



Chiapas Update



Information and Analysis from the Chiapas Support Committee

November 2006

“We Want This Border to Disappear” - Marcos in Magdalena de Kino

by: Mary Ann Tenuto Sánchez

As the hot desert sun began fading into a cool desert evening, the Other Campaign’s Karavana arrived in Rancho el Peñasco (Big Rock Ranch), Sonora, Mexico, between the towns of Santa Ana and Magdalena de Kino. The Quiché Biodiversity Center is located on the ranch and contains a hostel, a kitchen, an outdoor eating area and enough room to create a meeting space. A large bus contained the Karavana traveling with the Other Campaign on its tour of Northern Mexico. Subcomandante Marcos arrived in a van. He was accompanied by a personal security guard and indigenous leaders from the region and from the National Indigenous Congress, as well as a survivor of the police terrorism in San Salvador Atenco.

The Karavana was immediately whisked into the hostel for dinner and emerged an hour later to participate in a sacred fire ceremony. The meeting with indigenous peoples of the Tohono O’odham (Pápago) nation began around 7:00 in an outdoor manger for the lambs which are bred commercially on the ranch. One by one, traditional authorities and representatives of the different tribes went to the head table, sat down next to Marcos and talked about the problems they faced as indigenous peoples. Many of the authorities were women. The animals were either quite excited by the crowd of approximately 250 people or upset because we had taken over their space. Their “baas” were heard throughout the evening.

The US/Mexico border runs through the Tohono O’odham lands and divides the people. Tribal members live on both sides of the border and have different perspectives on immigration and on solutions to the problems arising from this unnatural division. They asked Marcos to help them unite. As each speaker finished, Marcos rose to shake hands with them, contributing to an atmosphere of warmth and friendship.

After two hours of indigenous speakers, the coordinators surprised all of us in the crowd by requesting the participation of those folks who were present from organizations in the United States. The majority of people present were from the US side of the border, a mix of border activists (we were meeting just 60 miles south of the border), indigenous people and Chican@s. A friend of mine met one of the indigenous coordinators of this meeting at a Border Summit of Indigenous Peoples and he had urged her to attend the meeting near Magdalena. He also urged her to invite her friends to come. I received her invitation. The coordinator, Gregorio, guar-



Subcomandante Marcos crosses the Mexico/U.S. border
Photo: La Jornada

anteed that all would be welcome. Now, Gregorio was calling the different organizations to the front table to give their word.

In addition to the Chiapas Support Committee, there were representatives from Just Coffee and No More Deaths, as well as several student groups. Cecile Lumer represented Citizens for Border Solutions. Marcos listened attentively to another two hours of presentations. Again, each speaker was seated next to Marcos and he rose to shake hands with the speaker as each one concluded his or her presentation. When I was called to the front table to meet Marcos and say a few words, I noticed that his eyes twinkled with warmth and good humor. I presented the Subcomandante some tobacco and a little money for gasoline from the Chiapas Support Committee.

The compañero from San Salvador Atenco spoke about the political prisoners and a representative of the National Indigenous Congress denounced the betrayal of the San Andrés Accords by the three political parties and denounced the creation of a so-called National Indigenous Convention to support Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO).

Finally, at 11:00 at night, Marcos began his talk, sprinkled with a bit of English. He acknowledged those of us from the US with lighter skin by telling the following story:

“Our elders, our chiefs, say that the gods made the world, that they made the men and women of corn first. And that they specifically put the heart of corn in them. But that

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the corn ran out and that some men and women didn't get a heart. But also the color of the earth ran out, and they began to look for other colors and then the heart of corn touched people who are white, red or yellow. So there are people here who don't have the dark color of indigenous people, but have the heart of corn, so they are here with us."

He then began to talk about the impending destruction of indigenous lands throughout Sonora and Northern Mexico by tourist projects and hotels. He specifically mentioned the Escalera Nautica (Nautical Stairway), a series of marinas for pleasure boats on the Coasts of the two Bajas, Sonora and Sinaloa. He also mentioned plans to place garbage dumps and toxic waste dumps with their poisons on indigenous Sonora land.

Marcos' message urged indigenous peoples to unite and struggle against these threats to their land. Marcos spoke about the war of annihilation against the undocumented. He said they (he and the Karavana) had crossed the border for a little while on their way to Magdalena and, at one point, he told the crowd: "We want this border to disappear."

CHIAPAS UPDATE

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ZAPATISTA COMMANDERS SUPPORT ATENCO POLITICAL PRISONERS

BY: Hector Domínguez

On Saturday, September 30, seven Zapatista Commanders arrived in San Salvador Atenco, a small farming town in the State of Mexico about 40 Km (25 miles) from Mexico City, to help and support the families and members of the People's Front for Land Defense (FPDT, its initials in Spanish) who are jailed since the violent police repression on May 3 and 4 of this year. Comandantas Gabriela, Miriam, Gema and Hortensia and her little daughter Lupita (delegate 5 and 1/4) and Comandantes Tacho, Zebedeo and David arrived in Atenco on September 30 in solidarity with and to support the women and men who remain in jail as political prisoners.

The riots in Atenco last May between federal and local police and the people of Atenco ended up in brutal repression, sexual abuse of the women detained and two young men dead. Initially, 172 people were formally jailed after the repression, but with help of the FPDT and the Zapatista's Other Campaign, 144 people were set free on bail of approximately \$1300 dollars each. However, there still are people in jail. 28 people (eight of them women) are held in the CERESO (Center for Social Rehabilitation in Spanish) of Satiaguito de la Loma in the State of Mexico, another three, pointed out as leaders of the FPDT, are held in the CERESO of Almoloya de Juarez, a maximum security prison used mainly for dangerous criminals, and three more are in Molino de Flores penitentiary.

Mexico's National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) and international human rights organizations have constantly shown all the human rights violations of those jailed, as well as the abuse in May by the police (both local and federal). On October 16, the CNDH issued a recommendation about the Atenco case, analyzing the facts, presenting the evidence and legal situation of the different parties involved in these events. In this recommendation, the commission found that the detentions were made in a random fashion, with cruel and inhumane treatment, that there was illegal detention, torture and sexual abuse, among other human rights violations, of those people jailed and provided different recommendations to Federal Public Security Secretary, the Governor of the State of Mexico and the Commissioner of the National Institute of Migration due to the deportation of foreign citizens under circumstances outside the Law.

Similarly, Amnesty International published a report on October 5 about the sexual abuses related to Atenco and can be read online at: <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR410452006>>.

All the different movements and protests, both national and international, have been fundamental in promoting the freedom of all Atenco political prisoners. Now, with the presence of the Zapatista Commanders, who stay with the people outside the CERESO of Satiaguito, and the Other Campaign, there is a lot of pressure on the government to review the cases of the Atenco political prisoners and to do justice in all these cases.



The Conquest Continues

by Alejandro Reyes

Today, it would seem difficult to imagine the despair that drove entire villages to collective suicide during the first decades of colonization. How do we understand, from the perspective of mestizo individuality, the collective decision to die, to cease to be, before the implacable violence of a conquest that destroyed the lives, the customs, the dignity, the forms of survival, and the entire universe of the Mexican indigenous peoples? By the middle of the XVI century, the Judge Alonso de Zorita, in his Brief Story of the New Spain, told the terrible story of the Mixe and Chontal people in the sierras of Oaxaca, who decided to stop procreating in order to disappear with dignity from a world in which they no longer fit.

Stories of a distant, dark colonial past, of a brutal conquest and genocide that five centuries of history, a struggle for independence, and a revolution have supposedly overcome. But no.

In the Northern Baja California desert, well into the 21st century we listen to the story of the last Kiliwa Indians on the planet, who have decided, like their Chontal and Mixe brothers and sisters did five centuries ago, to die with dignity before being devoured by the machinery of the new form of conquest. There are only 54 members of the tribe and of those only five speak the almost extinct language. For years they have fought to preserve their lands and their forms of survival. The words of Kiliwa leader, Elias Espinoza, reiterate what the Other Campaign has heard over and over during its travels throughout the country. The changes to the constitution and the PROCEDE —an institution that permits communal lands (ejidos) to be divided and sold— make Indians lose more and more of their lands, allow capitalist pressures to turn indigenous people against one another, and gradually deprive them of their forms of subsistence.

With a shortage of land, without work, without social services —there are no schools, no health centers, no electricity— more and more indigenous people leave their places of origin in search of another life. For the Kiliwa, this means death. In the face of this, the women of the community decided to stop procreating, a gradual, collective suicide to spare their children from having to live through an even more terrible spiritual death.

We heard the story of the Kiliwa in a Cucapá community near Mexicali, where Delegate Zero and the caravan of the



A Kiliwa woman from the community of Arroyo de León, Baja California. Photo: La Jornada

Other Campaign arrived this 22 of October. The Cucapá are also being pushed toward extinction. Only three communities survive —one in Sonora, one in Arizona and the one we visited— with a total of less than 300 members. The community survives through fishing, but in 1993 the waters where they fish were declared an ecological reserve. The fishing of curvina, their principle form of subsistence and an age-old practice, is now forbidden. Once again, the prohibition is a death sentence. Since 2000, and especially in recent years, the protection of the waters has become more aggressive. Armed soldiers patrol the region, confiscating any catch and destroying boats.

How can one remain indifferent to the extinction of indigenous peoples, and worse yet, to their collective suicide? How can one not be horrified by the brutality that this system inflicts on the thousands of peoples? How can we begin to understand the insensitivity of a good part of society that does not seem to care for its own people? Catering to economic and political interests, the mass media say nothing, and public opinion looks the other way.

But the Other campaign struggles from below, having as its only weapons the solidarity and creativity of those who refuse to maintain their eyes and ears comfortably closed. After consulting with the village leaders, Delegate Zero announced that during the next fishing season, from the end of February to the end of May, a Zapatista camp would be established in the Cucapá community, and asked for the presence and support of members of the Other Campaign from both sides of the border. The organizing has already begun: in meetings in Tijuana, Mexicali, San Diego, Los Angeles, Oakland and elsewhere, adherents to the Other Campaign have already begun planning the camp. The violence and the brutality caused by neoliberalism are a new form of conquest that day by day annihilates life; the other Campaign is the start of a new form of resistance, built from below. A new form of hope.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

www.jornada.unam.mx
www.RadioZapatista.org
chiapas.indymedia.org
EnlaceZapatista.ezln.org.mx
www.RevistaRebeldia.org
www.ciepac.org
www.zetztainternazionale.org

A Communiqué from the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee-General Command of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

Mexico.

Intergalactic Commission-Sixth Commission.

October 2, 2006

To the Peoples of the World

To the Adherents to the Zezta International of the Five Continents

Companeros and Companeras:

The EZLN, through its Intergalactic Commission and its Sixth Commission, Convoke: Gatherings of the Zapatista Peoples with the Peoples of the World.

The First will be December 30, 31, 2006 and January 1, 2 of 2007, celebrated in the Oventik Caracol, with the following objectives:

One - With the goal that the different organizations, groups, collectives and Individuals, individuals from other countries, that struggle, resist on the five continents, that struggle struggle for Humanity and against Neoliberalism, that they may know the experiences of struggle and how the Zapatista Indigenous communities organize their government, that the five Good Government Juntas speak directly, with those present at that Encounter.

Two - That the Zapatista peoples and their authorities may know with their own voice of the experiences and histories of struggle of other countries from the five continents that struggle and resist for humanity and against neoliberalism.

Three - That the Zapatista peoples and the organizations, groups, collectives and individuals from other countries, who struggle and resist in all the world against neoliberalism and for humanity may relate directly without an intermediary to offer support and mutual solidarity.

Four - To propose and agree means, styles and ways of communication among the organizations, groups, collectives and individuals that struggle and resist on the five continents.

Fifth - To send a message of support to the struggles that, against the power of money, currently sustain peoples in different points of the planet.

Sixth - To make and discuss proposals for the next Intergalactic Encounter, including dates and places.

The Second Encounter will be the 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 of July, 2007.

It will be celebrated in the Five Caracols with the same objectives.

July 21 - In the Caracol of Oventik - Inauguration.

July 22 - Work

July 23 - Travel to the Caracol of Morelia.

July 24 - Work

July 25 - Travel to the Caracol of Roberto Barrios

July 26 - Work.

July 27 - Travel to the Caracol of La Garrucha

July 28 - Work

July 29 - Travel to the Caracol of La Realidad.

July 30 - Work and Closing Ceremony

July 31 - Return to San Cristobal de las Casas.

In each Caracol Authorities from the MAREZ (autonomous Zapatista rebel municipalities) and the Good Government Juntas, Companeras Comandantas and Companeros Comandantes will participate. They will tell their experiences of struggle with their autonomous governments, but above all so that we may discuss proposals for the very next Intergalactic Encounter, including dates and places.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

For the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee-General Command of the Zapatista National Liberation Army

An Invitation/Call to Participate in the Other Campaign's Consulta (Vote), form the Other Geography and prepare for the Intergalactic Meeting.

Date: October 30, 2006

To: All Adherents to the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle and the Other Campaign and/or the International Campaign in Northern California.

To: All those individuals, families, groups, collectives, political organizations and/ or NGOs who are sympathetic to the Other Campaign and/or the International Campaign in Northern California

From: The Chiapas Support Committee, Oakland.

Sisters and Brothers:

At the end of September, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) issued a communiqué announcing a Consulta (Vote) on some questions relating to the internal workings of the Other Campaign. Secondly, it announced an Intergalactic Encuentro over New Years (December 30, 2006 - January 2, 2007) in the Caracol of Oventik, Chiapas, Mexico. Finally, one of the communiqués issued recently announced that the second phase of the Other Campaign will begin in February. We, the Chiapas Support Committee, as an adherent to both the Other Campaign and the International Campaign, have taken the responsibility to facilitate the voting and a discussion of all these initiatives and their impact here in Northern California. We are calling groups and organizations with a commitment to social justice to an assembly on the weekend of December 2-3, 2006 at:

CTWO Training and Retreat Center
1218 E. 21st Street
Oakland, California

Although the Other Campaign is a national (Mexican) campaign, many folks in the border states have asked to participate and our participation is generally accepted. Other folks in California and elsewhere in the United States are identified with the International Campaign. Here, in Northern California, we have adherents and sympathizers interested in both and, therefore, we are calling you to initiate the implementation of both. Both campaigns seek to unite those below and to the Left to struggle together peacefully against capitalism.

The Consulta seeks to explore the following questions and how they pertain to our local communities:

1. What are the fundamental characteristics of the Other Campaign (its collective identity, who are "we"?) for example, what does it mean to be "anti-capitalist?" or, what does it mean to be below and to the Left?
2. How do we relate to each other? (What is the structure of the Other Campaign?); (This appears to pertain to how decisions are made.)
3. Who do we support? With whom do we unite? (What are the Other Campaign's politics of all ances?) Some of this will depend on answers to the first question.
4. What is the place of differences? (race, gender, indigenous people, others?)
5. What are the common tasks for all adherents (for example, dissemination of information, recruitment)?

The announcement that the second phase of the Other Campaign will begin in February, 2007 makes it important that we form an Other Geography (the Other Campaign in Northern California) in preparation for that phase, which could reach into our geography and we all must prepare together. We are hoping to form an Other Geography at this assembly (who are the adherents to the Other Campaign in Northern California?).

The conference will have a program geared to including all levels of familiarity, or lack of familiarity, with the Other Campaign. We will send a follow-up letter with program details. There will be a conference fee to cover the rent. We will try to keep it low, but much depends on how many people attend.

Please reply whether you or your organization is interested in attending. The facility accommodates 60-70 comfortably, has a full kitchen and accommodations for out-of-town folks who need a place to stay.

Please reply by email to: enapoyo1994@yahoo.com or by telephone to: (510) 654-9587.

Gracias/Thank you!

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REGIONAL ENCUENTRO * * * OTHER CAMPAIGN * * * DECEMBER 2 - 3, 2006

Chiapas Support Committee on the Airwaves!

Tune into Radio Zapatista on La Onda Bajita
every 1st Friday in Spanish
and every 2nd Friday in English
both shows at 9:00pm

kpfa 94.1 fm))))))))))))

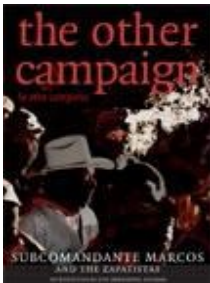
CHIAPAS NO SE OLVIDA!

www.RadioZapatista.org

Who we are

The Chiapas Support Committee is a grassroots non-profit organization. We have a sisterhood relationship with the Autonomous Zapatista Municipality (County) of San Manuel, located in the canyons (cañadas) of Ocosingo, Chiapas. We work together with San Manuel's elected authorities to construct a sustainable economic base capable of developing and independently supporting utonomous government.

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Book Launch of The Other Campaign / La Otra Campaña

November 10, 2006, 7 to 10 pm

New College * 777 Valencia St. * Mission District, San Francisco

With updates on the Zapatista's Other Campaign and the People's Movement of Oaxaca.
Featuring images, video, live music and a live broadcast of Radio Zapatista on KPFA 94.1 FM.

A joint event by : The Chiapas Support Committee and City Lights Bookstore

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