

# **A history of Guadalupe el Tepeyac**

Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

29<sup>th</sup> June 2002

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The resistance of Mexican indigenous communities is based on a large history of fighting for memory, liberty, democracy, justice, life and more over, dignity. This opposition joins the rebel necessity of young students to reinvent the world, to reconstruct a world where differences are represented in a sociocultural richness and in a collective future for the nation; in the reconstruction of a future line for Mexico. Including not excluding, listening not imposing, serving others not itself, commanding and obeying, contributing not exploiting, studying and collaborating with those who settled the IPN, to serve, collaborate and fight for the people without competing with them. NO to Excellency at the expense of life, NO to quality instead of money, NO to the enterprise-philosophy of consumption and extermination. YES to hope, YES to rebellion and the will to reconstruct a world where is a place for all of us.

## **Guadalupe el Tepeyac**

Guadalupe el Tepeyac was built in 1994 as the first zapatista Aguascalientes, a symbolic place of rebel indigenous against death. Tojobales in a fight for life, a cartel, a bunker, a fabric of arms, a training camp, Aguascalientes, Chiapas, Noa's Ark, the tower of Babel, the rainforest's nave, the delirium of zapatism, the pirate ship.

The anachronistic paradox, the sweet madness of those without face, the absurdity of a civil movement in dialogue with an armed force, Aguascalientes, the hope of the winkle that from the jungle and sky calls, the hope of the rebel who denies conformism and defeat it, democracy, liberty, justice, faces hidden to be seen, tomorrow that sows on the past, faces reduced to silence, nocturnal step, mountain that is hope: the same indigenous glance that from centuries follows us in our violated effort to be part of modernism; the stubborn denial to accept pittance, to demand the apparent absurdity, EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE, NOTHING FOR US.

From February 1995 till early in 2001, the Federal Army had two camps on indigenous lands. For almost six years the inhabitants of Guadalupe el Tepeyac have been driven out from their homes, expelled by official violence, by the same army that till today lives on their lands. There is no official information about this case, but even the most conservative estimates prove that there have been at least half a million soldiers, with a powerful arsenal of light and heavy artillery, as well as a great quantity of vehicles of combat and invasion.

"We have to go back to our Guadalupe. How, we should see!" Guadalupe el Tepeyac was once known as a zapatista-village. In fact the first village, that presented itself to the world in 1994, when the EZLN delivered General Absalo'n Castellanos Domi'nguez, before the television cameras. Just before the San Cristo'bal negotiations started. It was one of the seven points that the zapatistas demanded to be demilitarised, as a condition to initiate the dialogue with the Mexican government. "The army occupied the village, destroyed the coffee plantations, consumed the wood and destroyed our houses".

## **The displacement of 1995**

After being displaced by the Federal troops on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 1995, the tojobal families of Guadalupe el Tepeyac lived as refugees in four different communities. Now, the majority live in the "new village". They built it with boards and stones on lands lend by companions of the

autonomous municipal council of San Pedro de Michoaca'n, situated deep in the mountains. Some families stayed at a community on the high lands.

"My stomach hurts", says a man when he remembers the exodus. "We have lived with almost 40 persons in one kitchen, without belongings, nothing. There have been many children born during the exodus, they now speak and walk, and some old people died, those who could not support the suffering. There where we live now it's only borrowed. We will go back as soon as our village is clean".

"If the prostitutes, soldiers and policemen leave, then we will go back", says one of the women.

"We don't want to see them. Tepeyac should not be a cartel, it doesn't belong to the soldiers", says the youngest, who without doubt must now have grandchildren. "We put everything in the resistance. We don't want to stay with them. They hurt us a lot. They stayed and kept the lands and water".

"They took us away about 5,000 hectares, rough and cultivated land. The lands were perceled out and belonged to several families (20 h per family). Now the lands are abandoned. We've lost coffee, corn that we sowed, beans and some canes and bananas. We used to eat all that", says a man with apparently the major authority. "We had a field, we've lost it with the cattle and the horses".

"The chickens! ", an exalted woman interrupt, "and all the animals, the pigs! ", she says.

Settled between 1947 and 1948 by a group of eight families, a number that was soon duplicated, the village became a very important community in the region of the Margaritas' ravines. In the 80's it joined the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee, and later the revolt in January 1994. That same year in August, during the National Convention for Democracy, Guadalupe el Tepeyac became the first place where the zapatistas met the civil society.

A village of free and well-organized people, is a symbol of resistance. They have built three villages in half a century. They live now on borrowed lands, where they only can cultivate corn, that it's just enough for survival.

"All these years, the soldiers not only took us away our village but they also have been molesting us on the roads. They intimidare us when we pass through, asking us questions, and inspecting us." says one of the youngest of the tepeyaqueros.

Another woman comments: "In the past we used to prepare our cement, maintained our electricity system and main. Now we only live on what grows on the hills. We see our children grow up, we give them what we can, but there is no work and no money. Those who once were little girls are now mature women having children".

A man who seems to be the eldest says ironically: "Now, we could have had little soldiers for grandchildren if we've stayed there." He concludes: "We will go back when all those who invade our village go away".

## **LET'S WORK TOGETHER!**

In the first phase the shell will be constructed, the water plan and some community projects will start. The first journey will take place from the 17<sup>th</sup> till the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. At this journey students of the Polite'cnico will participate together with everyone else who wish to join them navigate to the south-east.

Students of the UAM Azcapotzalco will take charge of a long-term school project. Companions of the Zapatista Assembly of Iztacalco (equivalent to 20 families) with companions from Ecatepec and San Agustín will operate together as the Zapatista Coordinating Committee of Estado de Mexico and realize diverse activities. Groups and organisations of the Delegations Gustavo A. Madero and Azcapotzalco, will work on their personal projects. It is important that each of us takes care of his own project. That is in fact the political goal of resistance that from the rainforest calls through the sky.

The Polite'cnicos will organize music, artistic and politic events, and demand the recognition of the Cocopa Law. We will start with a music event on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June in Zacatenco, at 5:30 p.m. with Rafael Catana, Fernando Medina, Juan Pablo Villa, El Masturezo, Nina Galindo and others. Soon we expect to repeat this event in Guadalupe el Tepeyac.

## **THE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

First step: a huelum in the rainforest

There are many future plans, all based on the main idea to work together: groups, collectives, schools, institutes, quarters, organisations, intellectuals, musicians, artist and individuals will meet in projects and will take care together for their communitary projects. Also general activities will take place, so to improve the organisation on those places where it is hard to work.

The reconstruction of Guadalupe el Tepeyac is a proposal on a national and international level. We are only a bridge, as many can still be build. We are maybe the shortest and the must simple one. The Polite'cnicos participate as many other and invite you all to join us in this project.

In this way the students of diverse schools, groups, organisations and other sectors of the community of the IPN have decided to work in the project: a huelum in the rainforest. We will leave for Guadalupe el Tepeyac on the 17-18<sup>th</sup> of June together with other, and will work on the potable water project. We invite you all to collaborate with the events and activities ment to gain resources. We will keep you informed and wait for new proposals.

The community of Guadalupe el Tepeyac made a video and sent it to us. This video contains a list of materials that are needed for the reconstruction of all houses, roofs, walls, installations, etc. This list does not include the costs for electricity and for the potable water project. These costs are estimated at about 2 millions pesos (2,000 000).

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