this research is the actual cost of the traveling. I've worked all kinds of odd jobs over the years, in construction, farming, and various kinds of manual labor, to pay for the plane tickets to get to Latin America in order to conduct research and writing on the ground.

**NK: Here in the U.S., many on the left idealize Chávez and the like, yet you suggest that many ostensibly leftist regimes may sap the energy of today's social movements. How has this happened, and could one say, therefore, that "Pink Tide" regimes may ultimately exert a counter-productive or even pernicious effect upon local politics in their respective countries?**

BD: The way this relationship has played out is different in each country. Some Latin American presidents, upon taking power, have been more willing and able than others to collaborate with the social movements that help bring them into office. The relationships in Venezuela and Bolivia are probably the healthiest in this sense. In other countries, such as Brazil with President Lula and the Landless Farmers Movements, the Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa and the indigenous movements there, the relationship has been more difficult, with the governments repressing, criminalizing and demobilizing movements when possible. *Dancing with Dynamite* looks at how this relationship, this dance, has played out in seven different countries. It tells a story beyond what the presidents and major politicians have been doing or saying, and focuses more on the

history of the past decade from the perspective of the grassroots. And this view from below is something I think more people in the US left would benefit from focusing on, if anything to understand the full picture of what's been driving these momentous changes over the past ten years.

**NK: Of all the South American countries you describe, Bolivia seems to have the most revolutionary potential. Why is this so, and what new radical developments can we expect from Bolivia in the coming years?**

BD: I think this potential comes in part from the legacy and strength of indigenous movements in the country. Over 60% of Bolivians self-identify themselves as indigenous, and this identity has manifested itself in powerful ways in key mobilizations over access to natural resources and making politics in the country more participatory and accessible. The rich history of labor, student, farmer and other activist movements have also contributed to today's grassroots dynamics. Many people in Bolivia, which is the poorest country in South America, also have to turn to political activism and social organizing to survive; in many communities fighting for access to water, ousting a corrupt mayor, defending rights to grow coca crops, these are parts of everyday life. This capacity to mobilize translates into a diversity of movements that are ready to take action when necessary, whether it's to hold Evo Morales' feet to the flames, or mobilize against the right and foreign corporations. Because of this dynamic and often-changing landscape, it is difficult to say what will happen in the coming years.

**NK: From a political and economic perspective, Brazil dwarfs all other South American countries. Recently, Dilma Rousseff, Lula's protégé in the Workers' Party, won Brazil's**

**presidential election. That is good news for Correa, Morales and Chávez since Rousseff is unlikely to harass leftist regimes in wider South America. Yet, as you point out Brazil has become an agribusiness juggernaut, displacing poor peasants both within and outside its borders through its soybean industry. How can the more radical bloc of Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador seek to contest Brazilian geopolitical hegemony in the region?**

BD: The sad reality is that destructive agribusinesses, particularly soy, which displace poor farmers, destroy the environment and use toxic pesticides, are rapidly expanding across Latin America. Brazil is one part of this expansion. Soy crops are all over many parts of Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay and Argentina. There has not been a lot of political will on the part of the region's left of center leaders to confront this trend. As far as Brazil's power in the region, I think Lula helped pave the way for many progressive regional initiatives and diplomatic approaches. I think that Rousseff will likely continue in this tradition. If Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador seek to contest Brazil's power, they will likely do so together, cooperatively against Brazil, rather than on their own against this imperial neighbor.

**NK: Social movements in South America have not invested a great deal of energy in pushing for a more revolutionary foreign policy, preferring instead to concentrate on bread and butter issues at home. Should they advocate more loudly for a different sort of foreign policy, and if so what should it look like?**

BD: Well, I think social movements have pushed for more revolutionary foreign policy. The grassroots, continent-wide push against Bush's Free Trade Area of the Americas was historic. The

anti-imperialist stance of many of the region's new and recent presidents is largely a response to grassroots pressure against US-militarization of the war on drugs, against US military bases, against meddling from Washington, against foreign domination of natural resources and the economy. If there has been any lack of mobilizing for a more progressive foreign policy, I think it's because many movements are relatively content with the policies of their presidents in this respect. The landless movement in Brazil, for example, applauded Lula's foreign relations, but criticized his weak land reform. One of the most progressive aspects of Correa's administration in Ecuador has been his foreign policy. That said, I think a further strengthening of regional independence from the US will remain a key goal of social movements in the region.

**NK: As you point out, some leftist leaders have conducted anti-environmental policies. In their adherence to resource nationalism, they're harking back to a rather outdated twentieth century model of development, one which has been contested as of late by the region's rising environmental parties. In Brazil, Marina Silva of the Green Party netted a whopping 19% of the vote in the nation's first round of presidential voting. What kind of a political impact do you expect green politics will have on the wider region, and how can social movements take advantage of growing environmental consciousness to bring about revolutionary change?**

BD: Many social movements have been critical of the environmentally destructive extractive industries pushed by leftist governments, particularly in mining, gas and oil industries. While this will likely remain an area of contention between socialistic governments and the movements effected by these



industries, there is a growing trend among leaders to address the causes of climate change and environmental devastation across the globe. The Evo Morales' government demonstrated this in its participation in climate change talks and conferences. Sustainable policies based on the concept of Buen Vivir (Living Well) advocated by the region's indigenous provides a fitting model for all nations and people to follow

**NK:** You seem to be particularly speaking to and addressing U.S. activists in your book, and one of your more intriguing chapters discusses the connections between South American and U.S. social movements. You cite the case of Chicago workers who were influenced by their Argentine counterparts as they took over a factory in 2008. Yet, you yourself concede that applying the South American experience to the U.S. may not work as both societies have very different histories and political cultures. If that's true, then what can the U.S. left learn, concretely, from radical politics south of the border?

BD: I think a lot of activists in the US can learn from movements based in Latin America. As I discuss in the book, there a few key movements and actions in the US that drew from tactics and strategies of the landless movement in Brazil and water rights activists in Bolivia, for example. One major tactic is not allowing a fear of empowering the right dictate all actions as activists. I think that is particularly useful to people in the US right now. In Brazil, the landless movement continues to support the lesser of two evils in elections while also occupying unused land and working it for survival, regardless of the slow pace of land reform pushed by the government. Social movements in Bolivia have been able to both defend the progressive

policies of the Morales government while radicalizing his policies by pressuring him from below. Translating these tactics, which I outline in the book, in the US, will be different for each community. The past ten years in Latin America have seen a historic shift to the left in the halls of government power and the streets, so it makes sense that people in the US need to learn from these examples if we are to break out of the stranglehold of our stagnant political culture.

**NK:** Thanks very much for your time!

BD: Thank you!

For more information on *Dancing with Dynamite*, visit [www.DancingwithDynamite.com](http://www.DancingwithDynamite.com)

Source: <http://upsidedownworld.org/main/international-archives-60/2998-latin-america-and-the-us-social-movements-are-the-engines-of-change>

# PLUNDERING ON THE EVE OF THE WORLD CUP AND THE OLYMPICS RIO DE JANEIRO: COMMUNITIES THAT DON'T BELONG ON POSTCARDS

EDITED VERSION OF A TESTIMONY  
RECORDED BY TATIANA LIMA IN VILLA  
AUTODROMO, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL.

To the west of Rio de Janeiro, more than 900 families are being threatened with eviction. This is the preamble to the World Cup and the Olympics. The following is testimony by Altair Antunes Guimaraes.

I grew up in the island community of the Caizaras on the Rodrigo de Freitas Lake. It was 1965, and Carlos Lacerda was governor. The accusation was that we had polluted the Rodrigo de Freitas Lake. It was all a lie! It has become the most upscale part of the whole city of Rio. It was property speculation.

I was removed along with my family in a truck owned by the garbage removal company. When

we realized what had happened we were in a part of the city that nobody recognized or had heard of. It was a place without electricity, water supply, or schools, in the middle of nowhere. The name of the place was City of God. Up to this day, I cry when I remember my infancy and the exit from my home. I was left without roots.

Only as an adult I understand what had happened, politically, with me when, again, 30 years later, my house was on the route of the Yellow Line, the road that would be built to connect the center of the city to the western region. It was during the time of the government of Cesar Mala.

This time I was not evicted; I was resettled. The difference is that we were removed from our house, but we were placed in houses in the same community that were built by the government. This meant that we were barely given foundations and walls, and that the inhabitant would have to finish the construction. It was absurd. It was there that my struggle began. My political consciousness. My love to fight. With resistance and much discussion with the municipality, we arrived at the point where the governor paid for all of the work on the houses, as it should be. I left the City of God for my own reasons, because I had separated from the mother of my daughters. I began my life anew, and moved into the Villa Autodromo. I have been a community leader here since 2003. Governor Brizola conceded the titles for the properties to the residents for 40 year in 1992. Later that concession was renewed for 99 more years. Even so, the current governor, Eduardo Paés, is trying to remove the community of Villa Autódromo.

Every hour, the governor makes something up. We have already been called everything: polluters, devastators, vandals, anti-statists, invaders, the only land available to build the residence for the athletes for the Pan-American Games, a place to focus the attention of the media, a mistake of the organizers of the Olympic Games, the security perimeter of the Olympic Games, and, now, we have become the area of environment protection, which is the same thing as saying we are devastators. We are surrounded by luxury condominium and by the middle class, but the rich don't pollute.

Governments don't think before removing people. They interrupt the lives of people. They believe that a return to normal life will be automatic, but that is not the truth. 119 favelas are being

threatened with removal. We will only leave here by force, because the option that the government has given us is humiliating. There are only three alternatives: a voucher to purchase a tiny house located far away, a miserable compensation, or the streets.

The full text can be read at:  
[www.desinformemonos.org](http://www.desinformemonos.org)

## 2010: THE CONTEXT & IMPORTANCE OF THE ORGANISATION OF POPULAR STRUGGLE (AN EXTRACT) BY FARJ

In 2010, Rio de Janeiro was named as one of the main locations for both the 2014 World Cup 2014 and 2016 Olympics.

Though seen with positive eyes by the population, these events represent a party for construction contractors and tourism entrepreneurs, as well as a full plate for the opportunism of politicians. Within this situation we see the emergence of the insatiable hunger of the exploiting classes and leaders of Brazil, even worse within a country of brutal social inequality as ours.

Two mega events that demand commensurate infrastructure expenditure, and which ultimately suit the policies of the (national) Growth Acceleration Program (PAC) and the (continental) Initiative for the Integration of Regional South American Infrastructure (IIRSA). Both plots converge to benefit large national and transnational enterprises, and enacted via state and municipal policies. It is barely worth mentioning that such policies are defined and implemented undemocratically,

with neither consultation with the people nor with any of the real demands being met. We may mention the lack of jobs, quality education, health care, the issue of housing, not to mention others that have been going on for decades and decades without any effective policy taken by governments. After all, 'incentive programs' and 'aid grants' are palliatives which make for nice statistics and benefit the demagogues, but are far from concrete proposals to build a strong people, something that will never be top priority of any government.

It is in this context that, in Rio de Janeiro, this year brought a resurgence of the policies of 'law and order' shock tactics and the UPP (Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora/ police pacification units), and consequently the criminalisation of the poorest sections of society and social movements organized by the workers and exploited. That is, through the argument to bring 'order' to the city, we saw the brutal repression by the

**“ The state of Rio de Janeiro in recent years is a reproduction of capital's destruction of relationships of justice in the field, thanks to the intensification of real estate interests, due to the upcoming major events, and the increasing use of predatory industrial enterprises ”**

government of workers and residents in the informal economy. The social issue is treated with beatings and repression, ensuring 'order' to the prosperity and profitability of the shops in the tourist areas within the elitist and privileged area south of town.

Under the UPP a number of Rio favelas were occupied by police and military forces. As for those who live in these occupied communities, this represents an immediate solution to halt the violence and repression undertaken by drug traffickers for at least the last 30 years. This kind of solution, in addition to initially prioritizing the occupation of communities located in the south, does not solve fundamental issues such as employment, health, education, housing, among others. Meanwhile, other important social demands are abandoned and the state's presence is only military. On the other hand, some NGOs, private sector service providers and, especially, land speculators, see the great business opportunities, turning police activities into profit and easy opportunism.

Government measures such as these, lined up on the different levels of power, point to the alliance between governments and various business interests at the expense of autonomy and the demands of the population. Some critical issues are housing, transportation and unemployment.

The first, we discuss the speculation and evictions, the latter always accompanied by a strong crackdown on the homeless and their support. We can also highlight the communities located in areas of flood and geological hazard, where each year hundreds of people lose their property and their lives, as occurred in 2010 in

*Morro do Bumba* (Niterói municipality), and this year in the mountain cities. Not to mention the lack of sanitation and drinking water in many slums and poor neighborhoods of Rio.

Many workers, held hostage by the bad service of privatised transportation, spend hours in transit from home to workplace, in trains, buses, subways and crowded vans, with the inversely proportionate increase in fares.

Unemployment is not only associated, as suggested by common sense, with a public education system that does not work, but also by corporate policies that benefit from the large number of unemployed people to diminish the value of work and whom fail to comply with a series of labor rights. The immediate response of many to this situation is to search for informal work.

**“ If for the PT analysts "the poor have done well" during the Lula government, we find that the bourgeoisie did a lot better ”**

In the countryside the situation is also worrying. The Lula administration in these eight years represented a serious setback in the struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil. According to the Pastoral Land Commission in 2010 there was a reduction of 44% of settlers from the previous year and a 72% reduction in hectares intended for land reform. INCRA has become even more inefficient with its budget cut nearly in half from 2009.

It is increasingly obvious that the government prioritizes use of its bountiful resources towards the benefit and expansion of an agricultural model focused entirely

on the use of agro toxins, slave labor, concentration of income and foreign markets; and not at all for the rural poor, consisting mainly of farming families which, according to IBGE agricultural census of 2006, employ 85% of the rural workforce and produce about 70% of the food that arrives daily to the Brazilian table.

The state of Rio de Janeiro in recent years is a reproduction of capital's destruction of relationships of justice in the field, thanks to the intensification of real estate interests, due to the upcoming major events, and the increasing use of predatory industrial enterprises, such as Companhia Siderúrgica do Atlântico (ThyssenKrupp). Rio de Janeiro, despite its small agricultural potential, features prominently in the statistics of slave labor in the country because of the exploitative use of rural manpower<sup>1</sup>. Thus, it is clear that the Lula government, despite the hopes of millions of rural Brazilians, has strengthened agribusiness rather than family farms; GM in place of agro-ecology; the concentration of land in lieu of land reform; the criminalisation of social movements rather than guaranteeing their freedom and autonomy of action; subsidised private education and health care rather than strengthen public services; approved the new Forest Code, undertaken the *transposição do rio São Francisco*<sup>2</sup>; negotiated

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<sup>1</sup> The *Research Group of Contemporary Slavery* (from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) recorded 7398 cases of workers in slave-like conditions in the state of Rio de Janeiro from 2000 to 2010; the winning municipality being Campos dos Goytacazes, with 5495 cases - due to the sugar industry.

<sup>2</sup> A huge project to redirect portions of the São Francisco River, ostensibly to irrigate semi-arid regions in Brazil; but better seen as providing water to large agribusiness interests and the

# UPDATE ON HONDURAS COUP, MARCH 2011

BY AUSTRALIANS FOR A DEMOCRATIC  
HONDURAS

with dictators in Iran and Africa; sent troops to Haiti, gained international prominence and eventually paid the infamous IMF.

This embodies the very picture of the government. And if their social program passed crumbs to poor and working people, the same cannot be said of the subsidies passed out, via BNDES<sup>3</sup>, to contractors, banks, the business community and agribusiness. If for the PT analysts "the poor have done well" during the Lula government, we find that the bourgeoisie did a lot better, now dressed in the discourse of the LEAST WORST. Thus, we evaluate firmly that the only way to resist and face destruction of our lands, the death of rural workers, the poisoning of workers in the city, the evictions, the criminalisation of social movements and the killing of our people is to fight in an organised and autonomous form against foreign and national capital. That's what we do. It is the struggle for life that unites us! In Community activism, union, peasant and popular, we will deposit our energies to create a strong people!

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latifundista at the expense of access to water for human consumption, whilst simultaneously adversely affecting the ecosystems in immediate proximity to the river.

<sup>3</sup> Brazilian Development Bank

The Lobo coup regime demonstrated a policy of unrestrained violent imposition of laws serving international neoliberal agendas. Heavy repression of almost every protest gravely violated international human rights laws, as teachers began indefinite strikes supported by parents, students and other sectors of the resistance and unions, to stop the privatisation of education and health through 'municipalisation'. Different social sectors worked together on 30 March 2011 organising a national general strike day to voice their demands, stopping traffic from the early hours of the morning in many parts of the country.

MASSIVE UPRISING was organised in March, to oppose:

- An imminent new law to privatise education via municipalisation, in the deceptive name of 'Law of Incentives for Community Participation for Quality Education', with its second debate in Congress on 1 March 2011
- No part of the agreement signed between the regime and teachers on 30 August 2010, after a long strike and massive repression, has been complied with by the regime
- The municipalisation / privatisation process of health services
- Attacks against free public education and autonomous university campuses
- Dramatic increases in living costs with rise of petrol price
- Militarisation of streets
- Workers being paid next to nothing and farmers having no land

- Femicides against women and hate crimes and killings against LGBTI communities

- Ongoing attacks on Indigenous and black peoples' land and cultural rights.

## Some of the actions:

The month began with more sporadic protests and occupations at local councils. More mobilisations and assemblies sprung up from 7 March as teachers, workers, and farmers committed to unite their struggles and plan together, and on 9 March an indefinite teachers' strike began. Actions were daily and nation-wide especially on March 14 and 17. In the General Strike on 30 March there were coordinated national actions blocking highways, keeping schools closed, of taxi drivers protesting petrol price increases, students occupying universities. All protests were heavily repressed from 14 March 2011.

## Some of the actions on 30 March 2011:

- In Tegucigalpa, protesters occupied road exits for Danli and Paraiso, they occupied the bridges of Las Brisas, stopping at least 400 vehicles from passing to a highway to the north. University students occupied and defended their campuses. There were also occupations at Villas del Sol, outside the soft drink workers union building, in university, and outside the Supreme Court in support of teachers on trial for political reasons. Women organised activities outside the offices of the United Nations and



Organisation of American States.

- At Comayagua, parents occupied the Las Americas school after the coup-supporting principal, Santa Alejandrina Erazo, ordered teachers to give classes or be dismissed – police arrived at 6.50am trying to scare the parents away but the parents continued occupying the school.

- At La Lima, hundreds of banana labourers demanding salary increases accompanied by FNRP occupied the Chiquita banana plantation and the highway to Lima from 5am, stopping production, buses of workers, trucks that transported sugar cane for the beer factory (Coca Cola), and stopping 50 containers of bananas from going to Puerto Cortes for export that day.

- In Comayagua, hundreds including students occupied the Panamerican Highway blocking traffic from 8am before mobilising towards the city centre.

- In Santa Barbara, many parents, teachers, students, etc occupied the Occidente highway and more than a thousand blocked the international highway at Chiquila.

- At los Planes, Colon, many farmers, unionists, and grassroots activists occupied the Sonaguera highway at 7am, stopping traffic between Colon and Atlantida, a strategic entry point to block access to Aguan Valley. They were violently evicted with gunshots wounding several, but some regrouped and tried to return to occupy highway.

- In El Paraiso, there were dozens of activities including occupations of highways including of the entry to La Concepcion from 7am and different points of the Panamerican highway, massive demonstrations, and closing many schools, and occupying the Villa Santa council, and Quebrada Seca bridge.

- At the Bay Islands, teachers, parents and FNRP members took to the streets of

Roatan with placards and banners.

- In San Pedro Sula, students defending their autonomous university and public education were severely repressed but managed to force the police and military to leave, using stones and sticks.

- In El Yoro, 4000 unionists, activists, students, health workers, parents and teachers occupied the La Democracia bridge 8am-11am, then marched to the city centre, sat in at the council for some time and finished at Plaza Libertad.

Another occupation was at Santa Rita.

- In La Ceiba, protesters occupied the Rio Danto bridge a few hours before being evicted.

- In Valle, a huge crowd protested and mobilised from Nacaome.

- In Gracias a Dios, Indigenous organisations with students, teachers and parents continued to occupy the main province airport.

- In Olancho, 1500 teachers, campesinos, and resistance members barricaded highways including at Limones.

- At Potrerillos, El Progreso, 200 teachers, farmers and villagers blocked a highway from 5am for 3 hours before being evicted

- The Tacamiche community of Cortes occupied from early hours the highway of San Manuel to Villanueva. They returned after being repressed and evicted to block the highway for another hour.

- At Dulce Nombre de Copan hundreds protested headed by Father Fausto Milla accompanied by teachers, Agrarian Department workers union, resistance, occupied highway 8-11.30am before being dispersed by repression.

- At Santa Rosa de Copan, unionists, teachers and parents occupied the Sinuapa highway of Ocotepeque.

- At Choloma, protesters occupied the bridge from Puerto Cortes to Choloma, and the exit to Guasaule.

- At Siguatepeque, people mobilised towards the city centre, surrounded by police.

- At Lempira, people occupied the city centre.

- In 'Province 19' protest activities were held in LA, New York and Washington.

One university protest can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7U7O-cRQAI>

The indefinite strike in the education sector had not ended at the time of writing.

Instead of talking to the protesting people, the Lobo regime meted out massive repression, with worse human rights violations than before, especially after 17 March 2011.

### **The massive repression at the protests:**

2 people killed.

At 11am on 18 March 2011 in Tegucigalpa, Ilse Ivania Velazquez Rodriguez (59) was hit in the head with a projectile tear gas can fired by police and then run over by a vehicle and died in an emergency room from internal injuries at 12.45pm. Ivania was a deputy principal of the Republica de Argentina School, a FNRP activist, co-founder of human rights organisation COFADEH, and sister of Angel Manfredo Velasquez Rodriguez who was disappeared in 1981. The regime's comment about this is that there is no evidence to show state responsibility and warned teachers to 'act sensibly to avoid events like what happened on this day repeating', reiterating teachers must return to class to return to dialogue.

At Planes, Colon, on 30 March 2011, one person was killed with gunshots – he was

initially unidentified because of a police blockade and custody of the crime scene. 'We are seeing a person that does not move, is thrown to the ground and the military does not let us go near, it seems the person is dead', said a teacher who called Radio Globo. Later he was identified as a security guard of a company that distributes chickens.

Teargas bombs were used at virtually every protest in large quantities, and many bombs were fired at the bodies and heads of people, causing injuries. The largest reported quantity was about 500 teargas bombs launched inside the UNAH university in Tegucigalpa on March 23, including inside classrooms and halls leaving more than 40 people seriously affected by the gas, some people vomited blood and some trees caught on fire. At UNAH San Pedro Sula on March 30, teargas was launched for over 5 hours. Many reports of indiscriminate bombing including on March 22 in Tegucigalpa when bombs were fired at streets already vacated by protesters, and at passing buses full of people. On many occasions teargas bombs were launched inside buildings to attack and evict people occupying (eg Inprema Teachers' Pension Institute), working or meeting in it (Truth Commission Office, schools, etc), and sheltering from gases in it (unions buildings, homes of residents who opened their doors, and offices). There are constant reports of burn injuries, nose bleeds, respiratory crises, fainting, suffocation, etc. The youngest documented victim was a 2 month old baby, Cristopher de Jesus Bonilla Garcia, who was with his mum and dad in a house at Nacaome, on March 30, at which the police launched chemicals prompting them to flee. The young mother, affected by the gas, was unable to run, the young father ran with the baby but was chased by the

security forces. The baby began to turn purple. After mouth to mouth resuscitation and medical attention, the paediatrician warned that there may be future consequences for the baby's health.

Large contingents of security forces were reported at most protests carrying out evictions, and closing off some roads to protesters. A particularly dramatic account was at the small town of Potrerillos on 30 March where a contingent of 200 police brutally attacked 200 protesters.

### Detentions

There were many illegal detentions which were daily, including of 19 teachers who were politically imprisoned for 5 days. A judicial process continues against them. Here are some of what has been documented:

- On March 14, in Tegucigalpa, police detained 8 protesting taxi drivers.
- On March 17, in Tegucigalpa, 27 protesters were detained, including Edwin Espinal, who has been under constant political persecution and was the last one released that day. When the protest was repressed, a journalist asked him to help an 8 year old girl who was separated from her grandmother to escape from the gases, so he assisted her without hesitation given his own spouse died from excessive teargas exposure after the coup. He was captured and charged with kidnapping although the grandmother was grateful for his help!
- On March 17 in Comayagua, 22 protesters were detained.
- On March 17 at Puerto Cortes, teachers and students of the Manuel Pagan Lozano Institute of San Pedro Sula were detained and had their papers confiscated and in Danli, police entered schools to detain teachers

and students who participated in demonstrations.

- On March 18 in Tegucigalpa, there were 10 detentions, including an 8 year-old girl.

- On March 21 in Tegucigalpa, 20 were detained.

- On March 23, Gilberto Exequiel Valladares was detained and wounded by police at UNAH Tegucigalpa and taken to an unidentified place.

- On March 24 in Tegucigalpa, more than 11 were captured and put in the basement of HBC Bank, and 26 were detained, many from a minibus travelling to the protests that police intercepted. These 26 were 5 women teachers, 14 male teachers, 6 minors and one resistance member not a teacher, Hector Nunez. They were accused of sedition and 'illegal protests'. Torture was reported on the first night of prison with beatings and flooding of the tiny cells. On the initial hearing at 7.30pm March 25, the minors and Hector were released and the teachers sent to prison. On the 2nd court hearing on March 30, the charges of sedition were dismissed, and the judges ordered substitutive measures to prison while the judicial process continues. The measures prohibit the teachers from participating in protests or meetings that 'prejudice the state'.

- On March 24 two of the victims of detention reported fears that they would be disappeared. Hector Nunez is from FNRP Colectivo la Merced and a policeman said at the protest: 'this one is a leader, detain him'. Edwin Alexander Osorto (33) was also detained but was not registered in the book of detained persons, 'I screamed I am Edwin Sorto and the police covered my mouth so they would not hear me, I believed that they were going to disappear me...'. Edwin was beaten in the legs and hit in the

head with a stick 15 times. He was hospitalised with a big hole, trauma and bruises in the head, and transferred to a private clinic where even from there police tried to take him, but were stopped by human rights defenders.

- On March 25, detention and beating of youths at UNAH was reported and also in front of the JFK School where youths were forced onto a black pickup truck CBW 2970.

- On March 25 in Tegucigalpa over 40 were detained, most were freed quickly, some were illegally kept at the offices of the Military Welfare Department.

- On March 28, at the protest in Tela, police shot a teargas bomb at and burnt the abdomen of Miriam Miranda, they beat her and dragged her on the asphalt and racially insulted her. They detained her accusing her of sedition. Miriam is on the newly elected FNRP Coordination, a Garifuna leader and President of the Ofraneh – Fraternal Black Organisation of Honduras. The police sub-commissioner Victor Sanchez Bonilla said to the Ofraneh lawyer, Ferrera, ‘Now the big ones are starting to fall and when everyone falls the problem is going to resolve itself’. She was finally freed and taken to hospital almost 12 hours later with local, national and international pressure.

- On March 29 in Tegucigalpa, 6 were detained, mostly students, one member and one coordinator of LGBTI Arco Iris Association, Donny Reyes.

- On March 30, 4 were detained in Olancho, 3 were pulled off a bus and detained and in Tegucigalpa, another youth was forced into a taxi by a policeman. The police covered the youth with shields, and there was no time for the youth to give his name. At least 2 youths were detained in San Pedro Sula; 43 were detained altogether in different parts of

Cortes, and 3 were detained in Nacaome.

### **Live gunshots were reported on many occasions.**

Gunshots were fired by security forces at protesters on March 17 in Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, San Pedro Sula, and on March 30 in Nacaome, Los Planes - Colon, Tegucigalpa, Limones – Olancho, San Pedro Sula UNAH, and Santa Cruz de Yojoa.

Gunshot wounds documented:

- On March 17 in Comayagua, Margarito Rodriguez was detained wounded by gunshot.

- On March 17 in San Pedro Sula one parent suffered a gunshot wound.

- On March 30 in Los Planes, Colon, after police and military dispersed protesters with teargas bombs, they proceeded to shoot protesters who hid in the mountain or nearby trees, wounding the teachers Waldina Diaz, Elias Gerardo Hernandez, and Eduardo Rivera, the organised farmers Neptali Esquivel, Pablo Rosales, Franklin Hernandez, Victor Euceda, Daniel Perez, Juan Antonio Chavez, Paulino Chavez Rosales, and Mauro Rosales, and journalist David Corea Arteaga who was covering the violent eviction for Olanchito Tocoa TV when a bullet brushed his face before hitting the skull of a security guard.

- On March 30 in Santa Cruz de Yojoa, 6 suffered gunshot wounds.

### **Use of the Water Tank with toxic coloured waters/gases – ‘La Miona’**

The water tanks were sighted at the protests of March 16 at El Progreso, March 17 in Tegucigalpa, on March 18 in Tegucigalpa and El Progreso, on

March 21 in Tegucigalpa (3 tanks), on March 23-25 in Tegucigalpa, on March 29 in Tegucigalpa, and on March 30 at La Democracia Bridge, El Progreso, in Tacamiche, and in Tegucigalpa (2 tanks).

The tanks were documented to have shot at people on March 17, 18, 21, 23, 24 and 25 in Tegucigalpa, on March 29 at UNAH Tegucigalpa, and on March 30 first launching at La Democracia Bridge at El Progreso and moving onto Tacamiche.

Beatings with sticks and guns are systematic, as are detentions, chasings, etc. Some examples:

On March 29 in Tegucigalpa, a student was pointed out and chased by someone later identified as a plain clothes policeman, with riot police close behind him. The student was then tackled and trampled by all these police; one policeman pointed his pistol at the student and another screamed at and tried to stop this police, while others kicked and beat the student, before he was dragged and pushed to the police patrol car.

On March 30 in Tegucigalpa, 6 heavily armed plain clothes police tried to kidnap Eddy Guifarro when he was in a taxi. He escaped but was beaten with weapons in the right ear with which he cannot hear now, and in the skull. As he was escaping the police chased and shot at him 6 times. Guifarro is an employee of the Truth Commission.

### **Injuries and hospitalisations.**

Many protesters have been hospitalised, hurt in different ways, including fainting and severe intoxication, asthma attacks, traumas, fractures, head wounds, muscle injuries and gunshot wounds. Many who were detained were denied medical attention, and there are reports of victims having to transfer to private clinics because police were trying to capture them, and they

continued to try to capture them even after the transfers.

Persecution by numberplates / photos. On March 14 in Tegucigalpa, the police noted the numberplates of all the taxis that participated in the demonstration, and police took photos of protesters in Tegucigalpa on March 23, and armed soldiers arriving from a navy boat in Zacate Grande on March 30 did the same, threatening and asking if the community is part of the resistance.

### **Documented threats at the marches**

In Tegucigalpa:

On March 23, 2 police stopped Carlos Alfaro (Copemh) when he took photos to document the repression, and said in front of him, 'a few shots are what will win these of the Resistance'. Teachers leaders sent instructions to protesters not to use Che/FNRP/leftist T-shirts to the march to avoid being targeted.

On March 28, a police approached human rights defender Lorena Zelaya saying 'this ID is of an NGO, here this has no purpose. You are only to use it to ask for money. I identify very well your faces and with your children you are going to pay'.

On March 30 a traffic police said to Jose Luis Vaquedano (union federation secretary) in a threatening voice, 'I will grab your cock son of a bitch'. This was recorded and broadcasted by Globo TV. Jose also reported that his son was brutally beaten by police at UNAH after previous receiving threats from state repressive forces.

### **Attack on journalists and independent media at these protests**

On March 21 in Tegucigalpa, police attacked more than 12 journalists and camera people with sticks and teargas bombs. They beat and tried to snatch the camera

of journalist Sandra Marybel Sanchez of Radio Gualcho, shot a teargas can directly at the legs of Uriel Rodriguez, camera person of Globo TV, and at the legs of Bartolo Fuentes, FNRP and Honduras Laboral journalist when he turned to take a photo as a bomb was launched. The bomb launcher who targeted and shot him re-loaded and aimed again. Police also pulled the cable of the microphone of Lidiett Diaz (Channel 36) who protested saying, 'I am not a teacher, I am a journalist' – the police reacted by shooting a teargas bomb at her feet and at her camera person Rodolfo Sierra.

On March 22 in Tegucigalpa, David Romero owner of Radio Globo had teargas bombs fired at him, hitting the front and back of his car when he had finished off an interview with the teacher unionist Casana at the protest, and was hopping into the car to drive off. He almost suffocated. Earlier that day, he read over the radio a report where de facto Security Minister Oscar Alvarez affirmed that he was trained in Argentina and the USA in methods of disappearing persons and intercepting telephone calls.

On March 24, Yenny Antunez of El Libertador was almost detained when she questioned the officer detaining Hector Nunez. They allowed her to run after she showed her journalist ID.

On March 25 at about 10.30am Radio Globo went off air, and Channel 36 without visual images, for 30 minutes. At 11.15am 2 journalists of Radio Globo were hospitalised – Richard Casula suffered gas intoxication (he was put on oxygen) and his camera person Salvador Sandoval was wounded in the face by a teargas bomb (suffering nose fractures and could not open his eyes). Journalist Sandra Marybel Sanchez of Radio Gualcho was sprayed with gas.

On March 30, journalist Pedro Lopez of Radio Progreso, Potrerillos, Cortes, was detained by police when he covered the protest of teachers and villagers there. In Colon a journalist covering the protest suffered a bullet wound.

Racial attack. At Tela on March 28, a smoking ceremony ritual of the Garifuna was stamped out by police, who insulted and yelled discriminatory phrases at the protesters.

### **Death threats and selective persecution recorded outside of protests this month:**

● On March 1, at 5.30am, a suspicious taxi followed and overtook the vehicle of Eduardo Argueta Santos. Two armed persons demanded his mobile which he gave, but they then beat him and shot him in the face, pulled him out of his car and threw him on the street in a puddle of his own blood before fleeing. Eduardo is the vice-president of Section 2 of San Pedro Sula Stibys soft drink workers union. He is hospitalised. There were current negotiations between Coca Cola and Stibys, and Stibys unionists have suffered many attacks and persecution since the coup.

● On March 7, Leo Valladares Lanza was forcefully exiled after he had a taxi and car suspiciously parked near his home on March 1, for which the police advised that they leave for a time and take security measures. He was previously followed by a vehicle on 21/2/11, and before that, unknown persons called his home frequently and asked for Rodrigo and laughed – Leo's son Rodrigo was assassinated on 25/1/09. Leo is the ex-National Human Rights Commissioner and current Director of Association for Participative Citizenship. Recently Leo participated in a TV interview about the Armed Forces' repositioning and resurgence of



militarism after the coup, and its incorporation into the Executive Power structures.

- On March 17, cars without number plates and with polarised windows were reported to have been following and watching constantly the activists of Centre of Women's' Rights (CDM) in San Pedro Sula.

- On March 26, Jaime Donaire was assassinated by armed men. He was the Coordinator of Minas de Oro (municipality) FNRP and member of the workers union of the National Registry of Persons Sitrarenape, well known and appreciated by everyone.

- On March 28 at 2.10pm unidentified persons threw an explosive device at the roof of the San Pedro Sula Truth Commission office, making a hole. The office's regional coordinator Brenda Mejia had just participated in the IACHR hearings (March 25) with the city's Lawyers in Resistance, on 'Criminalisation of Social Protest'. She and 2 Canadian companions were at the office during the bombing.

- On March 31, at 1.40am, unidentified individuals in white shirts and blue jeans stopped in front of the Tegucigalpa Commission of Truth's 2nd floor public office, and threw rocks at its window. They walked away downtown but returned 20 minutes later in a taxi shouting and throwing more rocks. The Commission of Truth is in the Copemh (high school teachers union) building.

- On March 31, at 2am, the STIBYS union building had many rocks thrown at it. The Negotiating team of Pepsi were there sleeping, heard this happening, woke up frightened, and saw a white double cabin Toyota Hylux 3.0 without number plate, from which rocks were thrown at the cars in the carpark, breaking the windows and denting

the cars. They shouted on seeing this and the attackers ran away.

#### **Persecution and evictions against occupying farmers and land rights activists:**

- At 6pm, March 6, 8 army and police commandos, and hired security guards evicted unarmed 'MARCA' farmers at El Despertar and La Trinidad Cooperative lands. The farmers just began to reclaim this land currently usurped by large landholder Morales, when this contingent came, installed trenches with sand sacks and terrorised people with machine guns: M-60, M-16, etc

- In the evening on March 8, motorcyclists parked in front of Blanca Azucena Espinoza's home, forcing her to leave due to ongoing persecution against her and her family. Blanca is Buenos Amigos Cooperative's president. They were evicted on 27/1/11 and have been subject to constant persecution ever since.

- At 6pm, March 13, 2 hitmen Jorge Sanchez (Pinillo) and Porfirio Medina hired by large landholder Facusse, arrived at Zacate Grande's community radio, shouted aggressively at the resistance member and radio president, Franklin Melendez, 'you want to die?'. Medina pulled out a gun and shot Franklin in the leg. He ran. He was with 2 journalists and an international human rights observer, who helped him escape and took him to a clinic.

- On March 13, at the same time, Ethel Corea of Radio Zacate received threats from civilian armed groups against the social movement of land recovery. She is told she was being sentenced to be the 'second to die'.

- On March 18, the San Esteban cooperative that have occupied this land since July 2010 was evicted by 15th battalion soldiers, police and Rene Morales' private security guards. They

captured and imprisoned Maximino Ramirez Lopez. On March 21, at 7pm, farmers of this cooperative were attacked by armed persons driving in police vehicles an hour after they re-occupied the land. A security guard of Morales died in this incident. On March 23, San Esteban farmers were warned at 8am of a new eviction at 9am by the 15th battalion. At 9.50am the farmers left when 4 trucks of military and police arrived.

- On March 30, in Comayagua, judges, politicians conspired and carried out a violent eviction against the campesino group, 25 de Octubre, (500 families that have been in possession of the land for 7 years), destroying their homes, school and church. Live bullets were fired. They detained Betuel Guillen (19), Edwin Gillen (18), Pedro Hernandez, Selvin Javier Centeno, and Osman Gomez (19).

#### **Media defamation campaigns to discredit organisations and activists which lead into persecution:**

- On March 11, different coup supporting medias accused Copinh (Council of Indigenous and Popular Organisations of Honduras) of having burnt down the school in Santa Rosita, Lempira, as part of a defamatory and racist campaign.

- On March 10, the Mayor Amable de Jesus Hernandez appeared on TV Channel 22 saying Arnold Enrique Leiva Rivera was trying to be an obstacle to the community's development and accused him of an attempt from years ago blaming Arnold for situations that could arise, after the mayor invited Arnold to a radio debate about the municipalisation of education. The defamation campaign puts Arnold and his family at risk. Arnold is the FNRP coordinator of San Jose de Colinas and the local president of the Teachers Organisations

Federation.

● On March 15, Gloria Oqueli denounces that on March 1, in an article 'the future of Zelaya and FNRP' published in El Tiempo, Ramon Martinez said, '...as well as FNRP, there is some force of mobilisation to occupy highways and paralyse urban roads. And if the proposal of Gloria Oqueli continues, including they could execute armed actions with those that terrorise public opinion'. This is an attempt to brand Gloria as a terrorist to persecute her. Gloria is President of the Central American Parliament and high profile anti-coup activist.

### **Lobo's response to the protests, strikes and events (apart from the expensive repression) - Lobo does not want to resolve issues:**

● On March 1, Lobo ordered the Finance Secretary NOT to transfer the fund the state owes to Inprema (Teachers Pension and Loans Fund), with Vilma Morales, President of National Commission of Bank and Insurance, saying that they will work out something so teachers can go to private banks instead to get loans.

● On March 15, Lobo announced an investigative commission for Inprema headed by Vilma Morales, and including Arturo Corales, one of the main protagonists of the coup.

● When asked by journalists about the repression, Lobo was recorded saying, 'whoever makes trouble is asking for it'.

### **Threatening and incriminating**

Instead of responding to demands of the protesters, the massive teachers strikes and one teacher killed in a protest, Lobo denied state responsibility, but warned other teachers that 'these things happen'. Lobo then declared a state of emergency – to

replace teachers who are on strike with ('temporary') scab labour and announcing on March 22 that the Council of Ministers will dismiss more than 2,000 striking teachers including all the teacher unions presidents.

On March 26, Lobo declared illegal the teachers strikes which started on March 7, and announced the application of strong sanctions against teachers who did not return to class on March 28. In a sudden statement read at midnight on national tv and radio, the regime warned that it could declare 'definitive dissolution' of the union organisations that have promoted or supported the protests.

Teachers are threatened with:

- 2 months suspension without pay for teachers not in class on March 28,
- 6 months suspension without pay for teachers not in class on March 30, and
- 1 year suspension without pay for teachers not in class by April 4;
- and if by this date teachers have not returned to class they will apply 'justified dismissal'.

There are reports of Armed Forces preparing soldiers to be 'substitute teachers'.

Why do they want to impose the municipalisation of education so badly? IMF and World Bank have made loans conditional on the maximum reduction of public spending – eg education and health.

Municipalisation of public services translates to passing state responsibility to councils; councils don't have the capacity to administer education and health services and are facilitated to pass them onto private companies.

### **Other simultaneous neoliberal actions by congress:**

● The municipalisation of health is under study. The congress president announced that this initiative will be one of the priorities of the ordinary

commissions of legislative work in 2011.

● Bill to reduce human rights in discussion – the proposal is to prolong the time the initial court hearing has to be held from 6 days to 12 days, the time someone can be detained for investigation from 24 to 72 hours, and to remove limitations about what hours of the day invasion orders can be carried out.

● A law of Nutritional Food Security was approved without talking with the farmers' sector. The problem is while it recognises food security problems, it does not make the state responsible or identify access to healthy and adequate food as a human right, and it focuses on 'adapting the use of better technologies' which would be a reference to support for transgenics/GMOs.

### **International 'pressures':**

● Obama went to El Salvador, Brazil and Chile. According to political analyst Dieterich, this was to destabilise regional revolutionary processes and lift the USA out of the economic crisis through strategic commercial relationships.

● Amid the massive repression in Honduras, US Assistant Subsecretary of State Julissa Reynoso visited the Honduras regime. According to the US Embassy in Honduras her purpose was to support the 'advances' in 'reconciliation, democracy and human rights' that the Lobo regime 'achieved'.

● The Inter-American Development Bank made a statement that the main reason for the teachers' conflict was lack of state compliance to promises that it has no capacity to pay, thereby indirectly advocating for privatisation of education.

### **Regime's discourse to UN and Inter-American Commission of**

### **Human Rights (False image for United Nations):**

● At the second phase of the UN Universal Periodic Review to follow up on the recommendations made in November 2010, Ana Pineda, who represented the Honduras state, declared that although impunity indices prevail 'but that equally the political will exists to revert the situation... as a State we cannot affirm that the human rights situation has improved considerably from November to today'.

### **Blatant lack of political will by regime delegation at Inter-American Commission of Human Rights:**

The Commissioners challenged the lack of substance/credible/solid arguments and open shamefulness in responses which tried to justify political repression and persecution.

IACHR provided hard condemnation of more reports, recommendations, but these are ineffective because easily ignored. IACHR avoided taking concrete measures.

Companies pay nothing in Honduras as noted by Journalists of Revistazo highlighted this month through their FOI applications:

- Many companies don't pay electricity bills and leave giant debts to the state unpaid. The corrupt companies, including transnationalism are ones that supported the coup and haven't paid for electricity, some since 1999. More than 100 companies owe about US\$439 million – the US Embassy owes about \$750,000.
- 453 companies of the INTUR group (fast food and tourism) are in a tax-free zone exempt from tax and are lobbying for another 15 years of tax exemptions. Exemptions are

granted in the name of 'generating investment' and cost the state US\$42 million in 2010 alone.

### **Regime might close some South American Embassies:**

The Honduras State Department announced that it may temporarily close embassies in the UNASUR countries which don't recognise the Lobo regime – Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela (but maybe keeping Brazil open), to instead use the resources in other embassies to open commercial offices in India, Singapore, China, Kuwait, Korea, and Canada. They said they are doing this for Honduras' development.

### **Firing of unionists – hondutel, sitraunah, sitraina, sitrapani, et al:**

There is a worrying increase of threats, attempts and violations against collective conventions and illegal dismissal of workers – massive dismissals against the unionists of Sitraunah (university), sitraina (agrarian department), sitrapani (child protection), and cited cases of persecution, and of wider plan to destroy unions. Hondutel's workers union sitratelh – state telecom company – reports that an average of 50 workers a week are being fired.

Deposed President Zelaya had capture orders against him annulled, but false charges remain. The judge on the case of deposed President Zelaya decided against the application to nullify the charges against Zelaya and others, but revoked the capture orders against him. While the DPP will appeal the revocation of capture orders, Zelaya's defence lawyer, Jose Anahin Orellana, will continue to appeal to nullify the charges.

Confession from de facto security minister about training to disappear people. Oscar Alvarez,

defacto security minister, was quoted in the Baltimore Sun in 1995 saying "the Argentinians came first and they taught us how to disappear people. The US made everything efficient, the Americans brought the equipment. They gave training in US and also brought agents. They used to say: you need people to record the telephone conversations, to transcribe them, you need groups of surveillance. They brought special cameras that they put inside of thermostats. They taught interrogation techniques."

### **Other inspiring protests held by Hondurans in March 2011:**

On March 28, over 1,000 Indigenous Miskitos, Tawahkas, Pech and Garifunas mobilised to Port Lempira, occupying a US military base built after the coup, with the proposal of reclaiming the autonomy of the Moskitia, right to prior consultation, immediate cessation of construction of the Patuca River hydroelectric dams, and to evict the US military base in the Karataska lake, which was built after the coup. The Indigenous and black peoples are preparing mobilisations to support the Moskitia in the coming months, to carry out a journey of solidarity and to demand cancellation of the construction of the mega-dams, that will have unimaginable consequences for Tawahkas, Miskito, Pech and Garifunas peoples.

*See:* 10 minutes video in English of farmers situation in Aguan:  
[http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=6513](http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=6513)

*See also:* An even more detailed version of this report can be found here: <http://www.sydneysays-no2honduras-coup.net/news-summaries.php>

# [ AGUILAS NEGRAS: RISING FROM THE ASHES OF DEMOBILIZATION IN COLOMBIA ]

VIA:

HTTP://UPSIDEDOWNWORLD.ORG/MAIN/COLOMBIA-ARCHIVES-61/2999-AGUILAS-NEGRAS-RISING-FROM-THE-ASHES-OF-DEMOBILIZATION

13 April 2011

Situated in the verdant landscape along the border with Venezuela between the dramatic foothills of the Andes to the south and the plains of the Catatumbo and Zulia rivers to the north, the department of Norte de Santander has long been recognized as a strategic corridor to transport both people and goods, legal and illegal, from Colombia's interior to the Caribbean coast and beyond.

Conversely, this highly coveted territory has also experienced every imaginable horror produced by the decades old Colombian civil war, having first been under the control of the leftist guerrilla movement, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), for some three decades until it was subsequently forced out by the ultra-right paramilitary outfit, Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), in the late 1990s. With the massive nationwide paramilitary demobilization promoted during the first administration of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, the sizeable AUC bloque that controlled Norte de Santander agreed to disband and return to civilian life towards the end of 2004, leading many to pray that the days of terror were finally over.

Luis Miguel Morelli Navia, then-governor of Norte de Santander, expressed his desire for peace during the process. "We hope that, with the exit of this group, tranquillity will return and not a new wave of violence to our region."

Sure enough, a new armed faction, the Águilas Negras (Black

Eagles), emerged from the ashes of the demobilized regional AUC cadres, and quickly became the unofficial power in the department by 2006, establishing its authority over all black market activity through a campaign of terror taken straight from the paramilitary handbook.

This shift was not a spontaneous, organic development, but rather the amalgamation of demobilized AUC fighters, those who never laid down their arms to begin with, and the more hardened elements of the regional criminal underclass. The regrouping of 'demobilized' fighters into illegal armed groups underscores a wider national trend following the dissolution of the AUC between 2003 and 2005.

With extensive prior experience in irregular warfare and the exportation of cocaine shipments, the Águilas Negras freed itself from the ideological constraints that circumscribed the AUC's code of conduct and rapidly became one of the most powerful armed criminal organizations in Colombia. The newfound freedom of association and action coincided with a marked rise in human rights abuses and violence attributable to the group, as the Águilas Negras have recently expanded their operations into bordering states of Venezuela, a disturbing trend that has been met with official complaisance in Washington and Bogotá alike.

## From Paramilitares to Paracos

BY C.L. SMITH

Long a bastion of the 33rd Front of the FARC, the AUC leadership sought to 'liberate' Norte de Santander of the leftist movement and integrate local paramilitary outfits into the nascent organization in the late 1990s. This feat was promptly accomplished by the formidable Bloque Catatumbo, an AUC unit which emerged during this period under the command of Salvatore Mancuso.

Bloque Catatumbo first announced its arrival in the department through a campaign of intimidation and murder. For years, AUC leader Carlos Castaño had accused the people of Norte de Santander of aiding the guerrillas of FARC, accusations which soon culminated into atrocities such as the 1999 La Gabarra massacre in Tibú, where the AUC unit killed some 20 civilians in particularly merciless fashion.

Unfortunately, La Gabarra was only a mild indication of what was to come in Norte de Santander, as over the next five years there were 5,200 violent deaths and 200 disappearances in the northeastern department. Meanwhile, 300 bodies were also recovered from mass graves, and an astounding 40,000 peasants were forced to relocate due to the paramilitary activity.

Cúcuta, the capital of the department, became the second most dangerous city in Colombia during this five-year period.

Thus, when it was announced in late 2004 at a summit between



government representatives and top AUC commanders (Mancuso included) in Santa Fe de Ralito, that several of the most prominent AUC blocques would demobilize under the guidelines of the Peace and Justice Law, many residents of Norte de Santander were cautiously optimistic. The 33rd Front of the FARC continued to operate in the fringes of the department, as did the Bloque Norte of the AUC, a fearsome outfit of considerable numbers and strength that controlled all of the border territory north of the Catatumbo to the Caribbean coast.

Bloque Norte was commanded by Rodrigo Tovar Pupo, more commonly known as Jorge-40, and operated in multiple departments in the northeast, earning a reputation for extreme violence, notably against the Wayuu and Wiwa indigenous tribes in La Guajira department. The armed group eventually demobilized in early 2006, and Jorge-40 was remanded to the custody of the state under the conditions of his surrender and cooperation, finding himself in the company of other retired AUC leaders such as Mancuso (both of whom would eventually be extradited to the United States in 2008 for violating the terms of their demobilization).

However, the appearance of the Águilas Negras coincided with the dissolution of Bloque Norte and shortly thereafter rumours

started that whilst incarcerated, Jorge-40 had attained the leadership position of the new outfit and was directing them from behind bars.

In the immediate aftermath of the demobilizations, a whole proliferation of armed groups emerged, calling themselves 'Eagles', but of various different colors: Golden Eagles, Blue Eagles, Red Eagles, etc. This rainbow of illegal armed factions dissipated after a brief spell and eventually they all adopted the same name, Águilas Negras, as well as common methods of operations and rules of conduct.

Upon appearing in a zone or municipality for the first time, the Águilas Negras would announce their arrival by circulating pamphlets which stated an impending 'social cleansing' campaign, often accompanied by a blacklist detailing who was in violation of its strict code of conduct (i.e. drug dealers, thieves, muggers, prostitutes, homosexuals, drug addicts, etc.) and what would happen to them if they did not vacate the area after 72 hours.

For instance, when the Águilas Negras first arrived in Cúcuta, the outfit imposed such strict conditions on the people of the city that men with long hair, people with tattoos and/or piercings, or even anyone unfortunate enough to be caught in the street after 10 p.m. was

liable to incur the wrath of the group, often with fatal consequences.

Although the Águilas Negras possessed the zeal of the Saudi mutaween in imposing and enforcing this rigid social code on the people of Norte de Santander and beyond, its motives were neither religious nor security minded. The primary objective of the group was to regain complete control of all black market activity in the areas where the AUC used to operate, particularly the local drug market, prostitution, the pimpinero and weapons trade, and of course the incredibly lucrative drug smuggling routes.

A long-standing practice in the departments bordering oil-rich Venezuela, pimpineros are Colombians who smuggle considerable cheaper gasoline back to their country and sell it at below market prices. Daily gasoline sales in the local underground economy are estimated to amount to roughly 100 million Colombian pesos (\$53,300 USD). However, since arriving in Norte de Santander, the Águilas Negras have imposed a ten percent 'tax' on the pimpinero industry, ensuring that the outfit receives a percentage of every illicit transaction that occurs in its territory.

Most attractive to the group is the industry that has seduced countless other factions and individuals from all walks of Colombian society over the past forty years: the drug trade.

Under Salvatore Mancuso, the Bloque Catatumbo established a pipeline from coca producing regions under its control in El Tarra, Teorama, La Gabarra, and Tibú, to localities such as Ureña, Capacho, and San Antonio de Táchira in Venezuela, which finally led to the Caribbean Antilles and onwards to profitable North American and European markets.



The weekly cocaine trade in this particular region is estimated to be worth around US\$8 million .

Similar to the AUC before them, the control of the El Catatumbo-Cúcuta-Venezuela corridor is of paramount importance to the Águilas Negras. Unlike its paramilitary antecedent, ideology and association are less of an obstacle than an antiquated system of classification to the new power in Norte de Santander. The Águilas Negras don't have a problem making deals with FARC or other guerrilla groups as long as they are lucrative to the outfit.

Hence the new label *paracos*. The tactics and methods used are those honed by AUC paramilitaries over the past two decades, while the primary reason for existing is to control as much of the narcotics trade as possible.

Business has been good for the outfit, judging by the expansion of the Águilas Negras in its first year alone. In 2007, the Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, a governmental organization committed to overseeing the demobilization process, identified some 22 groups operating in 200 municipalities in 22 different departments across Colombia. This is perhaps an underestimate, as the official body has information pertaining to 34 different groups of Águilas Negras in operation nationwide.

Meanwhile, this development has been marked with an increase in violence in places where the Águilas Negras operate. For example, between January and September of 2006, municipal authorities recorded 259 violent deaths in Cúcuta, a figure that had increased to 327 in the same time period of 2007.

Likewise, the Águilas Negras has continued in the paramilitary tradition of silencing any potential critics. The group has proved to be particularly disdainful of human rights activists and NGOs working with internally displaced

peoples and those who have experienced repression at the hands of irregular armed groups.

Between June 2008 and October 2010, the Águilas Negras threatened activists at six prominent unions and NGOs in Barrancabermeja, labeling them 'auxiliaries' of leftist guerrillas. They also issued similar death threats against Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, a Bogota based NGO primarily composed of former leftist rebels from ELN, and other civil society groups from the capital, calling the employees 'civil guerrillas', and 'couriers for the guerrillas'.

The group has even targeted the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), repeatedly, along with dozens other NGOs working with internally displaced Colombians, warning them that their operatives "will be killed without a trace" and that, "the moment has come to terminate all of you. Consider yourselves dead."

These threats have not been made in vain, as forty leaders of groups representing internally displaced peoples have been killed in Colombia since 2005. One of these was Jair Murillo, a WOLA activist working in Buenaventura.

### **Contagion: No Longer Just a Colombian Problem**

With most coverage focusing on the destabilizing effects of FARC in neighbouring countries, the growing presence of the Águilas Negras in Venezuelan border states such as Zulia, Táchira, and Apure has largely gone unreported in the Western media.

First appearing on the radar in urban centers in Táchira in 2008, the Águilas Negras promised a 'social cleansing' along lines similar to the campaigns it had waged in Colombian border cities such as Cúcuta a couple of years earlier.

Whereas at first the threatened parties did actually pay

heed to these warnings and vacate the municipalities, albeit temporarily, more recently the Venezuelan authorities have discovered more than just menacing graffiti or pamphlets bearing the signature of the Águilas Negras.

In June 2009, a 22 year-old man, José Rafael Chacón Sánchez, was shot several times and killed in his hometown of San Cristóbal by two men on a motorcycle that were known to be members of the Colombian group.

The threat posed by this violent incursion into Venezuelan territory has grown to the extent over the past year that even the country's leadership have been forced to address it.

"Águilas Negras are here, operating in the states of Táchira and in Apure," stated Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez this past September. "We will rigorously combat all of these groups."

Since this public acknowledgement from the nation's outspoken leader, Venezuelan security forces have captured numerous accused members of the Águilas Negras, who were apparently trying to expand its operations within Venezuela.

On November 25th, 2010, multiple Venezuelan security agencies arrested Carlos Cuello, a Colombian who had been sought on charges of death threats, public extortion, and homicide amongst others, in Táchira.

The following month, agents from SEBIN (Bolivarian National Intelligence Services) apprehended two Venezuelan nationals and a Colombian in Táchira and found them in possession of military uniforms, two hand grenades, a firearm with defaced serial numbers, paramilitary pamphlets, twenty-six firearm cartridges of varying calibers, and two motorcycles.

Meanwhile, CICPC (Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas,

Penales y Criminalísticas) operatives recently arrested four Colombians and one Venezuelan on March 17th, in the border town and found them in possession of five firearms supposedly used in criminal acts in the vicinity, 25 million fake Colombian pesos (\$13 350), two cars, and two motorcycles as well. These men are all said to have been members of the Águilas Negras.

*Nos dirigimos a ustedes madres de familia con mucho respeto que este panfleto no son mentiras lo recordamos que si ustedes no son capaces de educar a sus hijos(a), y anderozatos nosotros si lo haremos pero no con reja sino que apunto de plomo señoras estamos jartos de la basura de sus hijos(a), de que toda esta maricada se va acabar. Sabe usted que hace su hijo(a), mientras ustedes duermen no se la pasan sino que robando y metiendo drogas en las en las esquinas, lo recordaremos y se lo advertimos. Les damos plazo de 20 dias para que los andersca o nosotros lo mandamos a dormir como niños buenos evitamos dolores de cabeza sabe usted que la lista negra es de 20 jóvenes de Alfonso López comenzando con: Julián David, Daniel, Mario, Gálvez, Alexis, Luisa, Villi Joe, Carlos, Urrego, Tanga, Tomate, Keru, Richard, Jonatan, cabezón, Babita, Mono, Piquita, Cosa, Guerrero. Si usted reconoce a estos mire a donde lo va a esconder o lo va amandar a vivir porque no lo queremos ver mas en las calles de la virginia, lo tenemos en la mira nosotros somos el grupo de limpieza del pueblo, GRUPO A LA MARGEN.*

## AGUILAS NEGRAS



Most recently, CICPC again apprehended three presumed members of the gang in San Antonio this past March 29th, all Venezuelan nationals, who were in possession of two firearms, a fragmentation grenade, and large quantities of street drugs. These individuals are believed to be responsible for the recent murder of a local teenager.

As these arrests indicate, not only are the Águilas Negras aggressively trying to push into Venezuelan territory, but they are also finding willing accomplices and recruits amongst the local populations. The established presence of paracos in Táchira has many powerful people very worried.

In 2009, a ruling party representative from Táchira, Julio

García Jarpa, accused the governor in his home state of allowing the Colombian group free passage in order to repress community activists who support the Bolivarian revolution, and to destabilize the region just before a national referendum on abolishing presidential term limits was to be held that February.

“Governor César Pérez Vivas,” asserted the representative, “in alliance with the Colombian right and paramilitaries, has permitted the entry and formation of a particular group, the Águilas Negras, with the intention to create chaos and disrupt the official process.”

Given the tumultuous history of the past decade, the current Venezuelan government is justifiably wary of any Colombian irregulars operating within its national territory.

Disgraced former director of the Colombian intelligence services DAS, Jorge Noguera, who is currently serving a prison sentence for his collaboration with paramilitary groups during his tenure (also known as the parapolítica scandal), reportedly met on a variety of occasions with ex-AUC leader Jorge-40’s brother and cousin, Álvaro Pupo and Luis José Pupo, in 2004.

According to the DAS visitor books, there were three meetings: one in April, and two more in August of that year.

His former director of information at DAS, Rafael García, who was also imprisoned for his role in the scandal, asserts that Noguera was working with Jorge-40 to destabilize the Chávez government by targeting not only the Venezuelan president, but also his vice president, attorney general, and interior minister as well.

Only one month after the first apparent meeting between Jorge-40’s relatives and Jorge Noguera, Venezuelan security services detained between 80 and 100

Colombian paramilitaries on a bus just outside of Caracas in El Hatillo, where they had been staying at a farm owned by a prominent Cuban exile, Roberto Alonso. Reputedly, they had been tasked with the assignment of attacking major government installations in the hopes of destabilizing or overthrowing the sitting government.

In November of that year, public prosecutor Danilo Anderson, who was investigating 300 people for their involvement in the 2002 coup attempt against Chávez, was killed after C-4 explosives that were planted in his car were detonated. In the subsequent investigation, the primary witness to come forward after being arrested was a former AUC member named Giovanni José Vásquez de Armas, who claimed that he smuggled the explosives into the country from Panama and had collaborated with law enforcement officials, ex-generals, and even bankers and journalists from Venezuela to carry out the assassination.

It is important to note that the credibility of Vásquez’s testimony subsequently fell into serious question in the ensuing legal prosecutions against those accused of orchestrating the Anderson murder due to the former paramilitary’s past history of fraud and incarceration in Colombia.

Despite this, it is difficult to ignore that Colombian irregular forces were present within Venezuela at such a volatile time, as their apparent intentions were acts of sabotage against the state, motives that were corroborated by testimony from those within the Colombian intelligence community.

These facts give credence to the accusation that the Colombian right has sought to destabilize the Chávez government in the past, thus giving the Venezuelan president and those in his party ample cause for concern in the

present, especially when Colombian paracos that are the successors to the AUC appear in strategically vital regions of the country.

Even if this group does not intend to subvert the state or destabilize the country, very few Venezuelans, especially those in power, wish to see Táchira or Apure turn into another Norte de Santander.

### **Disingenuous Appraisals**

Alarming, the official Colombian and American reaction to the reincarnation of demobilized paramilitary blocs into heavily armed organized criminal syndicates, chief among them the Águilas Negras, has been considerably passive considering the threat that these groups pose not only to the citizens of Colombia, but Venezuela as well.

While ex-President Uribe openly called for Colombian security services to detain any and all members of the fledgling paracos outfit in late 2006, the response and continued focus of the bilateral military strategy under the aegis of Plan Colombia has been to target leftist guerrilla movements, particularly the FARC.

It appears that neither the Colombian nor the U.S. government wishes to publicly refute the narrative of irrevocable progress that they have been collectively disseminating to the outside world over the past decade. To do so would force them to recalibrate their strategy and commit to tackling the root causes of the ongoing internal conflict, namely pervasive social inequity and the massive demand for illegal narcotics from the developed world, objectives that are significantly more difficult to address than simply defeating the Colombian armed left.

As a result, the protection of human rights will continue to take

a back seat to more substantial American interests in Colombia, which are both economic and those relevant to regional security.

The U.S. Department of State is bound by domestic law to condition foreign aid on the protection of human rights defenders in recipient countries, yet it evidently overlooks this consideration when evaluating its relationship with Colombia.

“The (US) embassy and the Department of State know the threats,” claims WOLA director Gimena Sánchez, “And they continue to affirm the advance of human rights in Colombia.”

This official passivity to the spread of groups such as the Águilas Negras has in turn led to the emergence of other paracos outfits in regions of the country that were once dominated by the AUC. Many of these groups, such as Los Rastrojos in the Cauca and Valle del Cauca departments, Nueva Generación in Nariño, Los Urabeños in Antioquia, and Los Paisas in Córdoba, are said to either collaborate or work directly for the Águilas Negras.

The fact that these groups primarily operate in departments that are located near the Colombian border is also worrisome, given the natural ability of groups comprised of ex-combatants to establish criminal enterprises in decentralized, lawless regions.

It is time for the Colombian authorities to acknowledge the failure of the paramilitary demobilization and to author a new strategy to prevent the spread of paracos, and to also protect those living within these troubled regions before the situation deteriorates any further. It would be a grave error to avoid addressing this looming crisis in order to preserve a disingenuous image the Colombian government has created for itself, one primarily for foreign consumption at that.

While recent progress is undeniable, so are the blowback effects from past strategies gone awry, and continuing to pretend that paramilitarism is a thing of the past will become increasingly difficult as long as groups such as the Águilas Negras continue to operate with impunity in places like Norte de Santander and beyond.

*C.L. Smith is an Inter-American affairs analyst who is currently teaching at a Venezuelan university.*

# EXTRACT -PAGUYUBAN PETANI LAHAN PANTAI (PPLP) KULON PROGO POSITION PAPER (SHORTENED VERSION)

## *Coastal Inhabitants of Kulon Progo Fight Injustice.*

*there is no peace without justice and there is no justice without conscience*

[The full text of this document is available at:

<http://325.nostate.net/library/position-paper-summary.pdf>

For more context on this struggle refer to *The Spectre #2*, available at:

<http://spectrenewsletter.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/spec-2.pdf>

Or see: [peasant.tk/](http://peasant.tk/),  
[petanimerdeka.tk/](http://petanimerdeka.tk/) or  
[kpsolidarity.wordpress.com/](http://kpsolidarity.wordpress.com/)

#### 4. Criminalisation of the people

It is only natural that the mine lobby will manipulate the issue, taking it from the social-political domain into the criminal domain, because actually each of the actions that they have undertaken to bring about the project constitute an utter violation of the law whenever a case is made. In 2009-2010 a farmer (Tujiko) became the target for criminalisation on a trivial matter only because he raised questions about his rights to the land which should be guaranteed by law. It is not impossible that any individual who is not in agreement with the mining of iron sand could become the target of criminalisation.

The fundamental problem of PT JMI's plan to mine iron sands is about land; land as both a living space and a provider of livelihood

to the coastal inhabitants of Kulon Progo. The legal establishment of land rights in the mining concession area has already been clarified because the land rights of monarchies and remnants of monarchies (*PAG* and *SG*) have been withdrawn and have been replaced by the state. This legal determination is further strengthened due to the local people possessing proof of land ownership. The people's reaction to Government and PT JMI's claim that the land in the mining concession area (including the location of the pilot project) belongs to *PAG* has already triggered acts of criminalisation from mine supporters to the local people, in the instances of Tukijo's use of his right to question the state apparatus as to the aim of *magersari*, and the people's own initiative to close down the pilot project on the 17th December 2010.

#### 5. Acts of Terrorism directed at the people

Any person who deliberately uses violence or the threat of violence to create a widespread atmosphere of terror or fear, or brings about a large number of victims, can be categorised as committing the criminal offence of terrorism<sup>20</sup>. Such criminal offences have been repeatedly carried out by irresponsible parties towards the coastal inhabitants of Kulon Progo, such as the burning of outposts and damage to houses on the 27th October 2008, or the provocation of public officials to

mobilise perpetrators of violence (and intimidate state apparatus) to oversee the progress of the *AMDAL* through the constitutional obstacles (the newspapers Meteor from the 21st February 2011, and Tempo and Republika from the 22nd February 2011 are full of provocative statements from Sultan HB X that he will employ hired thugs if the iron sands mine should continue to encounter obstacles).

D. The people's attempts to settle the matter.

At the local level, the source of conflict is the plan to mine iron sands, meaning that **the cancellation of the project is the only way to achieve a peaceful solution to the matter**. If the government is intelligent, wise and with the people, then it should be able to find a development agenda that is in line with the development process that the coastal inhabitants of Kulon Progo have carried out over the last 30 years, namely development of agriculture on the coastal land so that it becomes the cornerstone of the local economy, and not land-grabbing projects.

The people have sent letters to various interested parties such as:

1. The President of the Republic of Indonesia, asking to cancel the contract of work
2. The Ministry of the Environment, concerning the environmental problems (citing contraventions of *UU No 23 of*

1997, UU no 27 of 2007, UU No 32 of 2009, PP No 27 of 1999)

3 The Interior Minister, to withdraw *Perda DIY No 2 of 2010* concerning the *RTRWP DIY 2009-2029* (rather than public officials would commit criminal offences)

4. The Regional and Provincial *DPRDs*, concerning land use planning (citing contraventions of *UU No 10 of 2004, Interior Minister's Ordinance No 28 of 2008, UU No 26 of 2007*)

5. The People's Representative Council (*DPR*) of the Republic of Indonesia, to reject the mining project (citing contraventions of *UU No 5 of 1960, UU No 39 of 1999, UU No 11 of 2005*)

6. Komnas HAM [*National Human Rights Commission*] about the threat of human rights violations.

To many parties it may seem that we are coming from a (fundamental) standpoint of total rejection, as we have rejected several different attempts to reach out to our interests. However it is vital to understand that mining and agriculture along the coast are mutually contradictory to each other. If mining should take place then agriculture will be lost, and vice versa. Therefore **to find convergence between the interests of the different parties (the people, government and the corporation) is an attempt to go through with the mining plans whilst at the same time not going through with them**, something that common sense would tell us is impossible to occur. NGOs would be better off studying some logic first, before acting to their own ends, and trying to become brokers of the dispute. Whichever term is used: mediation, negotiation, compromise, *win-win solution*, we reject anything that is designed to result in the mining of iron sands. A *win-win solution* could only

occur if the plan to mine iron sands is permanently cancelled by law, because there are many other options available to plan an agenda for development that is truly mutually beneficial.

E. Direction, degree and landscape of conflict.

Arising from government's reluctance to be open with the people, and the shortfall of communication when dealing with the people (it should be dialogue, not monologue), this conflict has sharpened and spread as those who have an interest in mining the people's land have carried out a series of excessive actions. The conflict has been triggered by government violence, whether physical violence (such as the clashes with the police that occurred on 20 October 2009), or violence which takes the form of the deception of the people through the engineering of law/policy. If the government permits or even nurtures this conflict, it is not impossible to imagine that the next step will be a massacre of the people by armed agents. If the government continues to impose its will, so we will fight the injustice, in whatever form that may take.

By continuing to live as farmers we ensure a continuity for all concerned, as we represent the key to humanity's food needs. The weapons of the state can only wound and kill, but **let us use our own weapons to bring life to the government, the people, the forces, corporations, thugs, even Pakualam / Sultan, by farming, of course!**

To Farm or to Die, Resist the Iron Mine!

22 February 2011

[Editor's Update:

News from the PPLP is a bit scarce, but the last information I saw was that 700 Special Police had arrived in Kulon Progo (7 March), and the PPLP recently celebrated their fifth anniversary.

A small solidarity demonstration was held yesterday (21 April) in London outside the Indonesian Consulate and Anglo-Pacific Ltd (the firm currently bankrolling Indomines).

A number of Bank Central Asia ATMs have been destroyed or vandalised in Sulawesi in solidarity with the Kulon Progo farmers. A Tesco supermarket (?) in Nottingham, UK, was also vandalised in solidarity.

Indomines' latest '*Progress Update for the Jogjakarta Iron Project*' indicates that Mitsui & Co. are now onboard ("to explore the future development of a pig iron facility at the iron project") and Indomines have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tri Mitra "to work together in exploring and developing mineral assets in Indonesia with initial emphasis on coal to support Indomines future iron making requirements".

Indomines was recently queried (18 April) by the ASX in regards to the irregularly high amount of trade occurring in Indomines stocks; accusations of insider trading were alluded to, but it appears the ASX were seeking clarification rather than making accusations.]

# [LASNET EVENTS & CAMPAIGNS]

**LATIN AMERICAN  
ACTIVIST FILM FESTIVAL  
- THIRD CYCLE**  
28 & 29 MAY; 1-6PM  
RMIT UNIVERSITY, CITY  
CAMPUS  
STUDENT UNION,  
BUILDING 8, LEVEL 3,  
ROOM 18  
350 SWANSTON  
STREET  
\$5/\$10

**COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY  
SEMINAR ON LATIN  
AMERICA**  
SATURDAY, MAY 7;  
11AM-5:30PM  
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY -  
CITY CAMPUS; 215  
FRANKLIN ST,  
MELBOURNE  
(SEE RIGHT FOR MORE  
DETAILS)

**SECOND SOLIDARITY  
DELEGATION TO  
COLOMBIA**  
TUESDAY, MAY 10; 7-  
9:30pm  
Location  
TBC  
(See opposite page for  
more details)

**International Day of Action  
Against Multinational  
Corporations**  
22 July; Location TBC



**Community Solidarity Seminar  
on Latin America**

**SATURDAY MAY 7**  
11am-5:30pm  
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY  
CITY CAMPUS  
215 FRANKLIN ST.  
MELBOURNE

SPEAKERS FROM BOLIVIA, CHILE, COLOMBIA, HONDURAS,  
PERU & MEXICO.  
FILM PRESENTATION, MUSIC & MORE IF THE TIME ALLOWS US.  
Lunch by donation & \$5 Entry.

Called by Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET)  
as well as friends and supporters.  
More info write to lasnet@latinlasnet.org  
Visit www.latinlasnet.org and/or www.latinamericasolidaritynetwork.org

Supported by Latin American Solidarity Society at La Trobe  
& The Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) at La Trobe University

During the last few years, Latin American struggles have become one symbol of workers, indigenous communities and marginalised sectors being clearly conscious of their historical role, and acting on it. And where their resistances and struggles have attracted people from other parts of the world.

In Australia many activists have identified this and have sought to create links of solidarity and struggle with grassroots organisations in Latin America that, with creativity and commitment, are pushing for deep changes in their respective countries.

LASNET has been supporting these struggles and creating links with progressive and democratic organisations here in Australia. As a result of this work the movement of solidarity with Latin America has been getting stronger.

LASNET will continue to centre their solidarity efforts with popular and indigenous movements and organisations based in countries where oppressive politics, most notably neoliberalism, are still being implemented and continue to create inequality.

· Countries like Chile, where we see repression of indigenous

communities, the pauperisation of the poor in the countryside and the city; where progress and neoliberal advances only benefit the few.

· Colombia, where we see an institutionalised system of state terrorism; where the assassination of unionists and social leaders is a normal practice.

· Peru, where a government subservient to the United States is selling itself to multinational corporations of hunger and misery.

· Mexico, where for more than 17 years the Zapatista movement has presented us with creative alternatives to the misery of Capital and neoliberalism; an inspiring project when compared to the rampart corruption within a Mexican government completely directed by Obama.

· Honduras, where an almost invisible (within Australia at the least) coup d'etat disarmed the democratic institutions and, with the consent of Madame Clinton, continues human rights violations and the murder of activists, without any comment of these issues in the national media.

We could continue and continue, these countries devoted to imperial and neoliberal politics are a big contradiction to the anti-hegemonic countries of Bolivia,



Venezuela and Cuba, where international support is of total importance for the social and popular organisations that are playing a fundamental role in these countries in defying the central empire.

Significant things are happening in Ecuador, but still the marginalised and indigenous communities do not find spaces to raise their voices. In Brazil the State confronts Obama in some spheres and in others supports its politics, maintaining an unclear position on global US influence, where you can see some changes in supporting the people. Here our efforts will to support the MST, the biggest social grassroots movement for change in Latin America.

During the Community Solidarity Seminar calling for May 7, 2011, we will centre our discussions and presentations at this forum on those countries where the neoliberal and imperial domination exercises his desperate influence and where the peoples, workers and indigenous peoples stand firm against the avalanche of injustices and discrimination that oppresses them.

From Chile we are having a Chilean Mapuche activist, Maria Paz Toro, who will talk about the current situation of the social and indigenous movement in confrontation with the reactionary government of Chile today.

Ben will talk about the oppressive Colombia today.

Rosie will inform us of the current situation in Honduras.

Anita will share with us her experience and vision on Mexico.

James will share with us 'A Burrito in Tenōchtitlān'.

Lucho will introduce the struggle against IIRSA and the political hubs against hegemonic politics in Allende, Che and Sandino's continent and so many other fighters that gave their lives, so others could live.



In a continuation of last year's solidarity delegation (see: <http://www.latinlasnet.org/node/372> for more details); LASNET is again organising a delegation to Colombia in 2011.

Departing 12th August, 2011 and returning 31st August; the delegation has the following objectives:

1.- Contribute to the construction of an international solidarity long-term bloc with the Colombian people struggles.

2.- to contribute to the elaboration and development of a common platform of struggles between Australian organisations with homologous Colombians to oppose US Free Trade Agreement, the imperialist war, US Military bases facilities in Latin America and the world, the policy impelled by the global and transnational financial groups owners and to denounce the environmental destruction caused by the action of the capitalists.

3.- To contribute to the visibility of the problems faced by workers and popular sectors due to the policy of transnational companies of the Colombian State and the governments of the first houses of the economic groups that have a presence in the country.

4.-To obtain the necessary information to deal with the discussions that are developed in

relation to the TLC Colombia – Australia. The Australian government must not make agreements with governments that violate human rights and enrich the transnational companies and national groups through violence and terror.

5.- To promote and develop in Australia the Campaign “ No to the war of the multinationals!, strengthen the Global campaign against Coca-Cola “ Because I love life, I do not consume Coca-Cola!

6.- To strength trade unions and Australian solidarity organisations unity with the Colombian social movements.

At this event we will be screening the film: ‘Cesanare Human Rights Struggles in Colombia’; and we will provide a forum for interested persons to learn more about the delegation, register their interest in joining us, and more generally, learn about the solidarity work LASNET is engaged in in supporting Colombian struggles for social justice.

For more details, feel free to contact us via email: [lasnet@latinlasnet.org](mailto:lasnet@latinlasnet.org)

# ONGOING CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER COKE: *'IF YOU LOVE, LIFE DON'T DRINK COCA-COLA!'*

Colombia is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a Trade Unionist.

The trade union movement in Colombia has been dramatically dismantled in the face of privatisation and flexibility of labour. Since the murder of its unionist Isidro Segundo Gil by paramilitaries inside a Coca-Cola bottling plant on the 5th December 1996, the Colombian food and drink workers union SINALTRAINAL has been the victim of over 180 human rights abuses<sup>1</sup>. In a recent statement, the union attacked the complicity of the state and multinationals in the campaign of paramilitary terror inflicted upon them and the trade union movement as a whole.

All these crimes, past and present, remain unpunished, and this constitutes a state policy. In the era of 'democratic security', of the communal state ruled by 'justice and peace', the killings are pardoned, their ideologues are decorated and the transnational's are rewarded with non-payment of taxes and the surrender of more of Colombians' natural resources'. For over 30 years the Colombian Trade Union of Food Industry, SINALTRAINAL, has tried to defend against the increasing assaults made by transnational corporations, above all Coca-Cola. The price to pay were 9 murdered Coca-Cola unionists, 12 murdered Nestle unionists as well as permanent death threats, abduction threats and attempts at intimidation by the ultra-right paramilitary. In 2002 SINALTRAINAL initiated the International Campaign against Coca-Cola to bring attention to

the persecution. The campaign was picked up and supported by social movements worldwide. It was resumed in September 2007 and again has been ongoing since 2009.

## **Manifesto on the campaign against the Coca-Cola Company**

As SINALTRAINAL (National Food Industry Workers Union) has maintained since the beginning of its human rights campaign against the Coca-Cola Company, we demand that the company resolve the ongoing violence and meet the victims' demands. However, this has yet to be achieved. On the contrary, the Coca-Cola Company has adopted a strategy of lies to mislead public opinion and the workforce, dissolve our popular support, and terminate our campaign.

The Coca-Cola Company wants to avoid pressure that would force them to engage with SINALTRAINAL and move forward on a process for truth, justice, and comprehensive reparations for the victims and their families. We, SINALTRAINAL, continue to denounce the abuses of the Coca-Cola Company and the complicit Colombian state. We will continue our fight until Coca-Cola meets the following demands:

1. SINALTRAINAL will never be silenced and will always be free to speak truthfully about the abuses of the Coca-Cola Company.
2. SINALTRAINAL is autonomous in its projects and the management of its social funds.
3. The Coca-Cola Company must guarantee that it will accept the responsibility of new problems and must promise SINALTRAINAL that these will be resolved by Coca-Cola rather than treated as

mere local issues with the Coca-Cola bottlers.

4. The Coca-Cola Company must publicly acknowledge the benefits it has received from what has happened and its commitment that such violence will not reoccur.

5. An agreement necessitates the inclusion of reparations for the union; indemnification of the victims; labour policy that adheres with human rights, collective bargaining agreements, and international treaties; the right to the preservation of historical memory, truth, justice, and reparation that will allow for the advancement of SINALTRAINAL's social processes.

6. The Coca-Cola Company must adopt an agreement to modify its practice, recently well documented by the ILO, of decimating unions by using subcontractors.

7. SINALTRAINAL preserves its union sovereignty and its right to solidarity with the causes of theirs workers and sectors in Colombia and the world.

8. SINALTRAINAL communicates its willingness to reach an agreement with the Coca-Cola Company that is not harmful to workers and the union.

9. The Coca-Cola Company has forced SINALTRAINAL to inform the world about its abuses – s these abuses are not resolved and the company's anti-union conduct persists, SINALTRAINAL must continue to seek support to pressure the Coca-Cola Company to adopt a global policy respectful of Human Rights.

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<sup>1</sup> 2009 figure. Source: 'From Colombia Dubán Vélez in Australia', in *Latin America Stands Up*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Spring 2009, pp. 3-4.



[ MARICHIWEU ]



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## **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.

To find out Activities, Events, Launch and Rally of the campaign in Australia or If you would like to be involved or help in any way with this important campaign please visit or contact:

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