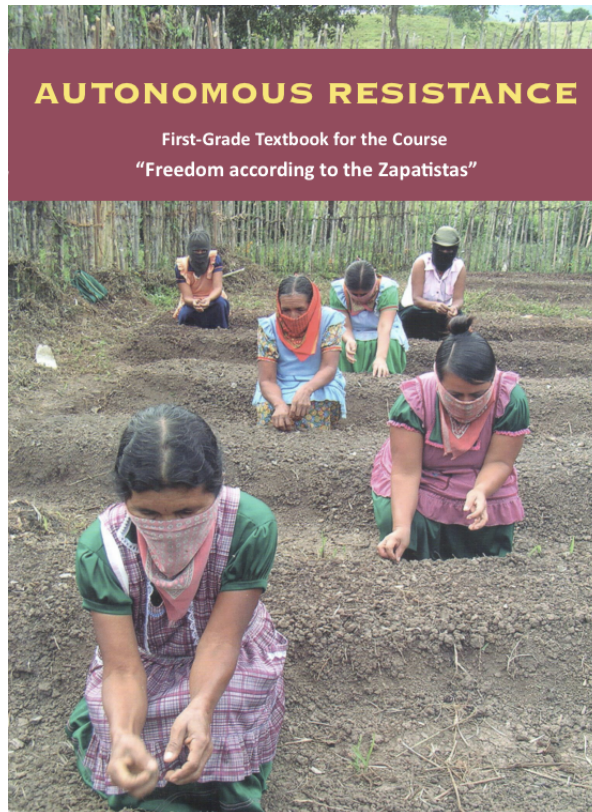


# Autonomous Resistance

First-Grade Textbook for the Course “Freedom according to the Zapatistas”

Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional



2014

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**Caracol I: Mother of the Caracoles,  
Sea of Our Dreams**

La Realidad

# Economic Resistance

## Marisol (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Pedro de Michoacán)

In our zone the evil government is attacking us with the economic element, it is not giving to us directly but many projects, much aid, arrives to the brethren who are no longer Zapatistas. We see that it does this so that our compañeros see or we see in what way it is giving, but we do not pay attention to their projects or their programs.

We are prepared from the families, as towns, as regions, municipalities, and in the zone. Why from our families? To be able to sustain ourselves and our families, to be able to buy everything necessary for each family, so that when it is our turn to do a job our family also feels that it is strong in the struggle.

In our families we are prepared to resist the economic attacks working the mother earth that we have, for her we struggle. We are cultivating the land in milpas, bean fields, coffee, banana, sugar-cane plantations, we also have pastures for cattle, raising chicken, to resist and sustain ourselves as a family, like this we are resisting.

We are also prepared as towns, that is why we have various tasks, be it in collectives or in societies. The compañeros always have a milpa or bean field, there are towns which have cattle in collective, stores which are as societies or transportation which is also managed as societies.

One of the reasons for which we see that the organization of the collective work and societies is necessary is because in each town we have different workers, we have health promoters, education promoters, authorities, agents, commissioners, local persons in-charge, various authorities in the towns. That is why we have to think what work we can promote as a town to be able to at least sustain them with regard to their fares. Maybe we won't be able to support them with much because they are several workers but at least with their fares so that they can fulfill the work within the organization, as a town we have to make that effort to organize ourselves in what the town can agree to.

Also we women have been organizing, seeing the need of each town and above all because we have compañeras who do the work, like the local persons in-charge or the authority of the town, they have outings and they need fares; to give them that it has been organized with chicken raising, bakeries, there also are towns in which the compañeras make a corn or bean milpa.

That work that we are doing as a family or as towns is with the purpose of creating economic funds to support with different situations which sometimes happen to us, like sicknesses and to support us with the fares in the various work areas.

In the regions we have various work collectives, there are cattle collectives, general stores, there are also trucks which belong to the region, there are regions which do milpa. The objective of this work is to create economic funds which are needed for any expense which there is as a region or for contributions, because sometimes celebrations are done and for that there are



contributions. Also the compañeros from the nucleus are promoting the regional work because within our regions we have various workers, as health coordinators, education coordinators at the regional level, our regional compañeros in-charge, so we have to begin to create, to form collective work.

All this work is not with the purpose of dividing among ourselves the few resources that we are obtaining, but to create the small regional or town fund and be able to support ourselves among compañeros, support those who do various tasks within the organization. We are doing this work from the family to the region, they are not being done with any type of project or solidary support, the compañeros themselves organize to see how to obtain a fund and begin, even if it is with a little bit, that work, which goes along growing. It is the effort to construct the economy within our struggle, that work is always done with compañeras and compañeros.

Why are we making all these efforts? Because we see it as necessary due to the economic plan which the evil government has toward our communities in our zone, so we also have to prepare ourselves to be able to resist more, that is, do work within the struggle. All this work that is being done has an objective.

## **Roel (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Pedro de Michoacán)**

At the municipal level our municipal authorities, the municipal councilmembers, have thought and the municipal collective work has been done in practice, because we have to think in our work with the objective of being able to sustain our own authorities into the future, the various workers that we have at the municipal level, like the municipal councilmembers, our municipal health coordinators, our municipal health trainers.

In this case the municipal councils in our zone have promoted municipal collective work in each municipality. Each municipality has a cattle project, which is the one that is sticking the most in our zone, each municipality has its own way of organizing itself. In the Autonomous Council there is a person in charge of looking after these animals, but also as towns or as regions they organize to have a municipal leadership and they aren't there for everything that is needed to take that work forward, for example the pasture, the posting, the cattle's vaccination, there is a special leadership to promote this work for it to not wane away.

For example the General Emiliano Zapata municipality currently has 50 heads of animals, Libertad de los Pueblos Mayas has 35 heads of cattle, Tierra y Libertad municipality has 20 heads of cattle, San Pedro de Michoacán 36 heads of cattle. All that goes along helping us to realize and create our own municipal fund.

We are doing the work at the municipal and zone level with solidary projects, all that work is being promoted through some projects but what is region, town, and family is with the effort of the compañeros themselves, the bases.

One of the problems that we have confronted is that some of the projects have been done and that the way has not been found for how to get them going. For example, in General Emiliano Zapata we have a rice huller, which is part of a project in which it was thought that in that municipality the compañeros were going to organize to plant rice, because it is produced there, and get it going. They did it once but due to lack of promotion, due to the lack of organization as a municipality, that machine is stopped.

We are lacking a great deal, there are things that do work and there are things that don't, so we go along seeing what things are working in the municipality, just how it is, for example the cattle thing is working well, with its respective leadership, but this matter of the huller project is not working for us.

We have a blacksmith workshop which is in the Tierra y Libertad municipality, which has its own municipal leadership, and leadership in the towns to keep that record. It was closed, those compañeros had it resting, but it began to be promoted, it began to be demanded that the municipality organize for them to get it going, so the compañeros begun to be trained and today that blacksmith shop, with the leadership that they have, is working, they are making stoves those ones which they call "Lorena."

The municipality has its way of organizing with its respective leadership for them to go to work, not permanently, every time they see that it is necessary or there is a petition from a community which needs stoves or a door, or anything which can be made in that blacksmith shop, then those compañeros already found the way for how to get it going.

We also have a shoemaking shop in Libertad de los Pueblos Maya, which due to the same thing, due to lack of promotion and organization in that municipality is stopped and in the town we have the teacher on-hand, he is trained. Right now there is an initiative of the compañeros from the nucleus of our zone, which as they see the things which are stalled, are paralyzed, that idea is born to take the word of the compañeros from that municipality and see if there is no way for them to pass it to the group of us compañeros who make up the resistance nucleus. Right now the compañeros are in that discussion because there is that desire within those of us compañeros who make up the nucleus to want to get things going which are stalled in our zone or in our municipality, the idea, the initiative, is up to there.

All that municipal work is helping us so that when it is necessary to make expenses of the municipalities we have somewhere to get it from. The Council has its own fund, even if it is in kind, for example cattle, but there is a fund which is growing little by little. From there is where in the future we can go sustaining the funds that we can have as a municipality, just like as a region, as a town, and as a family.

The store is one of the tasks that we have been able to do during all these years and which our authorities in the zone have been promoting. In the beginning that store had as an objective for the profits to be used to sustain our permanent workers in the hospital that we have in San José del Río.

With that store it was seen that it was helping us as a zone and that the communities which are very far away were benefiting because they no longer had to go out to the municipality of Las Margaritas, which is what is closest for us, we went to the store to buy. That was seen and it was thought about doing two more stores at the zone level. The first store is located in the San Pedro de Michoacán municipality, the second is located in Libertad de los Pueblos Mayas municipality, which together with the General Emiliano Zapata municipality is administering it; it was also thought for another store in the Tierra y Libertad municipality, which is adjacent to the Guatemalan border.

We have those three stores which are being administered by the municipalities in coordination with the Junta. There is a special person in-charge of commerce in the Junta who keeps that record, the municipality also has its person in-charge for them to be looking after everything, but the towns make up the leadership. That in the three stores, each store has its own leadership.

Right now the agreement of our stores, the objective that the Junta has, is that what they are generating in profits be used for when there is a mobilization as a zone, the resources have to come out from there, that is the final objective, for them to help us as a zone. We are no longer going to contribute as towns if something is needed, but the Junta now has a job as a zone and it goes along helping us, for example, if 30 thousand pesos are needed they meet with the Council to go along taking out maybe 10 thousand from each store and they can resolve that issue.

When the first store began we had our own leadership, we had to pass as towns to sell in shifts, the towns say who was going to pass. The problem was that they came lost because we sent someone who did not know how to do the accounts, that was teaching us that we had to find another way, the administration was not going to work like this. So within an assembly that was done in our zone with the municipal authorities, with the authorities from the towns, agents, commissioners, men and women, it was discussed.

Is it that we are going to continue losing like this in that store? And we thought that no, because the one who loses there is the town, because the agreement that the one who loses their town has to pay it, the town had to pay what the salesperson lost.

There were several towns that were losing, so the assembly discussed that problem. Is it that the administration, at the Junta level, has nothing to do with those losses? Why are there losses each time that they sell? What was happening began to be seen because those problems can be arranged seeing the way, that is why the assembly decided that if the compañeros from the towns are going to pay, they must contribute 75% of the debt from each town and 25% the person in-charge of those who keep the record in the Junta, like this is how we said that it must not continue happening.

In the same assembly it was seen that it was necessary that the future salespeople must not be just anyone, the administration continues in the towns but the future salespeople are no longer going to be just anyone from the towns, the authority from each town has to make a commitment. We already tried that just anyone from the towns did not work for us, that there are many losses, we sought another way and we decided, by agreement of all, that the authorities are to pass to cover two weeks, the compañeros from the town have a role.

It is like this how the problems that are happening to us, that we find, go along teaching us, we have to go along finding a way and we are not going to lose hope and close that store because of the problems, on the contrary, it is finding a way so that if something does not turn out for us we find another way. The problems make us think what we are going to do, we do not stay because of the problem that happens there, they teach us that it is necessary to seek another mechanism for the problems. For example, the rule with which the BANPAZ began was being improved. If a role does not work for us we go along modifying, we go along improving as the time allows it, as the situation allows it.

In the BANPAZ rules other points were included, for example that in the event that a compañero from the zone does not pay their loan, the town itself has to demand from that compañero. That is, we already have the proof of the authority, from the health promoter from the authority to guarantee that the compañero does need it, but in the event that they do not come to pay us for any reason the town becomes obligated to demand them, because it knows that compañero, why they do not want to follow through.

While that town does not demand, other compañeros from that same town cannot receive loans because their time to pay that loan already passed. Right now our Caracol is like this, for example if in my town there is a compañero whose time passed and they did not pay, the town

has to demand that they pay, if the town does not demand and in my family someone gets sick I cannot ask for a loan in the BANPAZ because I am not forcing that *compañero* to pay.

For us it has worked for the town to force the one who has debt with BANPAZ to pay, the rule is working, so the space is again opened for the town because the whole town is putting its part, then we again have the right to ask for loans. Like this we go along understanding that just as the *compañero* needed it other *compañeros* are going to need it, that we must fulfill that requirement that the authority asks of us.

Another one of the agreements that was made for the BANPAZ regulations is that in the event that it comes to pass that one of the *compañeros* who has a loan in our zone dies, be it the mother or the father, by agreement of the zone assembly, of the towns, nothing is charged to them, neither the capital nor the interest, it remains as forgiven, nothing is charged to them. If it has happened there, although it is not normal, it happened to us with the family of a *compañero* and we applied that rule, absolutely nothing was charged because it is the agreement of the assembly. If the parents are the ones who come to ask for the loan and something happens to their children, the agreement of the assembly is that the time to pay that money has to be extended in accordance with what the *compañero* can.

The assembly discussed what to do in the event that a *compañero* really cannot pay because the town already investigated and they do not have anything to pay with, they do not have anything to sell, but they had that need from a sickness and it could be resolved with that loan that they asked for. The assembly thought that if it was already investigated well that the *compañero* cannot pay with money or with something that they can sell, the form of paying the loan is for them to go pay with work in the zone. The *compañeros* thought that, it is not closing ourselves but we go along seeking the way.

With that work that is being promoted at the zone level we are creating small economic funds to be able to resist at the zone level. We have at the zone level, another example, a task which is especially by the female *compañeras*. It is an initiative of theirs that they made an eatery-store, that is they have their little eatery and a general store. They began with 15 thousand pesos, they asked for a loan of 15 thousand pesos and their idea of doing that was born. The regional female representatives and local persons in-charge had the initiative, in coordination with the Junta.

They began with 15 thousand pesos, they have their leadership at the zone level, the local *compañeras* in-charge are taking a shift to prepare the food and to sell, that in the first business that they did they informed us that they obtained a profit of 40 thousand pesos. With those 40 thousand pesos they were able to pay the loan that they had of 15 thousand pesos, they were left with the rest free, which is 25 thousand pesos.

The *compañeras* saw that they were lacking some things to complete, the Junta supported them with dishes, with tables, but they came to think that they wanted to improve with the profits, so with the profits they were preparing themselves better. Right now the way in which they are working is that they have their leadership, among the *compañeras* they go along rotating the work and each year they change leadership. They have informed us that currently they have 56,176 pesos which they carry in cash from the last register check that they did.

All that is work that we go along doing at the zone level not with the objective of dividing it among ourselves, not to finish those small funds that go along being generated, but to be prepared for whichever need that we have as a zone, for things which help us within the struggle.

At this zone level we also have milpa work, this year for example, we have 12 hectares of milpa that we have planted. We were responsible for going to plow, in three days we did it,

among 24 compañeros, now the milpa is plowed. The municipality keeps the record, what town is responsible for going to plow, what town is responsible for going to harvest.

The authority, the Junta, has its plan so that the corn we can plant in that zone milpa is to support our permanent workers that we have in the zone, for example those from the hospital. Part of what is planted goes to contribute to those compañeros in the hospital so that they can sustain themselves and another part maybe is going to be sold for other work that we have scheduled in the zone.

The final objective of those 12 hectares is for them to serve to have the zone cattle. Since the zone has 12 heads of cattle and right now does not have anywhere to put them, right now they are in the municipal pastures, we have those places borrowed for them to be in the meantime, they are distributed in each municipality, but the zone is intending to have its own pasture, its own little animals for them to serve us in the future, go along preparing ourselves little by little. Those 12 hectares were already foddered, fodder was planted for us to be able to sustain those animals and for those animals later to be able to help us to have funds at the zone level. What we have there in our zone is a little, how we are organizing ourselves from the towns, from the families, the towns, regions, municipalities, and zone. All this collective work, societies, are not with the objective of dividing up the profits among ourselves. We have to begin from the family, that is to sustain our family on our own and like so the collective work and societies on each scale have their objective in each body at the government level, it is how we are trying to organize ourselves to resist the economic question in our zone.

## **Doroteo (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ Libertad de los Pueblos Mayas)**

There are different things which are done to be able to economically resist because we organize ourselves in education, in health, and in everything, but we do realize, I think that in all the zones it is like this, the first is the economic element. We have heard in all the expositions that money is necessary for the fares, we have heard about the support to go to where it is necessary to go, if there is not that sometimes they stop being promoters, they stop being members of the Junta, that is what happens.

We in the zone where we are organized are not 100% in collective, we work individually in each family, there we organize in the families with the children, with the couple, the man and the woman, we all have to do something. If the man goes off to the milpa, the woman has to do something in the home, for example she is going to raise chicken, she is going to raise pigs. For example, if I must go to Oventik and I need something for a soda or for whatever I need, we sell a chicken, here I do not know how much a chicken costs, but there a chicken is real cheap 150 pesos; if someone sells two chickens well then we already have enough to go and come to Oventik. That is how each family does it there.

I am going to tell something about a town, about a compañero who I heard talking about how that is confronted with the brethren who are not Zapatistas, who have their government project and all that; one town is Zapatista and the other is not Zapatista, they are neighbors. The Zapatistas are on and on, going and going in their milpa or in what they can, in their small businesses, because they know that later they are going off to the clinic or to the Caracol to cover their shift, or going to a meeting, according to the work that each one has, so the days that they

are in their community they work hard, they have enough to feed themselves and what remains to sell.

Neighboring that Zapatista town is a community where they are 100% Priistas, they are with the government projects, they now barely plant their lands. The compas from the Zapatista town always arrive there to sell, the compas go every day and the buyers are those from that Priista community.

Some say that over there sometimes it even causes shame to sell, but I think that it is the most dignified thing because it is more shameful to steal, as it is said. They sell what they produce: avocados, oranges, chilies, tomatoes, beans, corn, sapodillas, bananas, plantains, everything that can be produced, chicken, pigs. One day a man from the Priista community and another from the Zapatista were making commotion, the Zapatista compa was going along eating a banana and the other man got pissed off and said: "Do you not have in your house what you are eating here?" "Yes in my house I have it but I do this because I am on my way, getting to my house I have things to eat. But more fucked-up in your community because it is a market," and he mentioned the name of the other community. "It is a market because they go to sell everything there as if there were no land, as if they were not on the land."

The one no longer answered and that is the truth, the Priista brethren are like that and the Zapatistas are not waiting. That is how to resist and not only in one town, it takes place in all the towns. Aside from the families resisting in this way the towns also seek their way to resist, their collective work.

There we have around N towns in the zone, that although there is not collective work in all we calculate that in those N towns 80% of the towns have a collective task, there are towns that have two, there are towns that have three collective tasks, four, and even five, it depends on how they are organized and it depends on the number of compañeros that there are in each town.

In the towns there are collective milpas of beans, of corn, there are cattle collectives, collective stores, chicken collectives, there are small businesses. It is not that they are permanent businesses which are there all the time, sometimes small events are done and there go the compañeros with their small business. A compañera told us that in a town in her region they began with a business of one chicken farm, ranch chicken, and every so often they killed one or two chickens and made tamales, they sold those tamales and little by little they went gathering a fund and with that fund they had they came to buy a nixtamal mill. Like this they went along creating their work.

One compañero who had knowledge of the other town told us that it is a center where many people from other communities arrive. The compañeras from there organized to make a tortilla-store, but it is not because a machine like those which we see in the cities was purchased, the compañeras make them with their little press or by hand, and there they are going to sell their tortillas to the people who buy it.

That already is a collective work, like this many other things are organized in the towns. And what is that good for? So that if a compañero from that town, if they are the education promoter, the health promoter, and have to go do their work, they have something to give them for their fare, to give them something that can serve them where they are going to do their work.

There the majority of the regions have their collective work, some have their passenger vehicles on the route where they are there, others have a milpa, others have cattle, others have stores. That now is like a custom, that if you have a compañero that is going to do a job on behalf of the region well the collective work of their region is what responds, aside from that their town also is going to support another little bit.

Also in the municipal element there is collective work, the majority is with cattle, some with stores, but here we are seeing that all the municipalities have from two to three collective tasks, at the municipal level we have 8 or 10 collective tasks. That is used so that if the municipality is responsible for giving personnel for the zone, the municipality responds, if that compañero who is named is responsible for doing a job in the zone the municipality responds with its collective work.

Like this is how we are resisting in the economic element, we are seeking it according to the possibilities of each town, the towns do not remain there saying that they cannot, we go along looking for it. Like that example of cane, it is to resist the sugar issue that the price is going up, the compañeros who do that work do not have that problem. Like this each town goes along seeking so not have that complaint, "it's that I cannot because I am missing this." According to our possibilities in each town is how we go along handling it in our zone, sometimes it looks very simple but it is good for something later.

# Ideological Resistance

## **Anahí (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno)**

The evil government uses all forms of media to control and misinform the people, for example television, radio, soap operas, cell phones, newspapers, magazines, and even sports. With television and radio it puts in many commercials to distract the people, the soap operas to hook the people, and we believe that what happens on TV is going to happen to us.

In education the evil government's system makes the children be in school well-uniformed every day, regardless of if they know how to read or write, it is only to put up appearances or for them to look good. It also gives them scholarships for them to have studies but at the end of the day the only ones that benefit are the businesses that sell the supplies or those uniforms.

How do we resist all these bad things of the government's ideology in our Caracol? Our principal weapon is autonomous education. In our Caracol the promoters are taught true stories related to the people for them to be transmitted to the girls and the boys, also making known our demand. Political talks also were begun to be given to our youth for them to be awakened and not fall so easily into the government's ideology, also the local representatives of each town are giving talks to the town about the thirteen demands.

## **Gabriel (Former Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ General Emiliano Zapata)**

In our zone they present many of the government's ideologies to us but we are resisting so that our towns, our youth, and even our children, have the idea of our struggle. Since some time ago we were resisting per se, since our clandestine period, in a part of our zone there were many divisions from other organizations that were compas per se, but we resisted all those ideologies.

What the government has done since '94 until now is counter-attack the collective work that we do. For example if the compañeras from a town are organized to do a bread making collective, they counter-attack that collective, the ones who are not compañeros do a project with the government, giving the idea that they too have it with the government and saying that what the compañeras do is of no use because it is more humble, more simple, that they get more.

Also on television there are many things that the government puts and our youth go off to all those ideas. For example with the soap operas, there are youth who now are awaiting the time in which the soap opera is going to be on; if they already saw a scene that happened that tomorrow the guy is going to get married to the girl, they are awaiting what is going to happen there, and if there is a meeting the youth now barely come. In the movies it is seen that there someone goes off with I don't know what, showing that it is very fucked up, but they just put up appearances, just to lose the mentality of our struggle, we explain this to our compañeros.



What we do is give talks about our struggle with the youth and explain to them that these things are not good for the people. We are resisting all these things, we are working so that our youth, our bases, do not fall into those ideologies of the government.

They also use sports, like soccer, that if Mexico is going to compete with Spain, so even if it is Monday or Tuesday, a work day, the youth lose that time, they even go pay 5 or 10 pesos to go see that thing. What we have done in our zone is promote sports, do youth encounters, make sport of soccer, basketball with the compañeras, we are doing all that, although a little but we are doing it in our zone.

In ideological resistance we do children's encounters, were they are going to perform their poetry, their dance programs, so that like this the children go along understanding about what our struggle is and know that we, the compañeros, are those who have to construct education. All that is also working a little, but we are working it in our zone.

The encounters are done at the zone level and also at the municipal level, the Junta and the municipality have to give their part, the two levels of government have to have that attention of the encounter with the children. If it is at the local level, in the municipality, the encounter is done in a town and the support bases go there to make the food with the children, also those who are the education committee go to supervise the children.

# Psychological Resistance

## **Flor (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ Libertad de los Pueblos Mayas)**

How is the evil government attacking us and how are we resisting it? There is the issue of alcoholic beverage consumption, the government is bringing in many alcoholic beverages for the brethren to consume it and for us to have a problem with them. But it seeks not only for them to consume it, it brings in those products so that we as Zapatistas fall into that error of consuming it and lose the meaning of saying what as Zapatistas we have in secret.

What do we do to counteract it or to resist it? We as Zapatistas organize ourselves and make our agreements or our laws, for example that the Zapatista compañero who consumes those products is given a punishment, but it is explained to them that it is not necessary for it to come to that, because aside from the fact that alcoholism does not leave us with anything good we have to pay a punishment for consuming it, so the compañeros realized that what we explain to them is true and they stop consuming alcoholic beverages. Like this we are resisting against that psychology that the evil government wants to put in us.

## **William (Member of the Autonomous Municipal Council. MAREZ San Pedro de Michoacán)**

There is also the issue of the programs, the government projects. The government begins to bring in projects so that the brethren receive from those projects and believe that it is good, so that they begin to receive from that and forget about their work. They do it so that the brethren no longer depend on themselves but depend on the evil government.

What do we do to resist those things? We begin to organize ourselves to have collective work, we have collective work from the town, the region, in the municipalities, and in the zone. We do that work to satisfy our needs for various types of work and it is how we resist to not fall into the evil government's projects and for us to do our own work, do depend on ourselves and not on the evil government.

There is also the problem of witchcraft. The brethren still in that sense of witchcraft are very cheated because the evil government, after '94, by means of the radio stations began to bring in many hoaxes that witchcraft exists. They, when one of their family members gets sick, go to those spiritualists and the spiritualist tells them:

“That brother who lives close to you is doing the evil to you or is eating you,” they tell them. The evil government brings in all that for us to continue having problems, with other brothers, sometimes they accuse one of us as Zapatistas that we are the witch. What do we do as Zapatista to resist or to not fall into those hoaxes? We begin to see with our compañeros, to tell them that it is not true, how can we believe that among us we are going to eat each other, we begin to orient

the compañeras that it is pure lies. It is how we are resisting those things and I think that the compañeros no longer believe in those things because we are clear that it simply does not exist.

# Cultural Resistance

## **Lizbeth (Future Junta de Buen Gobierno Authority. MAREZ San Pedro Michoacán)**

In our Frontier Jungle Zone we speak various languages: Tojolobal, Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Chol, Zoque, and Spanish. We identify ourselves with our regional clothing, like so we know what language each one speaks, except with Spanish. There are towns which maintain our culture alive, but there are other towns which go along losing language, their dress, even regional music.

With regard to regional music we have the violin, the marimba, the drum, and the reed, which now is only used in traditional celebrations for special ceremonies. Before the town dances were done with these instruments, now it is no longer used for dances, the keyboard is very much in style.

The religious celebrations which are done in our zone, which are maintained in the towns, are December 12th, December 24th, Easter Week, All Saints, and May 3rd. But as Zapatista peoples we also have commemorative dates which have their history, like November 17th, the arrival of the six compañeros to the Lacandon Jungle; January 1st, the armed uprising in 1994; April 10th, the death of general Emiliano Zapata; March 8th, International Revolutionary Women's Day. In the community celebrations tamales, atole, or community foods are custom.

## **Nicodemo (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ General Emiliano Zapata)**

We have almost completely lost crafts because we know well that neoliberalism is modifying what our grandparents had on-hand, but we still have 50% on-hand. We have clay crafts, clay jewelry, clay griddles. We have them because we need them to resist, like the griddle which serves to make tostadas because they do not burn there, the metal griddle has disadvantages, the flame is very direct and the tostada burns immediately from lack of care.

We still have the matamba basket on-hand because it serves for us to resist what is made of plastic. We also have a sugar mull because there where we live is very far away, there are transportation difficulties and it works for us to not buy sugar. We resist, we plant sugar in order to not buy jarochos, those are expensive and in addition they rust upon handling, you need to wash it well to use it because if not, the sugar juice comes out mixed with bad odors, those that we have are made of wood.

The sugar mill helps us to resist to not buy sugar because the price of sugar is rising every few months or days, it rises and drops, it depends on the business of the sugar-dealers in Oventik, in Pujiltic, in different places. We also use thatch to resist and not buy sheet metal. There in the zone we have the knowledge on-hand to make partitions for the floor, also for walls.

Also education is important, we always go along training our compañeros even if there are personal-life obstacles or due to lack of support from our communities or municipalities. But we go along resolving in good ways, if a compañero no longer wants to continue their work of being an educator we propose it to other compañeros, we do it like this.

We see that it is important to have an education promoter in each community because they are our future, those who are going to take our place, they are our successors, they are those who are going to give continuity to our struggle. That is why in each community and at the zone level we do not leave education to be thrown-out because our promoters give us a good history for our future, they can share the language with our children ,with our sons and daughters, so that the children understand our struggle and continue after us, so that they are not cheated with the plans or with the government's lies.

## Questions

*The culture that the capitalist system has created for us, in this case in Mexico, teaches us that to choose governments there are elections and to be able to do the voting it is necessary to get a credential, do the compañeros there still vote for parties like the PRD, PRI, PAN, or Green Environmentalist Party?*

We understand that what the government seeks is power, properties, cheating the people with a soda, with a pack of cookies, and with that for it then to go to shit, the beneficiary is going to be the ruler, the one who buys the vote. That is why we are in the understanding that none of that, that we are seeking, whoever it is that is going to govern, for them to do what we ask. What we understand is that.

*It was mentioned that you still have a sugar mill to grind sugar cane, do you have that work in the zone or in collective in each town or municipality?*

In my community we have what is sugar cane in collective, in community, and we are now advancing to have it in the region, but here was a failure in what pertains to the plot, it does not allow sugar cane to grow, there were no results, we planted sugar cane but it grew very salted and in addition there is not water to work in that place, we are going to move it from there. We are going to see what solution we are going to put for the sugar mill issue because there are compañeros who still propose for it to be made of metal, but we are going to see if it is necessary because we have the wood one on-hand, but it does not matter what it is we are now going to see what solution we are going to put for it. It is like that in the community, we do have it because it works for us for a meeting, a community celebration, we use it with that, to not make much expense in the store because the store is a business, we take out for the collective work.

*Are the authorities seeing how to resolve the problem of our culture's things which are being lost, is there a plan about that?*

At the Junta level the promotion of the rescuing of some things is being attempted but there is not a plan on how to push the whole zone recovering that. We see that there are towns which do keep culture strong, so work is being done with that. How? Through the education promoters who have to teach in their own dialect.

Since the work of the Junta is to be in-charge of promoting so that in our zone they realize that it is important to rescue our culture, so the Junta itself has to give the example, it is not just saying. The example of adobe is there, in the majority of the communities of our zone construction is done

with other materials, so the Junta decided to make its new office with adobe, as a demonstration that things can be made with our own materials in the region. The Junta office made of adobe is in the Caracol center as an example so that not only are we convincing the compañeros that we can rescue our culture, but also the one who says, in this case the compañeros of the Junta, is demonstrating that it is possible.

There also is the example of the sugar mill, that is taking place in the towns, it is very local but we still maintain it present and it helps us a great deal to not buy sugar. We are accustomed to planting sugar cane as families and from that we sweeten coffee or we drink cane-sugar water and that helps us to not spend, we do not buy in the store. The majority of our towns do have our own cane field.

All these things go along helping us. As Zapatistas we have to endeavor, work maybe double what those who are receiving government programs do, so that is the meaning of our form of working, we have to endeavor as Zapatistas, do everything possible to be able to resist. But there is not a development plan up to the moment, but it is being thought about, the steps are being taken, maybe we won't find the way how to do it, but we are seeing the possibility.

*How are you handling the production of thatch?*

In my community we use thatch a great deal because it is fresh, it is more comfortable, and more economic than buying sheet metal. Those of us who produce thatch are many, we still have that knowledge. But that work is very tough and very delicate, it is against the rain, to produce the thatch a hot time is needed, dry time because the water undoes the thatch, it is very delicate and it is not so easy to prepare it to construct. This work is just communitarian, it is not regional, it is not much.

*How do the compañeras make their dresses, do they handle needles or in a sewing machine?*

In some towns the custom of weaving is still maintained, of embroidering, and in some towns they do have their little machine, both things take place.

In order to make the outfits, for example the Tzeltal outfit which is different from the Tojolobal outfit, from the Chol, they just buy cloth and they make it to their way of dressing. There also is the Tzotzil outfit, just that then they use thicker cloths, they are more expensive, but they buy the cloth and they are the ones who make it to their way of dressing. That now is almost being lost, those who wear it are now few, what is defeating us is the clothing which is in-style. What we do, little by little, is not so immediate, it is attempted to convince a compañero to use the traditional outfit. But our organization also says:

“It does not matter if you dress like those from above but if your sense of struggle is here present with us.”

We know very well that the sense of struggle is to orient our children so that they do not go so much with the style because there also we are going to resist a great deal. There is for each one, that the situation in each home is going to see.

*In order to make clay pots, clay griddles, clay plates, are you working in a collective way or just in the community do a few compañeras do it?*

That work is very local, family-based, because the teachers, principally women, who have that knowledge are few. Those who maintain that custom, who know how to make the clay pots, griddles, are few, but the town does use it because it is a different flavor, for example, to make beans it is a different flavor cooking it in an aluminum pot than in a clay pot.

It is thought that the work of the Junta is to see how to rescue that knowledge which still remains with us in each town, the compañeros have given us the example. If the teachers who

still exist are few, how can we multiply it in the zone? It is the task of the authority to promote that knowledge that still remains with us in each town.

# Political Resistance

## **Marisol (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Pedro de Michoacán)**

In our zone the evil government is attacking us with constructions. In the beginning, in what is the Caracol center, it made a clinic with the interest of seeing if some compañeros would approach their clinic, now it is constructing a children's hospital also in the center. We see that it is their politics to counter-attack us in our demand for health.

We in the zone are counteracting with autonomous health, because we the compañeros and compañeras are accustomed to going to our health promoter, we go to our municipal clinics or where there is closest, we also have our zone hospital. The compañeros realize that upon going to a government clinic what they first ask is if we have a booklet, public insurance, they even ask us if we have identifications and we do not have any of that, so they do not give us the consultations or the treatment that is due. To counteract this government politics in health, we have the constructions for the clinics in the municipalities and health houses in the towns.

We are also seeing that instead of us losing we are winning. Brethren who are not Zapatistas go to our clinic because when they go to their hospitals or clinics the medicine that they give there does not cure them, they go to our promoters and see that it is a great advantage with the medicine that our compañeros give them they are cured faster. We are seeing that we are winning with our own health promoters.

In our zone we began with the rescuing of our culture, of the knowledge of our ancestors, our grandfathers, our grandmothers, with what were the three areas that we named. There healers were trained, compañeros and compañeras of medicinal plants, as well we have a group which are midwife compañeras. To no longer go to the government hospitals or clinics in the towns we have the compañeras. We are making our autonomy stronger, our demand for health.

In education the evil government is attacking us with secondary school constructions, around our zone there now are even high schools, before that was not seen or was not heard. We see that maybe we have not arrived to secondary school or high school but the experience that we have is that the compañeros, compañeritas, that our promoters or trainers have taught, now have participation as authorities, municipal councilmembers, in the Junta and in other areas. It is the advance that we have in health and education, with that we counteract what is the politics that the evil government has been doing to us.



## **Roel (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Pedro Michoacán)**

The government is attacking us politically with constructions, with roads, in health, with schools and many times we do not value the work that our own health promoter, education promoter compañeros are doing.

We who live very close to a government hospital and can get an idea on how we are resisting the government's politics and how we are prepared, thanks to our compañeros who prepared us, who taught us to prepare all the personnel who work in those areas, we can defend ourselves from that government politics.

There is a huge hospital in a community called Guadalupe Tepeyac and right now the government is constructing another very close, a half-hour or one hour trip, in the center of La Realidad, it is a children's hospital. But what happens, what have we seen in that hospital which is functioning in Guadalupe Tepeyac? In spite of the fact that it has all its equipment, the people from various communities, from various municipalities, end up going to our hospital.

It turns out that those people go to the government hospital and need to do an ultrasound study, for example, or a laboratory analysis, the doctors send them to our hospital. The doctors know that the hospital that we have, the Hospital-School Los Sin Rostro de San Pedro is very close, and they know that they cannot do the studies in that government hospital because they do not have the trained personnel, the machine is there but there are no personnel, so what they do is give the consultation and send the patients to the Zapatista hospital- school so that their studies are done there.

That study is going to be done and of course, there are rules in that hospital to charge a fee to those who go, and they do the study on them. So the people go along realizing, being astonished that in an official hospital there is not what many expect, the solution to their problem, so they go to our hospital, although simple as we say, but there is where they say what problem they have when the result of the ultrasound or laboratory study comes out.

In the Guadalupe hospital there is a laboratory technician but there are many things, many studies, that he cannot do and he sends them to our hospital-school. We have a compañero who is trained and already trained several more compañeros, he does various studies, but not alone.

The advantage that our compañero has, that the one from the official hospital does not have, is that when the people come sent by the doctors from the Guadalupe hospital he does the study on them, but at the same time he gives them the prescription, the treatment for their sickness. Because he has had a great deal of knowledge, in that area of the laboratory, in contrast the one who works in the official hospital only does the study and that's that, he sends it to another doctor for them to give a treatment.

We realize that things like that have happened, maybe as peoples who have not understood, we have not valued the work that we have been doing, how we are preparing ourselves to politically resist the programs that the government does. We are not competing, but rather we are doing as Zapatistas the work that a health promoter should do, giving the service.

The government in our zone has tried to divide politically with various civil organizations, organizations which have much to do with the government, with new parties and has brought in programs. The worst is that it has used our own indigenous brethren from our very communities, from our zone, for them to provoke us and us to confront each other as an internal problem among

ourselves. What we do when this happens is try to find the best solution, take steps to not fall into those types of provocations because at the end of the day what the government plan wants is for us to fight among ourselves as indigenous people.

If we fall into those provocations we aggravate the situation, so we try to find the best way to resolve it, to finish everything and if getting a solution by the peaceful way is achieved it is the best. There have been many provocations in our zone but the authorities, the compañeros from the Junta, the autonomous municipal councils, have tried to resolve all those problems that are presented in our zone, so these organizations or those brethren who want us to fall in their provocation or to respond in another way do not achieve their objectives. Up to the moment those types of provocation have been presented, it is a plan that the government has in our zone, in other communities that is taking place, it is not very general, they are issues of communities closest to our Caracol.

We also are politically resisting the government's educational programs. Today in our zone there is talk of new official schools and that all of the children who go to those schools they force them to put on uniforms for them to look better. But we do not go with that, they do not learn more from being uniformed better, that is not of worth in education but rather the quality of teaching that the teacher or education promoter gives.

Our education promoters work with the children making known to them everything important about the struggle, for them to learn to differentiate what is autonomous education and official education. There are communities where there is official education and there is autonomous education, we cannot stop or be less because we see that there is a school, but on the contrary, go strengthening ourselves more in our zone, in our communities, in our regions, and in our municipalities.

The greatest and most valuable thing with which we are politically resisting everything that the evil government's system is trying to do in our zone is the work of our authorities, our autonomous towns, the municipal agents, commissioners, our municipal authorities, the creation of the autonomous municipalities, the Junta de Buen Gobierno level. They are our principal weapon, all the Zapatistas, to counteract all those government plans.

It precisely is the strongest work that right now we have to get going, strengthening more to be able to continue resisting everything with which the government is politically counter-attacking us, we see it like this, that the strongest, the most valuable thing that is there are the authorities and workers that there are in the municipalities, in the Junta, they are the ones who directly confront the problems that there are in the zone. The towns are working but our autonomous authorities which have to wrack their heads twice as much to resolve all the problems that are happening in the zone, be it in a community or in a municipality. We see that the work of our authorities is very valuable, from the towns, municipality, and Junta de Buen Gobierno, it helps us a great deal.

# **Social Resistance**

## **Flor (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno)**

In our Frontier Jungle Zone there have been many changes. Before 1994 the communities had another way of organizing themselves because our grandparents had a way of understanding things, the work that was done in common maintained a communitarian living. What they did not practice is for women to be able to participate in the assemblies, they were not taken into account, as if they did not have the right to participate.

After 1994 with the Revolutionary Women's Law the participation of women begun to be practiced, that space was given to them for them to occupy positions from the community, as agents, commissioners, health, education, and three area promoters, local and regional persons in-charge, Committee substitutes, radio broadcasters, Council authorities, municipal councilmembers, and Juntas de Buen Gobierno.

We still have the custom of relating to each other in community living, where we make agreements to have celebrations. We organize for the work that is needed to take the celebrations forward, tamales, atole, are prepared, food with beef is prepared for all.

## **William (Member of the Autonomous Municipal Council. MAREZ San Pedro de Michoacán)**

We have a way of resisting in what is the social element in our communities or in our towns, we assist each other, for example when there is a death, we still have that custom of assisting each other with what is needed, how to dig up the tomb and transfer the deceased to the burial. We also have that resistance that in the towns we live organized, for example in the ejidal work, with opening the paths, with making hammocks and bridges, we still have that work which is the work of the community.

# **Resistance to Military Presence**

## **Anahí (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno)**

Since 1994 in our zone we have been preparing ourselves, as much men, women, and children, to peacefully resist the military presence. In the year 1995, on February 9th, when Zedillo sent 60 thousand soldiers to capture the Zapatista leadership, many towns had to withdraw from their towns to not provoke the military personnel. There were towns that returned to occupy their communities, they only left one month or more, but there were towns that spent more time outside of their territory because the army had positioned itself on it. We have as an example the town of Guadalupe el Tepeyac which over 6 and a half years was in exile resisting until the army withdrew. They returned on August 7th, 2001, they returned supported by civil society and the Zapatista peoples to rebuild their houses.

## **Gabriel (Former Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ General Emiliano Zapatista)**

On August 11th, 1999 the military arrived to the Amador Hernández ejido, General Emiliano Zapata municipality, we compañeras and compañeros resisted that military entry. The military wanted to take the community, they arrived to a dance hall and what the compañeras did was confront them, the military took them from the community, they put them in a place outside of the community.

The military continued there and an encampment was made in which the whole zone from La Realidad Caracol participated, civil society also arrived to that resistance and it was endured because it was the time of skeeters, time of mud, it was the time of rain. We did not fall into the provocations, we did non confront militarily but peacefully we came before them. In that encampment dances were organized, we danced in front of the military personnel, religious worship was done, programs of the compas' events were done, suddenly we gave them the political talk on the struggle. What happened with the military? As if we were convincing them because we were face to face with them, so what the military leaders of the army did was put some speakers so that they no longer heard our words and it withdrew them a little more.

Afterward the compañeros invented another way, I think that they had heard about paper planes, so they began to make them writing why the encampment is there and we threw the paper planes to the military and they picked them up. It was when the first air force of the Zapatista army was made in Amador Hernández, they were planes made of pure paper.

All that happened in that military resistance and sometimes we got to pushing with the military, the compañeros and compañeras were in front and the military personnel in two files. The military personnel pushed us with their shields and they had those clubs as they call them, they pushed us and there was a short compa, that compa stepped on the foot of a soldier and they

stepped on his foot too. Since another bigger soldier was there as if it made him curious and he laughed, he began to laugh because the compa stepped on the foot of the other and they stepped on his foot too. The soldier began to laugh and the shorty compa said to the soldier fucker, "what are you laughing about you shorty?", the soldier was bigger and the compa shorter, it was something funny that happened there. It was a resistance that was able to be done there in that time when the military entered into Amador Hernández. All that we compañeros are doing in what is military resistance. The compañeros were already getting used to seeing the military. There are communities who lived around the road and when they military passed they already saw them as if they were public transportation, as if the fear of them was going away.

# **Caracol II: Resistance and Rebellion For Humanity**

Oventik

# Resistance to Military and Paramilitary Attacks

## Emiliano (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Pedro Polhó)

Since the year 1994 many attacks, many problems, have happened in this Highlands Zone, the support bases have suffered a great deal in this zone.

In the year 1995 the support bases took the municipal seat of Polhó. The government responded with its force militarily, attacking the support bases with blows, 60 of them were imprisoned, they were taken from their land. There were three days that the 60 support bases were in prison, but they did not stay there, the Council, the support bases, the people continued and even established a seat in Polhó in a borrowed house. The autonomous authorities resisted the great suffering in that year.

The Polhó municipality received great attacks another time in the year 1997. The truth was that what the evil government did in that year was very painful, there were deaths, there were wounded persons, and there were support bases who remained entrapped, remained detained. There is a community called Yaximel, there were many support bases there, men and women, who remained detained by the paramilitaries. The paramilitaries were asking for 10 thousand pesos each person, they wanted them to remain in their party by force, there was a fine which later was decided that they would give 5 thousand pesos each person.

“Yes, I am going to pay. Give me permission for some 15 or 20 days. Yes, I am going to give the 5 thousand pesos,” they told them, there are support bases they are very tricky.

Those compas left hiding themselves in the mountains, they went to find their compañeros who were displaced, they did not give the 5 thousand pesos. There were support bases who did pay the 5 thousand pesos but later on they went to follow their organization, there they left the PRI party. There are compas who did not stop struggling, there are compas who have a great deal of conscience. It happened like that in that year.

When there was that paramilitary attack with police who came uniformed, with people paid by the evil government, people who came from other municipalities, the compañeros abandoned their houses, they went to another community, there were many communities that came to Polhó. There are support bases who were in the mountains I don't know how many days, in the river, there are compas who disappeared, who forcibly abandoned their houses, their animals, everything that they had. The paramilitaries stole everything that the support bases had and even burned houses.

There is a community where the compañeros could no longer enter to see their land, their houses, and up to the present are there in Polhó, they continue displaced. Thousands of support bases are suffering right now, since '97 to the present continue displaced, they do not have their houses, they do not have anything. There are communities where they can now enter to work a



little but not everyone. But they did resist the attacks, the attacks were very strong because there were very well-trained people.

The paramilitaries were going to enter again where the support bases were but they could not enter because it was already well-controlled day and night, they made posts day and night. They did not enter because the support bases already had more force because thousands of Zapatistas were reunited, they could not go out to work, they were there for several months looking after their places. But the paramilitaries day and night were firing their weapons to threaten the support bases more, supported by the one who was the municipal president, his name is Jacinto Arias Cruz, he continues prisoner right now. That fucker, Jacinto Arias Cruz, supported his people, his paramilitaries, with boxes of bullets.

The support bases endured that suffering, those attacks, but there were also support bases who did not endure that suffering, those attacks, there were support bases who returned to their community, to their houses, they admitted in the hands of the enemy, but the greater part are still there, they continue firm in the struggle. Thanks to the solidary brothers and sisters who supported the displaced that is why they endured. There the support bases saw that in the struggle they are not alone, they saw that there are many brothers and sisters in other countries of the world who are supporting our struggle. Every 2 weeks they sent a little bit of corn, beans, oil, soup, every 2 weeks the displaced received their rations, that is why they endured the suffering. They have been displaced for years now but they are still there.

There were support bases who forgot about that suffering, although their husband, their wife, their children died. Some now are in another party, there are others who sought other organizations, others went to the other side because the resistance was very hard, but they were only some, not all. It happened like this in that year 1997 in Polhó, the problems began on May 24th and continued until December 22nd of the same year.

The last attack was on December 22nd when they killed 45 people, they were not exactly support bases, they were from Sociedad Civil Las Abejas, but they were supporting our struggle, it is the same idea, so that there is not more problem, for no more problem to happen. The support bases already knew that great attacks were going to happen, the support bases were already on the other side in the mountains, it is that those from that organization did not want to leave.

“God knows that here we are praying,” they said.

A moment came in which a ton of paramilitaries came, there they killed the poor indigenous people, 45 men and women. It was the plan of the evil government to put more soldiers and police in. The evil government sent thousands of soldiers when there were many deaths in that place which is called Acteal, they made their encampments in various places, in various communities. The support bases suffered a great deal because they could no longer leave, the women could not walk each afternoon, they checked their backpacks. What the federal soldiers did was very rough, they made encampments in that municipality to control the Zapatistas more, planes passed every while.

The damn soldiers even carried marihuana seeds to provoke more problems. They disseminated on the radio that the Zapatistas are planting marihuana, but it was pure lies, they were the ones who were planting marihuana. It happened like this but much later the soldiers abandoned their encampments. There were some communities which they left but it was due to the force of our compañeros and the brothers and sisters from other countries of the world, who went all the way to that place. There is a place which is called Poconichim, there a ton of people came from other

organizations to criticize, to mock those soldiers, the damn soldiers hid in the mountains. They were afraid.

The support bases endured, they resisted those threats. There are some communities where those encampments of soldiers are still there, but not in all the communities. What happened in that year 1997 in the Highlands Zone was very rough.

The town San Juan de la Libertad created its government in the official municipality with an autonomous authority. In 1998 the evil government cleared it with its military force so many *compañeros* were imprisoned and many threatened by the police persecution. But the town did not remain with its arms crossed, it took more force and followed its government, although retreated because it did not have a stable seat, until little by little it established its seat in another place so that the town had its fixed self-government.

In April of 1998 San Andrés Sakamchen was dismantled by the evil governments, so it was seen necessary for the other towns to support to rescue the municipality and remove the police from there but the threats continued each time greater and with more force. An indefinite encampment was seen necessary to protect the seat of the autonomous municipality, that encampment lasted almost two years.

The military attacks happened like that in those years, not only in those places but there have been many attacks in other communities. There were attacks in Chavajebal, in Unión Progreso, in San Pedro Nixtalucum. There are several communities where the military attacks were very strong, but the town did not remain silent, it continued forming its authorities and everything.

In that zone when the towns in struggle were threatened and harassed they took more strength to form other autonomous municipalities. The Santa Catarina Autonomous Municipality was established, then the 16 de Febrero municipality, then Magdalena de la Paz, and then San Juan Apóstol Cancuc. Like this the 7 MAREZ in our zone were formed.

## Questions

*Currently how many support base *compañeros* are there still in Polhó as displaced persons? Has the Junta proposed living on recovered terrain, even if it is in other Caracoles, to the *compañeros* who currently live displaced? Yes compa. There are communities where there are a ton of weapons, there are a ton of paramilitaries and the support bases can no longer go to work. Our command said that there is recovered terrain in other Caracoles, one day the support bases put themselves in agreement and went to work there. They said that the corn does not grow well there or that the corn was stolen, they said so many things, they returned. But there are many families who are still there, the majority returned, they are in Polhó right now.*

Right now they no longer want to go to work, they have various ways how they are living, there are some who work in collectives. It has been years since they went to work, it appears that in 1998 they went to work on recovered terrain. The majority did not stay there but there are some who already have their houses there, they have their animals, they have their milpas, they have their beans.

*For the *compañeros* who remain, for example in Polhó, has the possibility been proposed to them of doing as those *compañeros* who do not only go to work but now live in other Caracoles? That is the possibility of positioning themselves on a plot or making a village on a recovered plot.*

Right now they already have another plan. I don't know how to explain well how many families are organized in the various communities, in various groups. There are some families who are working, they only go to work and bring their corn to their group, in their community, they work collectively. But a little while ago, last year, they organized it, a ton of support bases went to work on recovered land but they did not stay to live there definitively, they only went to work and returned to their houses. There are other families who went to live there, they no longer returned, they left their houses, they left what little they had in their groups.

But we do not have the list of how many families go and return, we do not have the record of how many families went to work and stayed to live there. Nor does the Council know well how many families stayed and how many went and returned. But yes right now there are a ton of support bases who are working on recovered terrain but just last year they organized it. We do not have the record good of how many families are there still and how many families have left, how many are now in the PRI or in other organizations, we do not have the record well. We as a Junta do not have the record good, that is our error, our failure in the work.

*Here you say that then the Junta does not have a plan to resolve the problems with those compañeros, the Junta does not have intervention in that the compas go to work on a recovered plot and return, you say that there are a ton but there is not that exact number, record of how many go and how many return. What role does the Junta have with the displaced compañeros?*

We still do not have a plan as a Junta. Much earlier when the regional persons in-charge gave their lists we did have the number of how many they were, but right now there are compas who no longer want to go to work. Right now there is a loss of spirit again, I don't know how many support bases lost spirit that year, that is why we do not have the record good. Just last week we were saying to the other compañeros from the Junta that we are going to again record how many families are working, how many already have their houses there, and how many went and returned.

# Situation of the Displaced Persons In San Pedro Polhó

In the municipality of San Pedro Polhó they received many attacks since 1997, in that time there was already a Council, there was not Junta de Buen Gobierno. First taking the town hall in San Pedro Chenalhó was attempted, that is the name of the official municipality, but the government entered there to remove the Council and the *compañeros*, 60 more people went to prison during three days. The place that they dismantled was in Chenalhó, not in the center of Polhó.

The *compañeros* returned and sought a place, a seat in the center of Polhó where until now they continue governing, the Autonomous Council began to function in a borrowed house. The toughest thing that happened were the attacks in 1997, well thousands of *compañeros* from various communities were attacked. Many *compañeros* left their places, they were displaced, they left their houses, their lands, their coffee plantations, everything. Some fell in the hands of the paramilitaries but the majority was able to leave and the greater part of them concentrated in the center of Polhó, where they began to organize in an encampment of displaced persons, almost 10 thousand men, women, and children concentrated there.

In that time there was not a Junta, only the Council. The Council as if it did not know what to do with those thousands of displaced *compañeros*. Little by little it was being heard that there were many problems and many displaced persons, so the international solidary organizations began to know that there are many grave problems. Those organizations saw what happened arriving directly there because there was not somewhere for them to pass first, they arrived directly to ask what happened. Support began to be sought and the International Red Cross even arrived, they began to give a little bit of aid, a little bit of corn, of beans, of canned food.

The problem was that it was uncontrolled, it did not work well for how that Council can govern, they only were seeing what arrived there, there it wanted to lead and directly give to the displaced, but the people, the support bases, began to get accustomed to receiving the little bit of aid. Every while they came to give that aid but the Council did not keep the record, so people became accustomed.

After it began to indicate that what was happening there was not good, as if it were the same as with the evil government, the *compas* only received the aid. It began to be indicated that it was not good how it was happening, it was said that the Red Cross's aid can continue but that first it had to pass through the Council, for the Autonomous Council to control it. Little by little it began to be indicated like so but that aid from the Red Cross took time because they wanted to give it directly, take advantage of the support bases' suffering, so it stopped giving that aid and left. Then another problem came, the *compas* began to complain.

"Now, what are we going to do?", they complained to the councilmembers. "now you Councilmember well you do not let us receive that aid," came the people's grievance.

“Here it is not good what we are doing,” now the Council does get strong. “If more aid comes you are no longer going to receive it the same as has happened before, it has to be seen first if it is suitable or not.”

The Council began to organize a little, another support for a project was received. The Council organized a few different tasks but now in that center, in its encampment, because the displaced persons could not return nor could they work on their land and see in their houses, it continued closed.

It was like this for some years, later a bit of aid was attained with other organizations and collective work with gardening, cattle herding, chicken raising, began to be organized. Other aid was also attained now with the Council, for example, there is a large sand and gravel bank in the municipality and the Council began to see how it can work so that the bank is taken advantage of.

There a project was achieved, a machine was bought which can dig up the gravel and the sand, like this a bit of income began to enter, from the hand of the Council because there still was no Junta. It was there where it began to change a bit, but the *compañeros* felt more rough, they thought that it was bad how the work of the Council was done, people still did not understand.

Like this the problem has been happening, the paramilitaries continue enclosed from their community, they do not let those who left displaced enter. What the Council did was begin to organize a little better, it began to ask people if they could endure more and how many *compañeros* can organize, they ask other Caracoles where the recovered land is. It was proposed how many *compañeros* were willing to go to recovered lands to live because it was not going to be allowed for them to go and come back each while because there they had another agreement for how to work the recovered land. It was posed like this.

I do not remember how many families made the decision to go there, but it was only for a time, little by little they went returning to their own places. It is the problem that happened there. If they only cheat us and are not decided better it is not asked, for them to endure there. A time passed like that but the Council began to see what can be done with those from that municipality.

It is what has been happening, so that you know that a very bad time passed because they got accustomed to only receiving humanitarian aid from the International Red Cross. Even if it is a little bit of salt, of soap, of sugar, of corn, people get accustomed as if it were with the evil government. A time passed like this but it was indicated that it cannot happen like this, the Council itself has to organize. Little by little it was being organized until the Council took into its hands for how to organize the *compañeros* there.

The resistance was strong because nobody could enter to their place because the paramilitaries were waiting. It changed a little when it was seen that there are *compañeros* who cannot handle going to recovered lands, so it was sought in what other way they could resist, they continued with the small collective work and others created a women’s store which is for bread and another *compañeros’* store which continues functioning.

Later there was another change and little by little those who could enter to their own land in the place from where they had left were returning. Others then arrived to their land to work but they could not stay there because they could receive another attack from the paramilitaries. The *compañeros* are organizing in small groups, small collectives, each group is organized to return to work on their land, only to make their milpa, bring their wood, and seeing a little of their coffee if it exists still.

There is a town where 15 years ago the *compañeros* left and up to now they are not allowed to enter because it is the center where the paramilitaries are concentrated, any support base who arrives there can be attacked again.

There is another town to which the majority are returning to see their land but they cannot live there, they have to return again. That is why the work on recovered land was proposed again, it was asked who are those who are willing to go to work, if they cannot decide to stay there on recovered land even if it is that they are only going to work. The problem there is that it is going to take a great deal of expense only to go to their milpa, I do not know what can be done there.

But that is an agreement of the two Juntas, the *compañeros* from La Garrucha have gone to the Oventik Junta, they have discussed if there is still terrain where the *compañeros* can work even if they are not going to live there, but there already is an agreement. The path is now being opened, there are *compañeros* who are in Benito Juárez, in Río Naranjo, right about there, there already is land, they are arriving but it is not known how much time they are going to be able to endure because it is not known if they can last there and return. That still needs to be seen but there now is an agreement with the two Juntas, not only from San Pedro Polhó but also for other municipalities in which they are going to ask if they are willing to work on those lands.

## **Aquileo (Member of the Municipal Council. MAREZ San Pedro Polhó)**

It is a bitter story in that autonomous municipality San Pedro Polhó, the truth of that year 1997 many *compañeros* and *compañeras* went astray in the mountains, some stayed in the river, many *compañeras* remained sick, there were *compañeras* who were pregnant and some suffered, their children were born in the mountains, on the path.

When the military entered in 1995 there was much work to cheat the people from that place, they gave things away, they gave out food, they acted as doctors, they acted as haircutters, they are tricky. The very people from the officials, asked the military for their food, the women arrived, the girls, the Zapatista *compañeras* did not, they arrived with the military and they even left their children in that encampment where they were located and gave that food donation. When that attack in 1995 was we did not remain with our arms crossed, really we were more organized, we took more force, we took more idea on how to organize ourselves.

Currently in the autonomous municipality San Pedro Polhó, where we had that small donation of a scraper machine and a dump truck, the community itself together with the local and municipal authorities and the Junta de Buen Gobierno are seeing how it can be organized and how it can be improved to be able to work in that sand and gravel bank.

There it was organized to see the way how to begin to work and keep the record of that work, that is why *compañeros* were sought who can keep that record. Those *compañeros* work weekly and keep record of the backhoe, of the dump truck, and of the block-maker which we have too. The support bases rotate weekly in that work, the authorities don't because they are in their office or in their municipal seat, those *compañeros* have the record of the money entries each week, that money comes to the hands of the municipal secretary, of the Municipal Council, municipal treasurer, and municipal representative, they are the ones who keep the record.

The quantity which arrives does not stay in the office or in the treasury, but the municipal expense comes from there which the municipal treasurer handles, a little bit remains with the

treasurer of the project and another part with the municipal treasurer. The municipal treasurer handles that money when there are withdrawals from the local and regional authorities and also from other work areas like health, agroecology, healers, midwives, etcetera. The money for their transportation also comes from there, it is helped a bit with travel, the municipal treasurer has to give that transportation. The bank is handled like this, we are working like this organized in each municipality and in each community.

# **The Evil Government's Economic Attacks**

## **Victor (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Juan Apóstol Cancuc)**

The evil government could not finish off our compañeros killing them with their soldiers and had to look for another way how to finish them through the economic element to see if our people resist or do not resist. In that way the government sought how to divide the people, how to make us fight among ourselves, that was a strong attack for the Zapatista people, those who struggle. But the compañeros and compañeras resisted, endured, even if the saddest thing had happened like everything that was already mentioned, they resisted more, endured although they suffered. The government could not finish our compañeros, it had to find another way how to finish them.

The compañeros sought how to resist those attacks in other ways, with the work. They sought the way to work in collectives, they sought the way how to survive to continue resisting the attacks. The evil government thought that it was easily going to finish off the Zapatista bases but it was not like this, they endured, although with great suffering but they did endure.

In our Highlands Zone we responded to the attacks with collective work, very few but work collectives did exist. There are cooperative stores, there is very little milpa work because in this zone we have very little terrain. There is not sufficient land but the compañeros and the compañeras had to find the way how to continue, they had to do chicken raising, craft stores, and some bakeries.

Only in that way can we the support bases survive. Whatever may come, whatever may happen but we have to endure. The ways are different, the extensions of terrain that we have in each zone or in the municipalities. In our zone it has not been possible to make the collective work big but it is due to lack of terrain, because sometimes there is nowhere to do them. In this zone we have endured. In that way we have responded to the economic attacks, through the work. The people have resisted like this.

## **Gonzalo (Former Judge. MAREZ San Andrés)**

The CCRI compañeros, that is the Committee, the local and regional persons in-charge, before '94 told us that when the time came to rise up in arms for us to be careful, it was what the persons in-charge recommended to us in each community. "Be careful, when the moment comes to rise up in arms or declare the struggle, the evil government is going to come with its economic attacks."

I did not believe it but it was the truth, those economic attacks came, I have in-mind too and in conscience, the other compañeros and compañeras also still have the knowledge, the conscience that before '94 had told us that the government always attacks by means of economic resources. That is what they told us, that they always are giving out money and other things, we know that



the evil government always sends productive projects, sends materials for the construction of housing.

It did happen like the local and regional persons in-charge had said, what they said is true, that is why before 1993 we always made collectives, we were always strong, we made the work in collective totally complete. The *compañeros* and *compañeras* from each group or community, from each town, always organized well, they were very strong, they did complete collectives, all the expenses, all the entries, everything that comes from economic resources, the planting of milpas, the poultry, everything like that in collective.

Unfortunately after the armed uprising in '94 the economic resources came from the evil government, many *compañeros* saw that the evil government sent those resources passing as if it were good government. The *compañeros* and *compañeras* realized that the government does as if apparently it is good, but other *compañeros* as if each one had little conscience, that is why many *compañeros* stuck to the evil government's economic resources.

We all know that the government is sending poultry, goats, sending greenhouses because on cold land frost always falls and that is why they send greenhouses where the product which is planted can be protected, they are sending fruit trees to San Andrés and other colder places some *compañeros* trust that very much, so they stick there. But not only in that way, they also are sending material for housing, we realize that on the path and on the road gravel, sand, blocks for the construction of housing are piled up. They are also sending hard floors which they call them and construction of outhouses, that is what they are sending to the party-members.

The response that we are giving is the collective work, although it is little. For example the women are organizing, the *compañeros* have the idea that they should not trust the government. Many *compañeros* do not trust the government that is why they are resisting, they are not trusting the evil government's projects.

We are responding a little with the planting of milpas because we do not have much land here. We do not have much land, we only have the land where a house can be constructed, where the *compañeros* can live with all their animals, poultry. That is why many *compañeros* went to the recovered land, they went there in collectives, they went to work, to plant milpas, some are planting coffee, there are also a few who are planting bananas.

That is what is happening with the evil government and its economic blow here in Highlands. The Junta and the municipalities still are not organizing much collective work, but what we need to know to exchange experiences is what the Junta is doing there, what response is it giving to the economic blow in this zone?

We still cannot find the best way how the towns can be organized. The Junta does not have some collective work in-hand, it is very different from what the *compañeros* from La Realidad and La Garrucha have discussed, where there is milpa work, there are cattle collectives, but here it is not possible to have that. The greater part of how resisting is done is through the force of the town, the majority is individual, of course there is already a part where there are collectives but the towns are those who go along organizing a little.

It is necessary to say clearly that in the beginning when there was no Council, there was no Junta, there was what we call central regions, before 1994 the people was already organizing a little. I think that some still know, those who are old like us, that here was called "Zoological Zone," there were closer regions, they were not the regions that we are taking about now in the zone, when the towns began to be formed, to enlist the towns, it was advancing politically but

not with the Council, not with the Junta, simply with the local and regional persons in-charge, and the CCRI.

In that time the collective work was advancing a little, there came a time, about six or seven years that were organized, the *compañeros* got together to work the corn, the bean field, the chickens, the goats. They did all of it in collective work almost like in socialist, it was not allowed for anyone to work only their part but in collectives. They had lived like this a little but clandestinely but more information went coming out.

“What are those groups doing? What are they? Are they communists? Are they socialists?” They began to accuse us like this.

That was what there was one time, but unfortunately since 1994 that organization began to disappear, I don't know if due to a failure of the CCRI, of the persons in charge, I don't know, but it went down. The majority of the *compañeros* dispersed, what they were organizing was lost, that is why it is no longer easy to rise up again. We hope that it is understood that here in Highlands it is totally different, the best way with what to work has still not been found. The majority of the municipalities are communal land but the terrain is also parceled, the *compañeros* have their little piece where they make their houses, their small *milpas* where they can do.

The problem is that in this zone there is no way how to organize what they have explained to us from other Caracoles, it is the justification, we think that it is like this or maybe only it is that we are not finding the best way how to organize but currently it is like this.

There are some *compañeros* who are now trying the collective work in each municipality, but it is not the Junta's initiative, only the towns'. I do not know what size the Magdalena municipality has but since '94 they have been organizing, they still continue resisting but no longer everything, but they continue organizing since that time until now. The *compañeros* from that municipality have part of their individual work but there is another part that is in collective, like coffee and other work that they do but the Junta does not keep the record.

The *compañeras* are just now organizing in San Juan, but not with their own money, but also they have supported the *compañeras* a little, they put their store, they are grouping together the *compañeras* in the collective store, but not like the other Caracoles told who sell from their coffee, from their cattle to begin, it is totally different.

That is the response to the economic blow, everything that the evil government is doing cannot be told in one day, they are totally dividing the communities, the little groups are separate, there are the official people, there is the official school and the autonomous school, in San Andrés there is the Autonomous Council and across the street are the officials, they are face to face. It is very different in this zone, that is why it cannot be said in only one word how the towns are organizing.

## **Another Compañero (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Juan Apóstol Cancuc)**

In the year 2005 when I was a member of the Junta we made a plan for the 7 autonomous municipalities, I still remember that there it was invested but as it was almost when I left my position I do not remember very well the quantity but a little bit was invested in the autonomous municipalities to begin a collective work.

For example my municipality San Juan Apóstol Cancuc, where I continue participating, was responsible for more or less 18 thousand pesos to create a cooperative store for the municipal councils, it is a way to resist what is of the economy. That small collective for the store continues up to the present, the advance is not much but there it goes more or less.

One time a problem happened in the year 2010, when there was a confrontation in the community of Pozo, there the quantity of money that there was in the store went down a little. The Council took from there to maintain itself, in fact it was displaced, that is why the quantity that those councilmembers went down a great deal but that work still exists, it still continues there.

That was what the Junta did in the 7 municipalities, not only in the municipality of San Juan Apóstol Cancuc, when that investment was divided up it was already 2006 that is why I do not remember well how much each autonomous municipality got.

In my municipality, San Juan Apóstol Cancuc, there are 12 small groups for collective work but the truth it is not due to the initiative of the Junta. We saw that there is no way to realize large collective work due to not having land, but we have realized small work in the greater part of the communities in that municipality, there are collectives for cultivation of avocado, of milpa, of pineapple, bean fields, and also there is the store, but it is a small group of small collective work.

Also there are compas who are analyzing how to be able to resist in what is in the economy, because we always analyze, we always discuss, we are always organizing. So in that municipality they currently are beginning a collective work but it is just beginning, we have begun that work but still a great deal is lacking, the compañeros are lacking a great deal for them to understand.

Those compañeros who are beginning the work are doing it in another place, on the recovered land, for example in La Garrucha, up to now they are working there. They are beginning that collective work but it is not that they are going to position themselves there, they are only going to work and return, but since they are going to organize by shifts they are always going to be there. That is being done thanks also to our leaders who authorized that plan. We have not found another way how to be able to begin that collective work, that is why the only way that we have right now is to go to work even if it is far away, but still it is not known if the compañeros are going to be able to endure.

# Ideological Resistance

## **Bulmaro (Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ Magdalena de la Paz)**

We are resisting what the evil government does in all the municipalities with their political parties. Since we are in resistance the evil government enters into each community by means of its political parties, in our autonomous municipalities it does everything it can to convince us to abandon the struggle.

There are many things that it puts on its media, that is on the radio and the television, but we in the autonomous municipalities and in the zone we are making an organization so that the evil government does not convince our *compañeros* with what it says on the radio and the television. We are responding in the revolutionary ideological element with the community radios. It is what we are doing to not fall into the evil government's politics, we have Radio Resistencia, Radio Amanecer, and Radio Rebelde.

## **Questions**

*Can you tell us what the evil government is doing and what is happening to people in what they call "Ciudad Rural," the one in Santiago el Pinar? What is happening to people there?*

The government made the Ciudad Rural in the official municipality Santiago El Pinar, we are living very close but we are organizing what we are going to do. The natives of Santiago are living in that Ciudad Rural but what the government did is not a dignified house, it is now seen well that it only cheated the people of Santiago. We, as we are in our organization as Zapatistas, are seeing that the evil government is doing poorly and we are organizing the resistance more and more.

Response from another *compañero*: In the Ciudad Rural in the beginning there were housing constructions. What the *compañeros* tell us is that the materials with which the constructions are made are those very thin plywood things, not like the boards that we have here. Currently the constructions are inflated like balloons, they are already undone because they do not hold up when there are strong winds, when it is the hot season and rainy season, all the materials of the houses are now bad.

Several families from various communities went to live a few days in that municipality, they were in those houses. According to the communications in the media about the Ciudad Rural, there is a kitchen that is built with the measurement of 3x3 meters, very small, and a little room, a living room on the side. But nothing was able to be done there because they could not make their fire in that house. Currently it is not working, the families were there a few days but what we know is that they had to return to their communities. Some families are still there but in very

bad conditions. According to what they say on a hill, above where the constructions are, they made water tanks but they are not working.

They say that there is a bank there to invest money, I don't know if it is a state or municipal bank but it is not working. They are pure shells already fallen apart. It is not how they say about the Ciudad Rural, that the name is very pretty but really there is nothing. Why are we going to believe in the idea that there are projects and other little things? They are pure lies.

That is part of the enemy's war, that is why if some compañeros from this zone have let themselves be convinced with those ideas it is because they got up to there, it is not because they are now going to have a more dignified life. Those who leave the organization or those who are in the parties have not had a better life than the support base compañeros. From the Ciudad Rural what they have said and what they are doing there plainly are pure lies.

An example of the ideological manipulation that the evil government does in Santiago El Pinar is that for the women they are promoting that they were going to give them farms of egg-laying hens. In the egg-laying farms the feeding of the hens is necessary, when they gave them that they gave them many hens for them to lay eggs, so everything very beautiful in the beginning because the hens did begin to lay many eggs but the government did not look for a market for them where they are going to sell them. The hens laid many eggs but those farms cannot make competition against the large grocers where eggs are sold.

The brethren told us that what they did was to divide them up, but the government did not give any more food to the hens, the hens began to get sickly, they began to stop laying eggs, so the women said:

“So what should we do?”

“We have to contribute”

“But how am I going to contribute if I already ate the eggs? Where am I going to find the money?”

The hens died there, what the evil government said did not give a result. It is just so that the cameramen arrive there and film that they were given, that it is very pretty, but that just lasts a month or two months, after three months it was finished.

The problem is like this among other things more. The houses do not work because they inflate like toads. The women are accustomed to making their tortillas with a wood-stove or with fire on the ground, in these houses the floor is made of wood, of plywood, fire cannot be made there. They gave them gas cylinders but the gas does not even last a month for someone who does not know how to handle a gas cylinder, so there the cylinders are thrown-out, there is a stove and it is not good for anything.

The life of peasants, of indigenous people, is that right behind your house is the vegetable garden, the sugar cane, pineapple, banana, what there is, it is our way of life, but there is none there, simply the house and that's that. Those who went to live there do not know what to do but they already remained far from their lands where they lived, they have to go to work there but it is an expense again to go and come back.

The evil government's politics is to do away with common life, community life, it is for you to leave your terrain or for you to sell it, and if you sell it you're fucked. It is a politics of injustice, it is to create more poverty. The entire fortune that they receive from the UN, which is the United Nations, the evil government, as much the state, municipal, and federal, remains with them to organize those who provoke problems in the communities, above all those of us who are support bases.

It is the continuation of the politics which was much talked about in Plan Puebla-Panamá, right now they no longer want it to be talked about and that is why they do not say it in the media. Now what they are doing has another name because Plan Puebla-Panamá was attacked a great deal, but it is the same. They only changed the name to continue individualizing the communities, to finish with the common element which may still remain. And they are going to continue like this because there along the coast, by Motozintla, by Huixtla, they are saying that they are going to have to make another Ciudad Rural, the same by Huixtán. What they want is for the community to finish but there is nothing of benefit in that.

# Cultural Resistance

## **Esmeralda (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Juan de la Libertad)**

The evil government is attacking us in the cultural and social element, like in education it attacks us trying to do away with our knowledge, our language. We resist because our education promoters teach the two languages, they teach us like this so that it is not lost.

With our clothing: the majority of men in our Highlands Zone no longer use their traditional clothing, they use the clothing from the stores, but the majority of us women use our traditional outfits and clothing.

With food: IN the zone the base of our diet is corn, beans, chili, squash, chilacayote, chayote, and other vegetables, that is why it is what we plant because it is our natural food, we know that what the evil government is selling in the stores is not good nutrition.

With the construction of houses: There we are losing because few materials are seen which our ancestors used before to construct their houses.

With celebrations: For the celebrations in the zone, in the municipalities, and communities, we still have our traditional music, the town does still dance with this music, although now a little.

With religion: we still respect our sacred places like the waterhole and the sacred peaks. What our elders do and catholic religion are combined. Traditional music is also played and danced.

## **Moisés (Member of the Autonomous Council)**

It is being seen how our culture can be recovered because before our elders had their own culture. We have analyzed how it can be recovered again because it goes along being lost a little currently, but there are many things which are necessary to overcome, it is necessary to recover many things. For example traditional medicine, before our compañeras did not use doctors on the day of the birth, they treated everything in her house, they had their medicine, their medicinal plants. There are many things which it is necessary to recover still. It must be seen, it must be known how we can recover our culture.

Of course they have attacked in many ways but here in our radio communication, on the community radios our culture is also spread, we also have to respond to the attacks. Talking is another way of resisting, disseminating that what the government says is not true. Those of us who talk are few, almost the greater part of us cannot translate perfectly well what happens, we cannot explain to each other well due to the lack of speaking in Spanish because here in this zone everyone talks our language, but in that we do not have a reason to be ashamed of ourselves because it is our original culture.

# **Caracol III: Resistance Toward A New Dawn**



La Garrucha

# Autonomous Resistance

## **Roberto (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ Ricardo Flores Magón)**

The Zapatista support bases in this zone organize ourselves in the four rebel autonomous municipalities which are San Manuel, Ricardo Flores Magón, Francisco Villa, and Francisco Gómez, they are organized in the resistance in all the projects and aggressions of the oppressor criminal evil government.

We train our own autonomous authorities in various work areas like agents, commissioners, councilmembers, agrarian, honor and justice commissions, Juntas de Buen Gobierno, health councils, and education councils. We create our authorities to administer our demands for autonomy, which are land, housing, health, education, work, nutrition, justice, democracy, culture, independence, without the intervention nor relationship with the evil government officials.

We organize our peoples so that they are not demoralized with the evil government's projects and programs, we explain what the strategies or the tricks are which those evil governments sent so that we forget our cultural and traditional identities, customs, that is the knowledge of our grandparents to speak the true word. We explain what is happening in our country Mexico, what those evil governments are provoking in their three levels, state, federal, and municipal.

When we then found ourselves in the resistance we formed our authorities, we organized to work together with our towns, regions, municipalities, and even in the zone. We made collective work for milpas, for bean fields, cattle herding and coffee plantation work to strengthen our autonomy, to facilitate the work of our authorities in each center and region, in the municipality and the zone, so that like this we may exercise autonomy.

Resistance does not mean that we are not going to work. Resistance is in order to work because it is made and constructed by the people, it means that resistance is our house, our roof, our awning where we are going to be as peoples and families, as compañeros and compañeras who are going to work.

While we are working and organizing ourselves the attacks come, the blows from the three levels of the evil government which are the authors, those guilty of what is happening. They send various police companies and corporations to our towns, to our regions, and to the municipalities in our zone to intimidate us, to do away with the resistance. But the resistance did not finish there, rather we continue working united in collective together with our people.

The task of the Zapatista autonomous government, of what we work in our town, region, municipality, and in the zone is to carry our work coordinated with every autonomous government body, like our municipal and regional authorities. We have to do the work and see how to carry the advance of our work in collectives, forming health, education, within our town so that the achievement and the fruit of our work that we are doing in resistance is seen.

The authorities were formed like the health, education agents. We go along working, carrying out our labor so that it may be an example in our town, in our municipalities, and in the zone, an example for our future compañeros who are going to come later on. In each area compañeros and compañeras are named to carry that work because as authorities of the Junta de Buen Gobierno we cannot work in all the areas, we have to name authorities so that they work, administer, and keep the record of those areas, they go along seeing if it works or does not work. We go along making our work little by little, we do not say that everything is already done but rather we go along constructing the path.

## **Valentín (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno)**

In Caracol III La Garrucha we began to resist since the year 1994, after the armed uprising. On that date the resistance began because the committee compañeros notified us peoples that beginning from that day the resistance began, we cannot receive even one damn crumb from the evil government. On those days the resistance began for the military attacks that the government sends to our communities, to our towns. We put ourselves in resistance.

On Feb 15th, 1994 the evil government's military tried to enter into the zone, we as civilians did not do anything, those who did are the compas who are there for that, they defended and did not let the military enter, they returned to their place, the people kept itself in resistance, we in the towns did not do anything because we cannot respond with arms nor with anything, because we know that the civilian people cannot take arms and resolve what is a military issue.

That was in 1994, but later the evil government began to send soldiers, it began to form paramilitary groups, white guards, to do harm to each community, to each compañero. The persecutions against the authority compañeros began. We as Zapatistas what we did was organize ourselves more in the resistance.

Resistance means that for us the evil government is our enemy. We cannot ask the evil government for anything even if it offers us, even if it tells us, even if it tries to buy us, but we cannot do it because we are not struggling for handouts, for a sheet of metal, for a bag of cement, for a kilogram of nails, we are not struggling for that. We think there that what we are going to do is resist all the projects that the evil government sends. The evil government makes another politics where it buys the compañeros, tries to offer money in exchange for us turning in our weapons, but we have never turned them in and we never will turn them in.

After the evil government formed other paramilitary groups which are OPDDIC, Chinchulín, Paz y Justicia, these are the names of the groups which they formed there to attack us on the recovered lands, to plunder us of our lands. We as Zapatista put ourselves in resistance, we did not let them plunder us, we did not let them take the lands from us because we know that the lands were recovered with the blood of our fallen compañeros in 1994, nor can we turn them in like that, like fuckers.

What we did is maintain the resistance although the Priistas and paramilitaries try to do away with us, try to take us from there but we put ourselves in resistance with the compañeras and compañeros, children, elders, we do not leave the lands. Even if they are positioned there but we also are positioned, we are never going to turn-in the lands. Several years passed so with force they wanted to take us from our lands but we know that we are not going to turn them in. To

find a solution to that problem, to not begin to do massacres what we did is leave them aside, them positioned in their places and we too, each one on their side but avoiding problems.

After that the evil government did its stupidities, everything that we know. The evil government began to say that the Zapatista were already finished, that they already died, that there no longer is anyone, it even said that el Sub already died, that he no longer exists. That happens on the television, on the radio, on the news but we do not believe it because we know that it is not like that.

Since the government has not done away with us, the largest project that it has put in our zone is the hard floors project. According to them it is a hard floor for the party members, for us no. It offers sheet metal, cement, rods for the construction. But instead of the Priistas having a better house, we Zapatista have more houses with metal roofs, with board walls, and the Priistas are more screwed than us. The Priistas receive that project but instead of them building their houses we buy the material from them and we build our houses. We buy it with our way of working, with our money, we are not needing the evil government's project.

The evil government also begins to offer other things, other types of projects like in cattle herding or for the milpa it offers PROCAMPO. That we are also not going to receive and as a matter of fact we are not receiving it because we know that we are in resistance. The Priistas also receive the cattle herding thing but after 15 or 20 days they are already selling the cattle and we Zapatistas buy that cattle, but we buy it with our money, we do not receive the government's project.

So everything that the government has done was backward, but there are some compañeros who have gone to that side, we do not all have our conscience tranquil, it must be said clearly because it is what is happening. The evil government began to form groups, it bought some who were authorities, former committees, or other work that they did. In Caracol III that has happened. There is a former compa who is named Constantino, aka El Santo; there is another who is called Faustino, his name in struggle was Israel; there is another who is Raúl Hernán, who was Ausencio.

Those former compas formed groups to try to buy people and formed an organization called ORUGA, other Caracoles have mentioned that organization which came from Caracol III La Garucha. It was formed there, those former compas are from there and what they have done is force people to enter into that organization but they have not been able because we Zapatistas are more in my community, I am going to share it with you because it is important.

One of those former compañeros came to my community to form groups, there then were about 10 or 15 brethren who were already in ORUGA. In that community some were in resistance, in other words there we were mixed-up because there are Priistas and there are Zapatistas. We made an agreement because there in the community there are more Zapatistas, or rather what we say the Priistas are also going to do, we completely have control. We explained what it means and we said that we are not going to allow that ORUGA in our community because they are directly with the government and they are traitors of our struggle.

Like this we achieved the ORUGA disappearing from there, because those who did not want to leave that organization we said that we are going to expel them from the community because that organization does not work, it is no good. Like this we achieved finishing with ORUGA in the community but in the zone it continues. Now it already appeared in another Caracol, I think that there are very many because that former compa has looked for his compañeros, has achieved getting some projects but has used false names.

## Another Compañero

Sabines's nonsense government buys those who left from being Zapatistas. What happened in that community is that there already were about 10 or 15 youth with ORUGA. Those youth are children of the right-wingers and they began to pressure all the ejidatarios who are right-wingers, they began to tell them that they have to give them their piece of land. They already wanted to command there because they train them like that, the government prepares them like that so they begin the problem. When the compas knew that, they said as those who are fathers say:

“Here the children do not come to command. How are they coming to say that?”

Those youth wanted the land to be divided up but organized by the government. It was for problems to be created, for there to be fighting among us, for us to forget that the great enemy is the evil government.

What happened with ORUGA was about 4 or 5 years ago. In the media, in the newspaper it went out that on such day, on such date, Comandante David, Comandante Tacho, and Comandante Zebedeo received so many thousands or millions of pesos, they met in Ocosingo, then it went out that they met in Comitán, and then they met in San Cristóbal.

“So then the Zapatistas say that they are against the government but no, their leaders are negotiating underwater, under the table, that is hidden,” that is what the government spreads but they are lies.

It is not even known who was handling several times like that, but in that zone papers from falsified projects in fact began to arrive to the hands of the authority, both the Municipal Council and the Junta de Buen Gobierno. They had the signature falsified, the name invented with the name of a compañero who is a Zapatista, and they falsified the seal of the Junta de Buen Gobierno.

They presented that to the government for it to see that they really are Zapatistas, they are autonomous authorities who are asking for the project. For example a project like those what it says is that they are asking for 6 million pesos to give to the widows of our militant compañeros who fell in '94 in Ocosingo. They falsified that as if it were real that the compañeros are asking the evil government for a project, but no, they are those from ORUGA.

The leaders of the ORUGA presented those projects but their base did not know, they began to enrich themselves, they began to have cars, they even bought themselves a Hummer, the leader had his car and had several houses. So those who are support bases began to ask where he got that.

“Why does he have it? Why do we not”, in fact they did get a little project for the bases but for them they asked the government for money with tricks.

When that happened the ORUGA bases realized what the leaders were doing and in a meeting that they had they asked for accounts. Like that those from ORUGA divided up because the top leaders are real tricksters, cheaters, falsifiers, but they already had also as their substitute, as if they copy our way how we are working. Those substitutes who did not receive much were those who realized what the leaders were doing and who those who asked for accounts.

Those who were the top bosses of ORUGA divided, left aside, and went with another little group, then they created another organization but with the look again on asking the government for projects. They formed what they called URPA, who knows what the hell URPA means.

Since it already began to be known how the shitshow that they were making was, the new leaders of the URPA went to introduce themselves to the compañeros of the Junta de Buen Gobierno,

they went to say that they respect the Zapatistas, that they as URPA do want to work together with the Zapatistas, that is with the autonomous governments, that they do not do wrong like the ORUGA.

They said who are those tricksters who said that they were Comandante David, who said that he is Comandante Zebedeo, who said that he is Comandante Tacho, and who said that he is Comandante Pedro. This was how it was known who those ones are, right now we do know who they are. They burnt themselves, as we say, with the shit that they are doing, with the bad things that they are doing.

But it turns out that those new leaders in fact do have a relationship with the government to do projects. Those who have spoken with the Junta de Buen Gobierno afterward went to say to the blatherer Sabines that they as URPA do have a good work relationship with the Juntas de Buen Gobierno. A few weeks ago when they went to talk with the Junta de Buen Gobierno to say that they do not do wrong and then they went to tell Sabines that they have a work relationship with the Junta de Buen Gobierno. It appears that it is their thought, of those ex-Zapatistas, but no, they are financed, that is paid by the evil governments.

The politics of the evil governments says that the Calderón and Sabines government is protecting the environment, that is why they are making so many trips in the United States, in Europe, that it is for the environment, for the Lacandon Jungle, for the Montes Azules Biosphere, and I don't know what other things. That is what the evil governments are going to go to say outside, but here inside it is not like that. Of all the projects that those evil governments present outside, they bring the money here where they are paying those worms, those parasites, who are those who are wanting to destroy us.

We are not lying, we have to say it real clear, there are some who leave the work. For example there are some insurgents, insurgent compañeros and compañeras who leave, they leave that work but they continue being Zapatistas, be it militants or support bases, health and education promoters, whatever it may be, councilmembers, they do not totally lose the path. But those others who I am saying then turn into party- members, into worms, they then sell out, those are the ones who are taking a look, they are the ones who are listening if someone already left.

"Ah, now I am going," like a worm, like a parasite, "for him to come here where I am too but now yes for real I'll show him the dough that the evil government gives me I am going to convince him," and the evil government brings it through the environment issue, with the pretext of the Montes Azules Biosphere.

What I want to tell you is that the committee compañeros have it in their view. Well, then in a town there is a former insurgent, and that former insurgent parasite came into the community and they knew him, so he arrives and says:

"Here I'm bringing you this, so you are going to do me a favor I am going to pay you this much for you to give this letter to so and so," that is, the committee compañeros.

"Well what trouble is it to take an envelope that is going to give me 1,000 pesos," or is it very difficult? "He is going to give me one thousand pesos, real quick, it is a 10 minute thing and I already have one thousand pesos," says the other.

So they go and turn it in, they wanted to give it to the committee compañero, so the compañero asked who sent the letter.

"Ah yes I did not ask but it is for you."

"No. I have not made an agreement, I do not receive letters like that."

"But then what? Open it and burn it if it is that you do not want what it proposes there."

“I won’t accept that letter. I do not know who it is.”

That former compañero took the letter and he opened it, not the parasite who already sold out, but the one who still has not sold out. So he realizes what they are planning for the committee compañero.

“Leave your work now, you make nothing there. Do the math how much time you have lost there already. If you want we’ll go to work and you are going to make millions of pesos,” says the letter, “and you if you convince that ex,” that is the other compañero who is a former insurgent, “if you are able to convince him you are going to make more still.”

Here what we have to understand is that the government is tougher against us, it is seeking more ways, it is inventing more ideas for how to make us sell out. It is no longer giving Opportunities, that if a hard floor, those things from the government programs, housing, scholarships, that is very much in-sight. This that I am telling you is not in-sight, it is hidden underneath, it is just a few.

It is not only that, there is another group that does other things, but the damn thing is that they are from our same race, are from our same color, they are not white-skinned. It is among ourselves, they send them to take photos, for example, if they are able to take Tacho’s photo like that without a balaclava the photo is worth 500 pesos. The one who is in-charge of doing that is offering 500 pesos to another compañerito, that is another boy, saying that if he carries the camera and if Tacho is sitting there, for example, for him to take the photo. If that happens Tacho is not going to say anything or he might play a little, make himself very handsome, he does not know that the little boy is making 500 pesos paid by the one who Calderón or Sabines sent.

It is necessary to take care, even if they are compañeros who are taking photos of you and you still put yourself, but you do not know if that compañerito is paid. It fell like this right now, we know who are the ones who are doing that. Take great care because when they do celebrations in the Caracoles it is necessary to see that, because the government wants to know our physique well, how we are in our photographs. I speak of this because in this zone that is happening and it is growing. It is what is happening in Garrucha and it is what is happening in Morelia, in those two places there is ORUGA and there is URPA, and they are going to continue.

It is necessary to have great care with what I am telling you, when it comes to be known about this it is necessary to inform the leader for them to know because it then is a safety problem for our struggle, for our organization. The problem that they falsified our seal, that they falsified our name, is not so much, it is part but the problem is that they handle what is Comandante David, what is Comandante Tacho, what is Comandante Pedro, what is Comandante Zebedeo. It is necessary to know who it is, what their name is, where they live, those are the principal manipulators, it is necessary to inform the leader directly.

# **Dismantling of the Autonomous Municipalities**

## **Elena (Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ Ricardo Flores Magón)**

When the dismantling of the autonomous municipalities happened in my municipality we suffered the aggressions of the evil government. On April 10th, 1998 we constructed the offices of the municipalities for our autonomous authorities to work. Once our autonomous municipalities were constructed and inaugurated as a collective work of our Zapatista support base compañeros, the evil government organized paramilitary groups to attack us. Pedro Chulín was the leader of the organization which participated in the destruction of our municipal house in the Taniperla ejido, the police and military also attacked us, they took apprehension orders against our compañeros, in that time the president was Ernesto Zedillo. But our autonomy was not finished with because of that, autonomy is in our hearts. So we met with our towns as Zapatista support bases, together with our authorities, to see and analyze what happened. We made the agreement to find another space to again construct our municipal offices as a collective work of all the Zapatista towns in resistance, so that our authorities attend to the needs of each town.

## **Roberto (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ Ricardo Flores Magón)**

We inaugurated the Ricardo Flores Magón autonomous municipality, the municipal house, we published nationally and internationally that our towns constructed that municipal house where the authorities named by the people are going to work to exercise their autonomy and to attend to the principal needs that we have. So the official evil government, former president Ernesto Zedillo, ordered to totally destroy the autonomous municipality.

The three levels of government, federal, state, and municipal, sent their armies and police, the white guards also participated. All the towns that we are inaugurating, doing celebrations, withdrew, we went to our towns and when the various police corporations arrived they destroyed and burnt everything.

It appeared that all our work had finished there, but it had not finished. We arrived to our towns, sat down, organized, talked, and began to see, analyze, and study what happened. There were families who were attacked as support bases and other compañeros who were authorities that were formally detained, they were taken to the Cerro Hueco prison. They also took a teacher whose name is Checo Valdés, just for teaching how paint is diluted, how to paint the wall, what the community mural of the Zapatista indigenous communities is; that is why he was detained too, they took him to the Cerro Hueco prison.



There were many aggressions against our municipality. The evil government was the one who provoked, it totally destroyed our collective work. In our town we again began to form our local, regional, and municipal authorities, we began to seek another space to construct the municipal house, it was in the ejido which is called La Culebra. When our authorities were named they went to work to again to function in the building where they are going to attend to our towns and carry our needs. We named those authorities for them to work on our issues which we want them to resolve, because the evil governments have no interest or ideas to resolve the issues that we want or that our communities need. We are going to resolve the great needs that we have among all of us.

When the authorities were named we began to present the needs that we have, like health and education. We began to see that we did endure the resistance, all the blows, everything that happened, so the evil government saw that it did not finish autonomy. We began to work and give it energy, give it force, and to organize and enliven the *compañeros*, the *compañeras*, for our municipality to function..

The authorities began to rotate and receive our needs which we go along presenting in each town, in each region, and in each center in the municipality. Like this we were working little by little, advancing. We began to create the health and education work.

We have the “*Compañera María Luisa*” clinic and on the San Jerónimo Tulijá ejido is the “*Compañera Murcia (Elisa Irina Sáenz Garza)*” clinic, a *compañera* who fought and died in the El Chilar ranch combat, close to where we are, in our boundaries; she died there, that is why the clinic bears her name. Another center is called “*Lorenzo Espinoza*,” who was a council *compañero* who was murdered by the paramilitaries and *Priista* white guards; in Amaitic a municipal agent and a municipal councilmember died. Those who murdered those *compañeros* are not imprisoned, there is no justice from the evil government, they are free. The other clinic center in Jerusalén is called “*Guadalupe González*.”

In our municipality the clinics are functioning coordinated with our authorities. There are permanent promoter *compañeros* and *compañeras*, they are working and taking shifts in four centers. We also have the participation of resident doctors, they spend 20 days working and take 10 days of rest. We are coordinated with the SADEC in Palenque, so the doctors arrive who come as support from the UAM.

So the evil government could not destroy autonomy. Why? Because we know that it is in our hearts. When conscience is mature, when conscience is not weak then we can continue the steps forward working in collective, men, children, women, and elderly together, we all go along working.

Since the evil government saw that it cannot destroy autonomy it sent another project that is called “*African Palm Planting*.” The military is close to the town where it sent that project, their barrack was close to our village, so drug-addiction began to grow, alcoholism, prostitution. The *Priistas* requested their arrival there, when the military arrived the projects of African palm plants also began to arrive, but that African palm is not good for anything, it is harmful to the earth, it is like a cancer which cannot be removed, although you cut it, knock it over, it remains there.

When the government saw that our resistance is very strong it began to organize paramilitaries as white guards to create clashes between *ejidatarios*. That did not work for it and when it saw that it could not destroy the resistance it began to create another project which is called *Progresa*. That program came but it is seen that it is a crumb. We conversed and discussed day and night,

we drank a cup of coffee with bread while we studied the strategies that the evil government is bringing in. That happened in 1997.

Our municipality and our region mobilized to remove the army that was positioned there, there were about 1,500 troops that were positioned there, when it was not possible to remove them they remained there until now. It is how the evil government planted the bad seed, it divided the community, about four political parties grew there.

What is happening there is that they say that they are going to name 4 commissioners. We as autonomous people have our authority like the Ejidal Commissioner, the Vigilance Council, we have our authorities too. The evil government wants to name four commissioners in the same place, it says that the other is good and ours is bad, but what it wants is the land.

Within the ejido there is a quantity of land that is 6,000 hectares, in total the area of the ejido is 26,000 hectares with 532 ejidatarios, the government wants to keep those 6,000 hectares because it is mountainous jungle, it is wilderness, it is land which has water, rocky terrain. The government wants to buy that reserve and if it cannot buy it, it wants to put in other ejidatarios.

Those are the tricks that the evil government is doing and it took that idea all the way to Palestina. In Palestina it says that there is a buffer zone, that there are urban zones, that there is with worked lands, or rather parcels. They say to the ejidatarios from there that they are going to give them 2,000 pesos a month, that they no longer are going to work the reserves, that is the buffer zone. In Palestina an order of food costs 280 pesos, a Ciel water 24 pesos, here in the store of the compañeros from Oventik it costs 5 pesos. What they did in Palestina they wanted to do in our ejido too, they wanted to make cabins, touristic centers, hotels. Who is going to sleep in that hotel? Who is going to eat that 280 peso food? Who is going to buy that 24 peso ciel water?

That is part of what is happening there. In Ricardo Flores Magón there are large water surfaces, they are the Nahá and Metzabok lakes, and in San Jerónimo Tulijá there are large lakes which measure up to 10 hectares, 4 hectares, 2 or 3 hectares, they are large laces. There they want to make what is happening in Palestina, they want them to come to put their program so that the ejidatarios give them 2,000 pesos each month or every two months.

Over there, there was a compa who worked in the Junta and when the evil government began to do that the compa immediately went to inform the Junta de Buen Gobierno what is happening, some Priistas and members of other organizations were also not in agreement with that plan and asked the Junta de Buen Gobierno for support, they asked what they could do there.

We made a letter asking the Priista ejidal commissioner not to bring that project in because it affects our compañeros, we explained that we are in resistance and we cannot receive those things which the government sends and in that ejido there are support base compañeros and compañeras. After that what we did was meet, there were many ejidatarios, that is the largest ejido in the whole zone.

Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas met, they made a plan to go against what the government is sending. There were other Priistas, as if the Priistas divided into two because some were in agreement and others were not. We sent that paper, that letter, and we also did the meeting. Right now it is pending in order to resolve that problem but it is between the ejidatarios themselves. What we did was tell them not to accept that project and they too respected it.

What is pending right now is for them to resolve that issue among the ejidatarios. We told them that they have to resolve it among themselves because as authorities of the Junta we cannot get so involved, because they are not recovered lands. Among ejidatarios they have to respond to see who is the majority.

## **Gerardo (Zone Education Coordinator. MAREZ Francisco Villa)**

In our municipality those things have also happened. In 1999 a group of police arrived to the Paraíso village in our municipality. They wanted to clear out the community but the support base *compañeros* organized and went to remove them, they resisted to see the way to remove them. Our *compañeros* from other communities also began to arrive, from other towns in the same municipality. When the police saw that the *compañeros* arrived they begin to fire, sometimes they shot the bullets upward to scare us, they did not want to kill our *compañeros*, they only wanted to kill a *compañero's* dog in that village.

As the police saw that the *compañeros* were not afraid but they confronted them more, they returned to the municipality of Ocosingo to bring more reinforcements. They took about three days and re-entered, but they no longer remained in the same community where they had first arrived but they passed to another community, they went to an *ejido* which is called Nazaret. That group of police was positioned there and began to organize groups of *Orcaos*, they began to give confrontations.

After a while there was a problem right there, they detained a committee *compañero* and shot a member of the Autonomous Council with a gun. The *compañeros* who were on that *ejido* could not work their lands, they were in danger, they had to go out to the mountains because the enemy was close. So the authorities began to see what they were going to do. The towns organized to see what to do and remove the police.

When they then had organized, the *compañeros* went, and *compañeras* too, even children, to remove those police. But the *compañeros* from there went ahead, when we arrived they had been removed, we were able to remove the police. We were caring there for a time because before removing the police they had already prepared another groups of paramilitaries on that very *ejido*, those remained as *contras*, the *compañeros* could not really work. That was the problem, but the police no longer returned, so we *compañeros* from there resisted more or less in that way, because we saw that those things or those problems have always happened in various municipalities.

On another occasion there was another problem in our municipality, a group from ORCAO arrived which wanted to invade the municipality. The authorities began to organize and ask questions how it was going to be done to solve that problem. The solution that was given, to not confront each other among *compañeros*, even if they are not *Zapatistas*, but we know well that those who are not *Zapatistas* are cheated by the evil governments, an agreement was made for the land to be given in equal parts. Where the center of that municipality is, there is a plot of two hectares so one hectare remained for the autonomous municipality and another hectare for the other group. The agreement remained like this, it has been respected like this up to now.

It is always like this for problems which happen, with patience, that the solution is given and sometimes they do not accept it quickly, but yes seeking the way and seeking the manner how it can be solved, it was solved like this. It is how we have resisted up to the moment.

## **Defense of Recovered Lands**

### **Mauricio (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ San Manuel)**

The evil government forms violent groups to provoke and remove us from the recovered land. In 1996 a group entered from the organization ORCAO to Peña Chabarico to plunder us of the land. We resisted there and the group from that organization withdrew. They left that village but in 2007 they again took the recovered lands. At the same time, in 2007, another group of Orcaos entered the Benito Juárez village. We were resisting there over the course of 6 months.

The organization ORCAO re-entered Peña Chabarico, they took the recovered land on a plot which is called La Pimenta. Those groups of people took that land of 40 hectares and then did not leave. Those people kept the land, there was no longer a way to recover it, it is like this up to today. It has happened like this, we were resisting those problems there.

There was another problem which began in the month of August 2009 and continued until 2010. That time the groups from ORCAO entered the Santo Domingo village, we had to resist one year. With the support bases from that municipality we took shifts to care for the land. In the first shift 300 of us support bases arrived to care for the land. After we saw that this problem was more or less being controlled we went lowering the number of compañeros to care for the recovered land in that village. We went lowering the number and about 40 compañeros remained caring for the land; it was not known that a great problem was going to be provoked.

We were resisting one year in Santo Domingo and when the autonomous engineers went to clean the line which marked the recovered land the most serious problem was provoked, because in that moment we did not have strength because we were only 40 compañeros who were defending the recovered land in that village. There was a confrontation with the groups from ORCAO. Our compañeros left wounded and detained. Four compañeros were detained and tortured in an ejido which is called Santo Tomás.

### **Mateo (Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ San Manuel)**

In that village Santo Tomás the confrontation was tougher. We were resisting with the Zapatista support bases, but when there was that confrontation it hit us hard because, we without knowing what it is that is going to happen to us, we only had 40 people caring for the land on the first day of the attack. Our compañeros were there in the village, they were opening the street, going out to the road where those groups from other organizations came and there they took and confronted. It was like this that those four compañeros were prisoners.

At the end those from the other groups did not endure because we are accustomed per se to resist anything, any provocation from the other organizations, from those which sell out to the

government, that is why they could not dominate us. That time we were caring for the recovered land more than one year because there were threats, there were insults, they threatened still when they left that village, they began to say that they were going to enter again. That was why the municipality and the region organized, they were looking after one year to see if truly they were going to enter again.

Like this it was that there was no longer anything, they left us because they saw that they could no longer do anything with their bad ideas. We know well that we, those who are struggling, do not do it for interest in money, but rather we are in resistance. If we have endured the resistance it is because there is work organized in the municipalities and the towns organized in collective. Thanks to that we were enduring the resistance, when there is a movement, everything that we are doing is due to the work that there is organized in the municipalities.

# The Evil Government's Ideology

## Ramón (Zone Coordinator. MAREZ Ricardo Flores Magón)

We see that with the modernity that there is now in the media, like cell phones, radio, television, movies, they are attacking us in our communities, in the villages. There in our zone we see that there are some compas who although they are very screwed now they too have cell phones, although with work they can obtain the payment for cell phones but they do have them.

With those things the government also tries to fuck us, even if we do not have the money but we too try to buy those things. We also see that there are brethren who although they do not have good houses but there they have televisions, modulators, those things are what the government dominates us, fucks us with. Why? Because although we do not have the money for what little we have, there we go spending it.

We there in the zone also work in education explaining this to the education promoters and the education promoters teach the children on the road to follow the customs, not continue mispending with those things. It is what we are doing there in our zone so that the boys and girls go along understanding the rights and the cultures that they have. In education, we tell the trainers that they teach what and how are the peoples' rights, because that is what the government attacks most, but we too are preparing our autonomy.

All the things that the governments do to us are because it does not find the way to finish us, that is why they invent that they have contact with our authorities and other things that they invent. But we there, as towns, do municipal meetings and also community visits to explain to the compañeros that it is not true, and explain how the advance of our organization is going.

# Resistance in Autonomous Education and Health

## **Darinel (Zone Health Coordinator. MAREZ Francisco Villa)**

Through the resistance that we have lived as support bases we have exercised autonomy without having the need to relate with the evil government. We train promoters of various work areas, like general health. The work of general health that we have achieved in our zone is thanks to the fact that the health promoters are named from the towns, and they receive the training to form the true health of our people. The health promoter compañeros and compañeras who work in the municipalities and in the towns, work with conscience, with discipline, and with respect to serve the people, the compañeros who work in health do it evaluating the sickness that the patient has, they see if it can be treated in the clinic or not, they have to be transferred to a hospital; the patients are sent to the hospital when they have the promoter's reference sheet.

We already have sexual health work in the zone, both in the towns and in the municipalities, the sexual health compañeras take shifts in the zone clinic to work on the lowering of maternal and child mortality. Those compañeras have achieved detecting some diseases in the compañeras and non-compañeras who arrive to be treated in the zone. The compañeras who do that work always give talks about the prevention of STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases); they see if the sickness of some compañeras and non-compañeras can be treated in the clinic, if cannot be we have to transfer her to a hospital. We also have the three areas in-function (healers, herbalists, and midwives), although still not at 100%, the compañeras are making these three areas go in-practice. The compañeras work together, the work for the health of the people always is done coordinating with each other.

## **Ramón (Zone Coordinator. MAREZ Ricardo Flores Magón)**

With autonomous education we make the resistance against the evil government which puts official teachers in the communities. In some communities where there are Zapatista compañeros and where there also are people from the PRI, the evil government enters and so the teachers of official education are there and the autonomous education promoters. What they do to finish with autonomous education is mock the promoters. The idea that the official schools have is that the education promoters do not know anything and they mock because they give scholarships and rations to the children of those who are not compas. They are ideas with which they want to do away with autonomous education, but since we are working with the coordinators, with the education councils, and with the municipal councils, we say that with those ideas they want to do away with us, but instead of it finishing we are going to continue forward with the steps in autonomous education.

In the places where there are official teachers and education promoters, the compas have never let themselves be, there they continue forward advancing with the children, teaching. There are some promoter compañeros who say that it is difficult for them, that they are working and they are mocked, they do not concentrate on their work with the critiques that are made and they leave, they stop being promoters but remain as support bases; when that happens other promoters are named for them to continue working in education. Instead of it going back, autonomous education continues, in it the anniversaries of the fallen compañeros are celebrated, we raise the flag, we do works of theater in our municipalities. With those things those from the official school see that we are not going backward, but that we continue resisting, although they are there with critiques, with mocking. We have resisted like this up to where it has been possible.



## **Caracol IV: Whirlwind of Our Words**

Morelia

# Introduction

## Rosa Isabel (Support Base. MAREZ 17 de Noviembre)

In the year 1994, when we rose up in arms, the government repressed the people with its armies using tanks, planes, and helicopters, many were attacked, like Morelia and the town Nueva Esperanza. They attacked us in 1995, 1996, and 1998. They always tried to enter the Aguascalientes, they wanted to destroy our municipalities, they wanted to destroy our collective work.

We were united the compañeras together with the compañeros, we were many, but when there was the uprising the government began to send those things to divide our towns and municipalities, some compañeras began to become uncontrolled with the programs that the government sent, like Progresá and Oportunidades, with that they wanted to finish the collective work, but they could not finish it, we had to resist and continue working the land that we took. Whenever the government wants to finish with our force, we compañeros and compañeras organize to defend ourselves, the compañeras more who removed the soldiers from our communities.

Like this we have resisted the evil government's repression, we work in collective. Right now we have the land in our hands, but from since before we did work in collective per se, and right now the towns, the municipalities, and the zone continue working collectively to sustain ourselves in the resistance.

In the towns there are various collectives, there are collectives of the women and collectives of the men, we see that it is very important to continue working in collective because when it is necessary to do a contribution in the zone, in the municipality, or there are other needs in our towns, we support each other with the resources from the collective work. For example, if we need a communication radio, the compañeros and compañeras share this expense, if the compañeras or compañeros have a little advance in their collective work they can contribute to cover this need.

It is like this that we are working, but there are towns that still do not take very much importance for the collective work. In our zone, in our municipalities, and in the towns, we continue demanding that we work the land because it is the only thing that we have, we see the need for land in our towns and ejidos have been formed, we continue working the land.

Our towns also saw that it is necessary to have good education, health, production. That is why we began to form our authorities. Now we have our municipal authorities, before they were parliaments and then it was changing, the autonomous municipalities were founded, the autonomous councils were created, and up to today we continue working with the Junta de Buen Gobierno.

With this formation of our organization we continue resisting the attacks that the evil government does to us. When we see what is happening at the national level, above all in the analysis of reality, it is also explained that the government counterattacks what we do, but we continue resisting more, we have to work the land more, organize more to see how it is necessary to advance our collective work, the compañeros and compañeras together.

## **Gerónimo (Former Member of Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ Lucio Cabañas)**

With the evil government's repressions, we know that there were attacks wherever, but here in Caracol IV the role that the compañeras played in the resistance to those attacks was very important. The community of Morelia is in Caracol IV, which is very big, before the majority were compas but then it divided, now the majority are Priistas, Perredistas, Panistas. Before, when the army arrived, the compañeras got together in that community and confronted it first.

There was a problem in Nueva Esperanza, the army occupied that place a few days, about two or three days. Then there was a large movement of compañeras, they organized in the municipality, in the zone, and made that great mobilization of compañeras. Thanks to that mobilization the army withdrew but never stopped bothering, with the repressions that they did they could not finish us and they sought other ways to be able to repress.

Currently what is happening is very rough, the organizations ORUGA and ORCAO continue affecting our zone, but also the government's economic projects are taking place very rough. On the Morelia ejido, which is a large community, they are trying or are going to make a Ciudad Rural. That is with the purpose of we as Zapatistas being able to see that the government is helping, they believe that with that our support bases are going to be demoralized, but no, the collective work that has been done has reinforced the resistance.

Morelia is the seat where our Caracol IV is, the experience that we have there is that the government built many houses, it installed sewage but it turns out that in that community there is no water, what is there sewage for? There we see too that it is only to trouble people. The brethren who are with the government were working there one year with the government project, those brethren did not make their milpas, that is they did not have corn, did not have beans, because they only dedicated themselves to making the constructions.

Right now they are not even living in those houses because they had their houses per se, but what is a mockery maybe is the sewage, what do they want it for if there is no water? They make some houses where there is room to put a stove, toilet, but the people do not have that, those houses are a shell. Those houses are to be able to cheat the people, that is the politics that the current government is doing.

# Ideological Resistance

## Saulo (Former Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ 17 de Noviembre)

Just as in the other caracoles, the evil government is attacking us with its plans, but we and our peoples do not have our look on that we want to receive everything that is supporting the people from the parties with. In our towns, with the autonomous governments, our look is on working the land, be it in collective or individually, in those two ways we are walking with our struggle, because there are towns where they are not working on recovered lands but they do have somewhere to work, there they work the milpa, they have their coffee plantation and sometimes they have cattle or other little things like beehives and birds.

This is what we are experiencing in our resistance, in it we are very much helping the collective work, because the collective work helps us to move our commission. For example if the commissioner has a meeting in the municipality, from the collective work a part can be taken out for the transportation of that commissioner, and like this there is no need for each *compañero* to contribute for transportation, but we do not take out resources from the collective work all the time, sometimes the base contributes with something if it is a very large thing that is going to be done.

We are seeing that the collective work and the individual work is taking us one step more in our struggle, in our organization. There are towns where the *compañeras* and *compañeros* are working in collective, sometimes it is also taken out from the work of the *compañeras* when there is a need in the town, if something needs to be bought or the delegate needs to be supported, for example, the educator, it is there where the *compañeras* also think:

“If we are going to support the *compañeros* all the time, why don't we take a little bit from our collective work as *compañeras*. We can take from there to support the educators.”

In some towns they do it like this and it is there where we are seeing that the fruit of us *compañeras*' collective work is a support; sometimes the support is done for the educator, or if there is another need in the towns, a local need, the *compañeras* give a part there too. It is not like that all the time, because speaking of the collective work we cannot say that they are getting much profit daily. It is necessary to see, when there is an urgent need, if we can take something from that work, because if all the time we are going to have our look on the resources of that work well in a short time we are going to finish it.

It is working like this in some towns, not all the towns are like this. In the towns where their authority, their autonomous government is awake, in those towns it is advancing well; if the authority in the towns is sleeping sometimes there is no collective work, that is bad. It is as if an idea comes to us but we do not take it and we do not take it into practice because we think that it is not going to turn out well, well nothing is going to happen; if we take it into practice maybe it will turn out bad for us, but then in practice we also can see the fruit. It is more or less like this

that the work in resistance is being done. In that work sometimes the compañeros who worked in the milpa or coffee plantation, or if they have their cattle, sometimes they sell a part of what they produce, sometimes they sell their animals and a part of the economic resource remains for them. But the evil government is attacking us with its projects for hard floors, housing, improvement of housing, and other things that they send to the Priista brethren, to the party-members in other communities, they are already very much accustomed to money, as if their look is now more with the government, they are waiting for more money to come and those projects that they receive.

Sometimes those brethren sell the sheet metal that the government project gives them. The government thinks that they are bettering the people from their party but it is turning-out the opposite, the party members come to sell those things that they send them and with the fruit of their work our compañeros who are in resistance buy them. For example, a piece of sheet metal might cost 180 pesos in the hardware store, but the brethren from the parties come to sell it for as low as 100 or 80 pesos. They also receive construction blocks, it can be 5, 6, or 7 pesos in the hardware store, but they come to sell them for as low as 3 pesos or 2 pesos.

Maybe someday you are going to see in some new population centers that the houses have metal roofs, that is something that really came from the compañeros' work; we are in resistance and we are not accustomed to spending the fruit of our work, but they, the party-members, are those who come to sell those things.

The government realized where their project was going, that it is not benefiting the party-members, the Priistas, because when they sell those things the Zapatistas are taking advantage of those things, that is why it began to send its housing constructions, they no longer only deliver the material but the construction-worker now goes so that they cannot sell the material. Now when the material arrives the construction-worker is already there because the government realized that the Zapatistas are improving their houses, that is why they are changing it.

There are many forms that the evil governments have been using to attack us since '94 and until now, they continue in the same idea of finishing us or convincing us to lose spirit in our struggle. The evil government wants to convince us to abandon our struggle, but if we have in our head that our hope is to resist and we have the hope to see the future of our work, even if the government is sending thousands of pesos or constructions, we are not going to leave our struggle because we have it in conscience, we are not in those things that the government does, we are not thinking about that. What is happening there is like this with those projects from the evil government, the opposite is turning-out for them.

As a municipal government we are also resisting, we seek the mechanism or the ways to do the collective work. As the government of the autonomous municipalities we are resisting the evil government's ideologies, that is why in each municipality collective work is being pushed.

In the 17 de Noviembre municipality they have a cattle-herding collective and they also have a municipal store which is in the Independencia region. We now have the plan to begin a collective of compañeras at the municipal level, we are in the process of them beginning with a cattle-herding work, it still is not done but it was already thought and discussed with the towns; what was done in the Independencia region was the milpa and planting zacate in that part so that it remains as a pasture for the compañeras' cattle.

In the Lucio Cabañas municipality, Puente region, there is the Maya store, this is an effort of the towns. There also is a coffee collective which is recent, it is being thought that in the future it'll help us with the needs of the municipality, we have our hope in that.

In the Olga Isabel municipality, our compañeros have a coffee collective in the seat of Olga Isabel. They also have a municipal store which is called Nuevo Amanecer, which is located in the center of Chilón.

It is being thought that the collective municipality work will help us with the steps of our resistance, but also, as was mentioned the autonomous government, the municipalities, the towns, and the Junta de Buen Gobierno are together pushing autonomous education and health. This is the ideology that we are able to make in our municipalities, but the evil government also has its plans seeking the way to do away with us, for example in education it is sending its projects with scholarships for the children and also in the secondary schools, before '94 we did not know that, but with its plans that it sends to the Priista communities it wants our idea to finish.

In health we are taking steps, now we have municipal clinics and in some places we also have clinics in the regions and in the micro-regions. The evil government also counter-attacks us in the health work that we are doing, it sends its clinics to the Priista communities, but those clinics are not functioning, but rather they send just the building and it is closed.

What is being seen is that those party-member brethren sometimes go to the clinics in the municipalities or in the regions, they arrive there to ask for a consultation. It is being seen that the evil government's idea, their plan is not working because it is sending just buildings but there is not medicine, there are no good doctors. In our clinics we are seeing the advance, that it also depends a great deal on the knowledge of the compas who work as promoters.

The Junta de Buen Gobierno also is pushing some collective work like the Arcoíris store, the autonomous bank, and the cattle collective. This is thought because later on this collective can help us, we are not saying that we are now seeing the fruit but rather it is being thought about improving, about how one day these collectives can help us in the walk of our autonomy.

Something new that has been thought in the zone is to create a coffee collective, this coffee collective is in the Independencia region, in the 17 de Noviembre Autonomous Municipality. We just now also thought about making a cacao collective, the work is being done in Bolon Ajaw, which is in the Olga Isabel municipality. But this work is part of the zone and our hope is that one day we are going to see this collective work help us. We are not talking about how in this work we are already seeing the fruit, but that it is being thought how to improve it later on.

## **Gerónimo (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ Lucio Cabañas)**

The work that is being done is not easy, sometimes there are difficulties, but with those difficulties that are encountered ways are sought for how to be able to do the work better so that the collective work is developed. The work that is done in the three levels, local and municipal government, and the Junta de Buen Gobierno, is done in coordination.

The principal work of the Junta de Buen Gobierno is to push the collective work in the municipalities, in the towns, so that we too have our sustenance to be able to live. We said the problems that happen with the government, the brethren who are from the other party sometimes have problems because due to adhering to the projects which the government sends them they neglect the land, they no longer work the land. Currently the economic problem that Progresá, Oportunidades, 70 y más, have given them is tough, that supposedly it is for the elderly; they are giving those projects but they are only for small groups in some communities.

This example of the clinics that the government makes is there. In the Independencia region in the 17 de Noviembre Autonomous Municipality there are two evil government clinics. One is in the Venustiano Carranza ejido, it is a large ejido where the majority are Priistas, the clinic is just a shell, only the house. The person in- charge of health in that clinic has his car, and he dedicates himself more to carrying passengers in his car than to being in the clinic, so there is no medical treatment, there is nothing. There also is another clinic in a very large community, also majority Priista, which is Belisario Domínguez in the Independencia region, it too is another shell which they sometimes use as a warehouse, not as a clinic.

The party-members might be able to see there on their own that they are only cheated by the government. We, even with the little that is being done in the work, but we are improving. In matters of health, healer workshops, midwife workshops, health promoter workshops are being carried out. All that work that is being done is to counterattack that political ideology of the evil government which it wants to put in our communities.



# Economic Resistance

## Floribel (Former Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ Lucio Cabañas)

Before 1994 we as Zapatistas did not have anything because we still had not recovered those properties that we have now, but we did not leave ourselves be, but rather we organized to advance our organization. We lived the way how we are working in our towns and like this we come little by little into our resistance regarding the economy, which is an important need of our organization.

After 1994 it was that we recovered the properties, so we organized in the towns to make the various collective work, be it with birds, gardens, stores, and other things which can be done in the towns, so until now we are here more or less advanced, let's not say much but yes we are advancing more or less. For example in the majority of the towns in the zone we have collective work, but there are other towns that do not have collective work due to the lack of compañeros, because there are not many in those towns. That is why we cannot say that all the towns have collectives, but the majority of us do have those collectives.

The compañeros also are working in milpa and bean collectives, and also in some large towns they have collective cattle and coffee plantation work. Like this we come little by little and up to now we have a bit of advances in the zone, we have the commerce center store collective, the recent coffee collective. The cattle herding.

There are also two bathing areas which support us in the economy. They are the touristic centers, one is in Agua Clara, which is in the Comandanta Ramona municipality; the other the one in Tzaconejá, which is in the 17 de Noviembre municipality, it is a zone collective. Those two centers have helped us with the needs of the zone, if there are needs in the Junta one part comes from those centers and they have also improved some things in those two touristic centers. Those two bathing areas have helped us in our organization, sometimes we divide up the resources which come from there among the municipalities; each municipality on what expenses it is going to occupy the resource or if it is going to invest it in other collective work, sometimes it is used on other things like on the commission's fares.

## Questions

*What did you do to recover or arrange the two touristic centers which were mentioned?*

The place that is within the Comandanta Ramona municipality is recovered land, but that recovered land is in the hands of the Priistas, who are the brethren from Agua Clara, they had that touristic center in their hands, but as we well remember, it is part of our territoriality which was recovered in 1994, so we had to organize to defend that place.

First the municipality was organized to defend the place but nothing could be done and it passed to the general assembly at the zone level, where the decision was made that this land has to be defended. There are our lands, they are about 30 hectares and within those is the touristic center, that is why the Junta de Buen Gobierno began to promote this touristic center that was already there, they were using it on behalf of the federal government, but we had to give it use to take out a little bit of our economy.

The Tzaconejá bathing area is in the official municipal seat of Altamirano, before the official government attended to it, people came from Comitán and Teopisca to spend Easter, but when those lands were taken and remained within our territory it was no longer allowed for the official government to handle it, there were problems, the municipal president also wanted to stick his nose in, he went to offer that he was going to make palapas, that he was going to make bathrooms, that he was going to modernize it. But already being in our hands we organized, from those very resources that were entering the palapas were made, the bathrooms were composed, from there it was taken to do the work. The visitors arrive per se but the one who has to control that territory is the Junta de Buen Gobierno. What we did is not easy, it cost us work, but we recovered it because it is ours, it is within our territory.

*How do the women who work in the cattle collective do it, do the compañeros support them?*

The compañeras who work in cattle herding in some towns have been supported by the compañeros, they help with going to see the cattle, lassoing the cattle, or vaccinating, they also are supported by the compañeros.

# The Compañeras' Work

## Miriam

The collective work did not begin in 1994, it began much before, since '88, in that time we were working clandestinely, we did not know well how collective work is, we begin just like that. When we were already working we began to contribute with chicken or making a piece of garden, but not in all the towns, just some towns began that work, the resistance was since then because the situation was very tough.

In Morelia, which is a large town, and where all were compañeros, was where the first collective began. With the profits that we were generating we bought some of our organization's things, like the communication radios and other things that were needed to prepare ourselves for '94. Like this we were supporting the compañeros.

After '95, with Zedillo's betrayal, we all left because the army entered, so we withdrew, all the collectives remained abandoned and everything went to waste. Three months passed, we again returned to the community and there was no longer anything because all the brethren who remained there, who are Priistas, took advantage of it. After that we began to reorganize the collective work but we did not find well how because if a town works and can share with another town, as if the other town does not understand, we went understanding little by little, up to now we are working in collective.

The compañeras' collective served to get the fare of the compañeros who were going to the meetings, but also the profit that was being generated was invested in another work, collective stores were made. The profits that the collective stores generate served to buy the compañeras' cattle, in some towns they are working in cattle herding but as we say, with the work in the organization we seek equality among men and women, that is why we understand that we are not the owner of that collective work but also it is the compañeros'.

The practice, the experience of the towns that are advancing in the collective, who have understood the importance of collective work, it is that they must support each other among themselves. The compas weed the pasture, the compas buy the cattle, buy the salt, the medicine, and the compas apply that medicine; but when there is a need in the town, if the radio broke down, if there is no battery, also the women sell the cattle, they contribute together with the compañeros. Like this we are walking together with our work.

When they do the celebrations, like one for the founding of a town, sometimes the women take cattle and then next year the compañeros take it from their collective. Like this they go along supporting each other among compañeras and compañeros. They are working the collectives like this where there are compañeras who already understood, already move around alone, because before the regional representatives and those from the CCRI had to arrive to give ideas, but as they already understood how it works, the compañeras then made their idea alone.

But it is not like this in all the towns, it is necessary to speak clearly, in other municipalities we are still lacking organization because the importance of the collective work has not been

understood. There are municipalities with very small towns, with 4 or 5 compañeros, in those towns which are very small we still have not been able to make collectives. We are working in that at the level of our zone.

## **Gerónimo (Former Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ Lucio Cabañas)**

With regard to the plan that there is for the compañeras' cattle-herding work, we have to understand that we as compañeros are not going to let the compañeras do the work alone because it is difficult to make the pastures, planting posts is difficult, but those who are going to administer that collective are the compañeras. The collective is theirs, we only are going to support with the work, the same as they support us with the compañeros' collectives, the compañeras also work there. It is joint work.

The compañeras's collective work still is not being done in all the municipalities, but it is due to various things, the compañeras cannot do milpas all alone but it too has to be collective. For example in the 17 de Noviembre municipality is where there were large ranches, there were large estates where the Castellanos, the Kanteres, and others lived; those ranches were 500 or 1,000 hectares, they were great extensions of land, those ranchers occupied the whole canyon, all of what is the edge of the river. Now it is not like that, those lands now are our new ejidos which were declared in resistance. There is where the task is, there is where through the zone assemblies they have to tell us how we are going to defend the land. We have to work hard, work a great deal in the milpa, in the coffee, in cattle herding, in the collectives. There is where it is working because those lands which were our grandparents' are now in-hand; they were recovered because before we did not have land to work on, and now that the land is had, it is to help us in the economy.

If a compañero already produced their corn, their beans, and other products, it is so they can sell and can have resources to pay for their family's needs. We do not want to do like the party-member brethren who are in accordance with the handouts that the evil government gives, awaiting the projects that the government gives. Those brethren are waiting for the month to come in which they are going to give them their Progresá, when they know that it is already going to come the women go to get credit in the store because their Progresá is already going to come; they are stuck to their project, but what is going to happen when it runs out.

We have the task of orienting our compañeros and compañeras, telling them that we have to work hard; that task is done through the Junta, through the municipalities, through the towns, because those lands are the place where the ranchers left and we have to demonstrate that it is being worked. We are working, it costs a little but the fruit of the work is seen. Before, when some of us lived on the peaks because we did not have anywhere to live we did not have good houses, we had houses of straw, of zacate. Now with the work that has been achieved the compañeros now have their sheet-metal house, even if the wall is boards but it now is a house which is seen that it is worked. And the money for that house where did it come from? It came from the very work that we are doing on the recovered land.

It is like this how we are doing the work in the constructions of each town, in the municipalities, in the communities, there is the Junta de Buen Gobierno's task, it has to push and see that the work plans are fulfilled, see that the town does not remain delayed. The Junta has to review how

the work is going, is it advancing? Is it remaining? Is it failing? What problems are there? How are the problems resolved in the towns?

# Cultural Resistance

## Manuel (Former Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ 17 de Noviembre)

We as Zapatistas, in the Morelia zone, when we choose our authorities of the three levels (local, municipal, and Junta de Buen Gobierno), do not do political campaigns nor voting in ballot boxes, nor do we use credentials. Why do we not do these things? Because we do not want to do the same thing that the evil government is doing in our country, in our states.

The way in which we choose our authorities in Caracol IV, is through the assembly. If in the towns a local authority is going to be chosen, be it a commissioner, agent, vigilance council, or some other local authority, we do it through a local general assembly, it is chosen there among *compañeras* and *compañeros*, two or three *compañeros* are named as a proposal to be an authority, then, once there is that proposal, a vote is carried out, the assembly is going to defend who they like being their authority.

When the proposed *compañero* or *compañera* is mentioned, if the majority comes out they remain as the authority, it is practiced like this in the community, in the *ejidos*. Once the local authorities are named, the commissioner, the agent, or the position that each one is responsible for, that *compañero* or *compañera* has to go to present themselves to the autonomous municipality to go bring the information, the work that the Autonomous Council is going to share, that is their work.

To choose a municipal authority it is done in the same manner. Everyone gets together, a municipal assembly is convened, all the authorities get together so that a proposal is made to choose an authority. For example, if we name the Municipal Council proposals are launched just the same, three, four, or five *compas*, so the majority of the assembly chooses who is going to be president, who remains as councilmember, like this until completing all the commissions. Some *compañeros* who are present in the municipal assembly are chosen, but also there are some *compañeros* who are not in the municipal assembly, who are working in their town without knowing that they are already named as an authority. When it happens like this the commissioner, the person in-charge, arrives to that *compañero's* town and informs them that they remained named in the municipality as an authority. So that *compañero* or *compañera* was not there in their naming but they do accept the position because it is clear where they are from and what their duty is as a member of the organization.

In the zone, municipal assemblies are also realized, each municipality carries their task for it to name their delegate for the Junta de Buen Gobierno. When a *compañero* or *compañera* is named depending on their discipline, their behavior, that is what has been practiced in our zone when the three levels of government are named.

When the levels of government are named, for example in the municipality, our customs are used so that the new authorities enter into function. The elders, the new authorities, and the

authorities which are leaving use their traditional dress. We do the presentation of our elders, they advise the new authorities so that they govern well the three years, they also say goodbye to the authorities that are then leaving and they tell the ones who are entering to be concerned for their people. The elders use what is custom with their incense, with their regional music and all that; since in our zone and in our municipalities there is Tojolobal and Tzeltal custom, all the elders get together at the municipal level and do their work.

The work is handled like this, what is of the three-level government, when the municipal authority is then in their position we respect them because they are an authority that we chose. The authorities do their work coordination to do a municipal general assembly and give their proposal, the commissioners come to that assembly. There are points that can be defined in that assembly but also there are points that cannot be determined there, so the commissioners carry that task point to the town. The town analyzes that task and gives its response which is taken to the next assembly.

The role of the authorities is to push the collective work with the coordinators so that it is not going to be forgotten, they always are telling them to promote the work. What is cultural politics has been handled like this in our Junta de Buen Gobierno.

## **Rosa Isabel (Support Base. MAREZ 17 de Noviembre)**

The work of the elderly men and women is to do the change in authority. When the new authorities are going to enter the elders begin to prepare their incense, the flag, the drum, the flute, the holy water. A place is sought where the new authorities are going to line up, those who are leaving their position put on their traditional outfit and give the cane that they received when they entered. The new authorities go to them, carry the flag, the drum, and their outfit, they arrive to the place where they are waiting for them, for example the stage. When the new authorities arrive, they line up below the stage, the old authorities also line up with their cane. Each one of the leaving authorities passes to give their cane, they pass to greet the new authorities who are receiving their cane and those who are those who are exiting go along leaving, so each one takes their seat and remains in their place.

The elders put themselves in a place, they are also lined up, the eldest elder is already chosen. When the giving of the canes is finished, the elders who are already very old, begin to give advice to the new authorities, sometimes they pray for them to do their work well because being an authority is not a game, the elders know because they have been authorities before too, they served in their municipalities. The elders give us the advice, as is our culture, because we have to take being an authority seriously, the elders advise us that we have a responsibility. After they give advice, the elders line up and give a blessing to the new authorities. The elders' work is like this, we respect them a great deal.

Upon receiving the position we dance three or four times with the regional music. When the old authorities are going to leave their positions and the new ones are going to receive it, the support base compañeros are present, men and women, because they are those who are going to give faith, they are those who are going to give legality to that change in authority. When each one has received their position all that finishes, so all the support bases who are in the assembly are going to approach the new authorities, there is a feast where we eat together. Finishing the

feast sometimes we do a cultural event, we do a celebration and a dance. This is how we do that change in authority in our municipalities, also it is done like this in the zone.

Within our autonomy we have to respect our authority a great deal, whether they are underage, are a young person or an older person, the respect is level because they are an authority. They did not buy that power like is done in the political parties, sometimes they buy the vote, they are conquering, giving away food, giving away beer, giving away booze so that the candidate's people come. With us it is not like this. Here it is the people, the *compañeros* and *compañeras* are those who choose and just as they choose their authorities they have to give their work with joy because they too do their work well, clearly if an authority does not do their work well in the three years of their position, they have to receive the support bases' and the authorities' critique.

When the change of authority between the exiting and the entering is, it is done with joy because those who leave are turning-in the work, they already did a report on how they handled the turning-in of accounts, how they handled the donations, the entries which arrive to the Junta or the municipality, a report was already given, there is already conformity from the people so there then is joy. The *compañeros* are dancing in the night because the change was already given and the new ones entered, but the people are content, there is no inconformity because they received the report.

Comparing with the official government, with the government that there is right now of Juan Sabines and Calderón, we see that they are spending many millions of pesos to do their campaigns, the worst is that they offer many things in the moment of their campaign and when they are government they do not fulfill them. So the difference is that the *compañeros* who are a part of our autonomous governments are in their position because the people offered it to them, not because they offered it to themselves to do it, they were chosen and like so they have to accept the work that our peoples need.

We see that the evil government is spending a great deal of money which is the people's money, that is bad, that is why we are not spending our peoples' money. What little we spend is not for the authorities to keep, we only use what is necessary for our peoples, to be a good authority.

## Questions

*In the matter of culture some customs and traditions are being lost, but also the mother tongue, the matter of dress. How is this in your zone and what plans are there to recover all of what is being lost?*

The languages of our zone are Tzeltal and Tojolobal, in some parts of the zone there is Tzotzil. There are municipalities, like 17 de Noviembre, in which Tzeltal and Tojolobal are spoken, what is done there is that the government always names half and half between Tzeltales and Tojolabales so that there is communication with the people. Within the work of the Junta de Buen Gobierno and of the autonomous municipalities the language is shared. Since there is Tzeltal, there is Tzotzil, there is Tojolabal, we have to inform each other in our language, there is someone who must translate for those who understand the Spanish language.

That is our form of working, that is why there we communicate well, but if we all understand Spanish just the same we are working shared like so. Regarding the use of traditional outfits, the majority is using clothing how they wish, what is our traditional clothing those who are still using it are a certain few, we cannot lie and say that we are all using it.



*What is the work of the elders to be able to help the authority with their life experience?*

In the period when we had the parliament, since '94, the elderly compañeros entered the positions, as agents, they covered other commissions in that time when they were the example. Now the compañeros of age have to be respected, they entrust us with the work. We respect them because they give us their experience, they explain to us, they reason with us why we are here as an authority. That is the way in which our elders accompany us to do our activities in the moment when it is needed, but when not needed, they are with our peoples doing other activities.

*When speaking of how we resist in the cultural element, we are seeing that in each community, principally in the communities where they are majority Priista or from a party, there are the secondary schools, the high schools, the COBACH; in those government educational levels what is pushed most is Spanish and for them to learn to speak English.*

*In my zone, in Caracol I, we see that there is no way to counteract that in our autonomous schools, because there is Tzeltal, there is Tzotzil, and there is Tojolobal, what is most being lost there is Tojolobal, and in our schools unfortunately there is no educational plan or an educational area where the mother tongue is studied. In your schools do you have a plan so that the languages are not lost or in your zone do the children speak their mother tongue perfectly?*

To counteract the loss of the mother tongue our students in the secondary school are learning that subject; there is that space of language teaching in each town or in each municipality, this is in the third level of the primary schools. Each educator or promoter is going to teach in the Tzeltal language if the student compañeros are Tzeltales, if they are Tojolobales the promoter speaks in Tojolobal, if they are Tzotziles the promoter speaks in Tzotzil. In all the schools that we have the practice of our cultures' languages is done.

It is not that we speak our languages perfectly, be it in Tojolobal, in Tzeltal, in Tzotzil, in the various languages that we speak, but in the local or secondary schools it is being practiced. It always happens that the little kids arrive and they ask you how a word is said in Tojolobal, for example, when we know we answer them, but also there are things that we no longer know just how it is in Tojolobal and that is what we have to see still. Of course the use of the mother tongue is being pushed in our schools but there are things that in itself we already lost. We are already chewing them mixed with Spanish.

That is why in the education workshops the rescue of our mother tongue is much talked about. When an education workshop is done at the primary level many promoter compañeros and compañeras attend who speak their language, so the one who speaks Tzeltal receives their material and their work guide in Tzeltal because they are going to teach in Tzeltal; the one who speaks Tojolobal carries their guide in Tojolobal; and there are towns in which the language has been lost and they speak in Spanish, the promoters in those towns carry their classes in Spanish. Like so rescuing is being attempted, although it is not so easy, there is work to do, both in the municipalities and in the zone there is that impulse to rescue our mother tongue and our customs.

## Social Politics

### Omar (Former Delegate of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. Che Guevara Region)

We are going to begin this topic with education. Why do we talk about education a great deal? Because education is very important for us, in it we can have theory and practice with the students.

But we did not always have our autonomous education, first we had to convince ourselves because many of us who now are compañeros were Priistas before 1994, others were Zapatistas from before and many of us are Zapatistas since '94, but in that time we still had some ideas from when we were Priistas. When the need was seen to teach our children and the official teachers left, they were told up to there no more and we began to see how to do our education. So the critique came.

“Do you not know how do teach? As a Zapatista you do not know anything,” they said.

But that was a lie, we did do our education, we are doing it among all. An example: in my town, which is in the Che Guevara regions, a year and a half ago some compañeros who had four children left the organization, of those four children one was in first grade in our education and the others in second and third grade. Those former compañeros are neighbors in the same community, it is a village which is called San Antonio, there they founded a new official school and their children began to go there. When the teachers and the supervisors said:

“Those four children already went to school”

Why did they say that? Because they passed quickly to first, second, and one of those former compañeros who had studied in our autonomous school even arrived to sixth grade. Now that former student went to the official municipality to compete and even came to compete at the state level. There is a question that those bilingual teachers from the official school ask up to this moment:

“Who taught you”

“The Zapatistas taught us,” they said.

“But who was your teacher?”

“My teacher is the son of our compañeros the Zapatistas.”

“Where did you find that teaching and why do we not teach those things? Where do those Zapatistas find their trainers?”, are the questions that the supervisors ask, it is the question that those teachers have.

This is our education, that is why we are giving it tough, but when we began we received threats from the Priistas, from the governments, from the federal army. It was worse with Zedillo's betrayal in 1995, when the 60 thousand soldiers came to our territory. We suffered the persecution a ton, the mistreatments, the military harassment because they wanted to have our

education but we were not afraid, on the contrary, we got to organizing education to confront them and to do the work.

We are seeing that the result of our education is there. It is not in vain that we passed hunger and ate tortillas to enter to form our education, the tortilla does give strength and gives knowledge. When we began with education collectivism worked very well for us, we learned with many of the *compañeros* and *compañeras* in each town, in each municipality, we confronted those goddamn soldiers that there were within our places, who came to harass us. The *compañeras* learned there to defend themselves, with clubs, with rocks, or with shouts, I saw it and I have present that the *compañeras* there were convinced to confront them, there the *compañeras* that they can.

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The political social problem that the government has with us, is that it wants to do away with us, it does not want us to form our education, but it cannot do away with us because just as we organize working in education, we have in the collectives. So it is that thanks to our organization, thanks to our *compañeros* who gave us that idea, we could go do the work in education, in the collective element.

The years passed and as if it calmed a bit, time passed and the government began to navigate underwater against our autonomous education; it sent many projects to do constructions of government schools, principally COBACH. In my municipality they wanted to construct several high schools, up to now there are two COBACH schools which it built there in one year; with those schools they wanted to finish with our secondary school, but it has not worked for them because there have been problems and they are finishing.

There is a village which is called Cuxuljá, in that place there were hundreds of students from the official schools, there they have community dormitories, there they eat and sleep, but the problem is that the female students left pregnant and drug-addiction began, they took two or three kilos of drugs from within that school. With that the *Priista* brethren realized that it does not work, some of those brethren were our *compañeros* since '94 but now they are ex-Zapatistas and some were *Priistas* in and of themselves.

"Why is it that we trust the government? Now our daughters are in a problem. They are with drug-addiction," that is the worry of those brethren. "And the Zapatista brethren continue in resistance and have good, well-prepared students, the teachers are from the town." They say.

That is what the party-member brethren are now realizing, but we do not know why with the handouts that the government offers them there they just remain silent again. With this social politics that the government is doing it wants to do away with us but it cannot do away with us.

In the year 2000 we had a problem with our Arcoiris store, when the Orcao brethren wanted to take control of that place, as a matter of fact, those Orcao brethren are former Zapatistas and when our Arcoiris store began to function in a house that we had recovered, the Orcaos attacked us. The store was at the crossroads, so they arrived from Altamirano, Ocosingo, and San Cristóbal, they took our things, they piled-up the merchandise that we had within the store, since that time we could not defend we had to accept their remaining there.

But we did not only remain there just like that, while those Orcaos took control of the house, we were selling in the crossroads. However it may be, we had to occupy a place selling in the open air, we no longer had a house, we just hung up a tarp to put the things that we sold. We were confronting that problem like so one month, and later we began to see what we had to do to recover our house.

At the zone level we all had to defend our place over the course of six or seven months making guards, doing all types of work. That encampment that we did was very strong, and the goddamn Orcaos could not remove us but they did act like fuckers just to be clever, since they are former Zapatistas and they threatened us with knowing about all of us. We did not want to do provocations, we had to find the means for how we can have our little house to generate our economy, for the collective work in the zone.

We had another problem in the political-social matter, it was a land problem with the Orcaos. The problem was that the Orcaos entered our land, they enter however it may be, it is not that they ask you but that they take control of the land.

“I have my pants in a knot and the land is mine,” they say.

When we realized that they were already inside. We were confronting that problem collectively. The best path that we found was supporting each other with our animals, with the little bit of collective cattle that the zone and the town has where they provoked the problem. We put the animals in, they were going to confront first and then we go, although we did question if our animal is going to die but it did not die. That is the first place in which they defend our animals, the recovered land.

That is the problem that we confronted against the Orcaos and against those from OPDDIC, aside from those who now come from Garrucha and are penetrating into our zone, who are those from ORUGA and URPA. The government is seeking where and how to put them in our lands because they want to totally fuck over, but they cannot. Thanks to all those problems that we have lived another new way how to defend ourselves is always born, it is just necessary for us to sit down and think. The councils, the Junta, the commissioners and agents, and also our CCRI, support us in posing and to think about what way we can resolve the problems and defend our recovered lands.

We also have heard that on various occasions the federal government and the state government have said that the Zapatistas are already finished or that the very leaders, the Comandantes, already sold out. The towns heard that information by means of the news in the media, by means of the radio and television. There we began to seek ways for how to explain to the compañeros why those lies are said.

Some compañeros who heard that began to think if maybe that it is true, but with some mobilizations of our organization they realize that it is not true. For example, with the march of 1,111 Zapatistas in September 1999, with the 5 thousand delegates that went throughout the country, where all those who got that luck to go give their work at the national level showed the response of our compañeros, they showed that it is not how they say that the Zapatistas already died and that our Comandantes already sold out.

The government seeks a thousand ways for how to fuck the people over psychologically. That too is why these encounters, this work, is important, thanks to them we took, we shared our experiences, and they helped us to have more of an idea on how we can organize ourselves.

# **Support from the Solidary Brothers and Sisters**

## **Saulo (Former Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ 17 de Noviembre)**

The projects of our solidary brothers and sisters help us with the resistance, well they have supported us with the financing of some constructions which have helped our towns. Before we called our new ejidos new population centers, that changed on February 14th, 2009, so those lands were formed as ejidos or settlements. On those ejidos we have electrification, the solidary brothers and sisters have helped us there. In the places that we inhabit since '95 we now have electricity, those which were formed later are still lacking.

They have also supported us with water projects. The better part of the new villages have tap water, water in tubes. They have also supported us with that and with some constructions since we do not have many economic resources in the municipalities, in the Junta, with this support that our solidary brothers and sisters have given us we have always made useful things in our communities and municipalities. Sometimes we have invested the support in equipment, be it in the secondary schools or in the municipal clinics. Also sometimes we have taken it for training in the area of production. Like this is how we are handling our solidary brothers and sisters' projects, it really has helped us with something.

# **The Evil Government's Provocations**

## **Manuel (Former Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ 17 de Noviembre)**

Regarding the evil government's provocations we know well that we received a betrayal from Zedillo on February 9th, 1995, when he sent 60 thousand soldiers to our zones. The difficulty that there was then is that there were towns and zones that had to take refuge in the mountains to not confront the enemy. We had to experience all that and find the way how to sustain our people. That was one of the greatest provocations by that federal government, that as it saw that it did not do away with the Zapatistas so it had to put together more things so that we could not advance with our organization.

We as Zapatistas had to find the way to resist, something important that we did to organize our autonomous municipalities, was that we supported each other with the compañeras. How could we pass our documents, our work plans, in the checkpoints? The compañeras had to help us because they do not register them, so they participated a great deal. The evil government saw that it could not finish us with the military, so it organized the paramilitaries. In our zone of the Morelia Caracol, the most-harassed compañeros were those who are on the Comandanta Ramona side, by Bachajón, by Chilón. They were the most-harassed by the OPDDIC, the Chinchulín, and the Agulares, Paz y Justicia. Those were the paramilitaries that were provoking the support base compañeros, they wanted to take away the recovered lands.

Our support base compañeros endured all the blows of the paramilitaries, up to the present day we are working on those lands. Currently there is a problem of provocation in the 17 de Noviembre municipality, in a place which is called Ranchería El Nance, there too there was presence of the ORCAO, of the OPDDIC. Up to these present months the compañeros are doing an encampment there defending the land.

# **Caracol V: Which Speaks for Everyone**

Roberto Barrios



# Autonomous Government in Resistance

## Ana (MAREZ El Trabajo)

The resistance in our towns, the resistance that we are carrying in the struggle, did not begin in the year 1994, nor in the year 2003, but rather now we indigenous peoples carry more than 500 years resisting.

The resistance began when the Spanish arrived to conquer our peoples, they wanted to impose another form of life, they wanted to destroy our own governments so that they could command or govern. They wanted to take all the lands from our grandparents so that they could hoard them and control the peoples in the estates, for them to only work as servants. They wanted to change our ideas making us believe that they are the wise, the good, the more advanced in language, imposing upon us their education, their religion. They wanted to get involved in our thought that to live happy and in abundance there has to be inequality, so that some live luxuriously without worrying about those who do not have anything.

All this is the thought or the ideology that exists in the capitalist system now. But our grandparents understood that life must not be like this, that is why they had to struggle in order to not accept this imposition, fleeing to the mountains to escape slavery on the estates. In other cases they rebelled against the bosses, killing those who oppressed them. They risked their lives to maintain the language that they spoke, the religion that existed, the knowledge that they had.

Although the punishments which the authorities of the church in the inquisition applied were strong, although there were moments in which they wanted to annihilate our grandparents, they kept in memory all their lives, they were transmitting it from parents to children, from generation to generation. That is why we are here and we continue here in the resistance.

But resistance is not only not receiving the evil government's aid and not paying property tax or electricity, but rather resistance is constructing everything that makes us maintain our peoples with life. That is why resistance is a weapon of struggle to confront this capitalist system.

# The Evil Government's Politics

## Valentina (Vigilance Commission)

The rich are those who command the government, that is why they exercise their neoliberal politics which consists of all those who have money are free to buy and sell everything that serves to produce commodities. The rich who command, Mexicans and those who come from other countries, are owners of great factories, businesses, stores, they are land-owners.

The evil government has various structures, like the federal government, which is the highest authority which executes power in the whole country; then follow the governors of the states who have power in each state of the country; then are the municipal presidents who execute power in their municipalities, there are also other structures, like the ejidal commissioner. All these government bodies function as a means of control because they all have to subject themselves to the law that there is in the constitution and the rules go along reforming that law for the benefit of the rich.

In Mexico there exist three State powers, executive power, judicial power, and legislative power, those powers are part of a structure which is united to weaken the people in resistance, because they have the same thought as the rich. It is chosen through elections where people vote for their candidate of whichever politician, be it from the PRI, PAN, or PRD. But the candidates from whichever political party only serve the rich, they choose who suits them the most, the people do not choose.

The federal, state, and municipal government name those who are in-charge of handling the government dependencies, like the Federal Electricity Commission, Department of Social Development, Education Department, and all the services that the people need. They name their family members and friends to occupy those positions which supposedly are to give services to the people, but it is not like this, they also come from the rich who command, that is why they are those who decide how the service which the people need is in order to favor the rich businesspeople.

The peasants, workers, mobile vendors, students, teachers, and all the people who are poor are those who carry all the weight of the work to maintain this system of government which controls us through the taxes that we pay. They underpay the price of the product that we sell, wrongly sell our natural resources like petroleum. This is the politics of the evil government.

# Politics of Autonomous Government

## Valentín (Former Member of the Autonomous Council)

The politics on which our towns and their autonomous governments are going to focus is the construction of autonomy, so our thought or idea is to change the situation which our towns suffer due to the fault of the evil governments of the rich, like poverty, inequality, exploitation, injustice. We struggle for having a dignified life for all the children, youth, men, women, and elderly, and for all of us to have the opportunities and place for all, without there being exclusion.

Our idea in the structure of autonomous government remains in this way: the people are those who have the power to decide their form of political, economic, ideological, and social organization, beginning from below to above. The various levels of authorities are only representatives of the people.

Each town has its local authorities, formed by the ejidal commissioner, judge, vigilance councilmember. In the work areas like health, education women, they also have their committees which work coordinated with the authorities.

In the autonomous municipality they have their authorities like the Autonomous Council made up of a substitute, treasurer, secretary, and it works with other members which are the health, education, women, justice, civil registry, and agrarian commissions.

Within the zone there is the Junta de Buen Gobierno, there the delegates work who are support bases named in their municipalities. Within the Junta de Buen Gobierno there is a vigilance commission which was named by the towns in each MAREZ and its role is to watch after the work that the autonomous governments realize and the errors that they may make.

# Ideological Politics

## Jacinto (Education Trainer. MAREZ El Trabajo)

They put me in-charge of explaining about ideological politics. We have it in two parts, one is how they mentioned a little about how the evil government's ideological politics is. We consider that it is important to say it because we also are going to explain a little about how ideological politics in resistance is.

The ideological politics that the evil government has, we know and we hear it day to day, that one of the ways with which they disseminate their ideas is through the media, we hear clearly in any moment, in the news, in the announcements. One of those things that we always hear is that the government is doing away with poverty and that it is battling the insecurity which is lived in the country; we know that they are lies but it is an instrument that they use to defend their ideology.

Another thing that we hear and that they always mention, is that the services that the towns in the country need, like education, health, and all the needs that the peoples have, are achieved only through private investment; for the government it is the only way of giving solution to the needs that are presented in the towns. We also hear in the media that they say that with more and better education we are going to have better opportunities for all. That too is one of the ideologies that they impose, they make us believe that if we get to studying, if we prepare ourselves, we are going to have a better life, it is what they put in our idea in all corners of the country; but it is not true, many people study and they do not have work nor do they live well.

We hear the political parties which say that they are against populism, but in reality what they want is for the peoples to not be able to state an opinion and not be able to say how they want to live, so when there are social organizations it is an ordeal for the government because they weaken it. Since they do not want people to organize they get to talking about unity, they say that upon being united everything is going to change, the country is going to progress, it is the idea that they want to put in us.

The political parties, through the media, want to bring in the idea that they are the ones who are going to resolve needs, poverty, those who are going to give all the services that the people need. The political parties and the candidates put themselves as if they were the saviors, those who are going to save the country, it is the idea that they want us to believe. Also, through their media, they want to put the ideology of voting in us, when they speak of democracy they say that only by putting an "X" on the ballots, just with that democracy is done.

There is another part of the ideology of the rich that is not said, but it is the way how they see life, it is private property. They believe that private property is very important, they believe that each one should be the owner of what they have, be the owner of the land, of the natural riches, for individual capital to accumulate, they believe that it is the best in order to live well. That is not said but in official education they put the idea in us that it is the best way of life.

In history we have seen one of Benito Juárez's phrases which says, "respect for the other's right is peace," and well the rich applauded him when he said that, because it means that we respect things, private property, and like this we all are going to live in peace. That is why the rich applauded, because no one was going to touch everything that they had, the great lands that they hoarded. That is why in national history Benito Juárez appears as the one who saved the country, well rather he saved the goods of the rich.

That is the ideological politics of the evil governments. What is going to be the ideological politics in our resistance? We think that change is not achieved from the government but change is achieved from the bases, from the towns, when the towns are those who decide, those who state opinions.

So the practice that is being done in our organization is participatory democracy, the towns are those who directly choose their authorities and not through votes like the evil governments do. That is a way for how we are resisting this which they want us to believe is the best way to live.

When the autonomous governments exercise their position, to be able to govern well, they take our seven principles: serve and not be served, represent and not replace, construct and not destroy, obey and not command, propose and not impose, convince and not conquer, lower and not raise. That is the ideology that there is in autonomous government.

We also base ourselves on other things that we have said, like the phrase, "a world where many worlds fit," because that is one of the ideas that we have in our struggle, that we struggle to have a place for all without there being exclusion. We struggle, we are constructing this autonomy for all men, women, children, elderly, everyone to have their place.

The phrase, "for everyone everything, nothing for us," is part of the ideology that we have as Zapatistas. We have our name EZLN, we struggle not only for what we want, we struggle for everyone even if we do not have anything. Although we give our lives, fall in the path, even if what some authorities who now are of-age have said happens to us, who say that although we are not going to see the fruit but we are struggling so that our children have a better life. That is part of our ideology because we wager for struggling, nothing more for us, but for everyone.

One of the ways in which we have resisted the government's politics on private property for land, is that the autonomous government has learned a little to regulate the land so that everyone has a place, that is practice the right to enjoy the land. The form of land holding that there is in a large part of the towns and communities in the North Zone is the ejido.

The ejido was formed by the struggles for the defense of the land years ago, what the government did in that time was that it legalized the land, delivering papers in which not each one is going to be the property- owner of the parcel. Over there, there was parceling, it is to say, each ejidatario was given their part, that was like a step where private property entered the ejido, and more still when Procede entered, so it began to be divided, fractioned, taking force from the assembly which was the maximum authority in the making of decisions.

Before, in some towns, a ejidatario was not the owner of their parcel, when he wanted to leave but could not sell the parcel because the owner is the ejido. With the introduction of Procede what the government did, the land holding in the ejido was corrupted, that too is another one of the attacks that the government did but it is very hidden.

What the autonomous governments in our zone did with the recovered land is that they could understand that private property for land must not continue, they already understood why a part is not going to be given to each compa. For example, there was a case in which the compañeros

positioned themselves on the recovered land and it had been said that it was going to be worked there in a communal manner, but it was seen that problems began to arise from there. Later it was agreed that it would be parceled and they were given 5 hectares of terrain, but each compa is not going to be the owner of that land, it is property of the people.

It is necessary to understand the advantages of the land being communal, because when someone is a property-owner of the land there is no place for everyone, for example, when each one has their parcel that custom is there that the ejidatario deeds to his youngest some, something like that, and if he has more children they remain outside. So the question is: where are the other children going to live? It is one of the practices that the autonomous government in the North Zone is now learning to change.

We touch upon this because we who are struggling have to think what to do so that we all have the possibility to enjoy the land, be them ejidal lands or recovered land, because we talk about how in this struggle there must not be exclusion.

There are things that we have achieved in the resistance, but there are things which are missing. There in the North Zone there are compañeros who supposedly in their way of understanding, it is that they are in resistance when they do not pay electricity nor property tax. There are compañeros who like so have their way of understanding. We do not know how this is in the remaining zones, but we are going to be realists, in our zone that happens. There also is another thing it appears that it is in-general, it is that there are compas who lose spirit and go with the government again.

There are problems that the autonomous government in the North Zone has not been able to resolve, one case is when a community is supported with a construction, for example of an autonomous school, and that school is built on the land of a compa, so if the compa abandons the struggle and goes with the government and takes the school. There are cases in which a cooperative store collective in a community is built on the plot of compañero, if he abandons the struggle he keeps that store. The greater part of these problems are on the ejidos where there are few compañeros, for example if there are 10 compañeros and the majority are Priistas, these things happen. That is one of the difficulties that autonomous government has not been able to resolve there in the zone. Another difficulty, speaking of resistance in ideology, is that in the communities where there are few compañeros, two or three families, when they feel that there then are few compañeros, sometimes loss of spirit comes in, doubt comes in. sometimes their idea, their conscience, weakens, they have children and then they wonder what future their children will have within this struggle. So they begin to question, to think about taking two steps, two paths at once.

One is that if they still have their government documents, if they want their child to have an electoral credential so that they can go to work in the city in case all the compas from their community abandon the struggle. There that doubt exists, there are communities where they want to carry two paths. There the autonomous government still has not been able to convince them, has not found the way to support those compañeros for them to be kept strong in the resistance, in our idea and in our thought.

# The Evil Government's Social Politics

## Rosalía (MAREZ Rubén Jaramillo)

In the communities there are political parties, this makes us be divided, fighting among ourselves, between one group and another. The same also happens with religions because now in the communities many religions are entering which some criticize the others, which also carries division.

The government has created the Procede program which cheats the peasants telling them that they are going to have ease obtaining support, but their objective is to break the system of organization of the communities, which are the ejidos and that like so the people can sell their parcel without the assembly opposing because each one is a small land-owner. The official ejidal authorities pressure the support base compañeros to abandon the struggle, they demand that they abandon the resistance, they want to force them to pay property tax and electricity.

The government asks them to accept Procede so that they continue receiving the Procampo resource, that is how the government does so that they continue giving support to the Priista communities. When the Procede program enters the communities it is for the peasants to be able to sell their lands to the rich. Many people in the nearby communities sell their parcels, when they no longer have their land, when they already sold to the rich, they emigrate to the city, they go off to be workers.

The youth are those who most have had to migrate to the cities because in the schools they do not teach them to work the land. In the official schools they do not teach them to work, to produce on the land, what is harvested there, that is to say, the knowledge that they obtain does not serve the people, in addition to the young men and young women who go to the city their studies in the official schools are of no use to find good work.

Another problem is the discrimination of the indigenous due to our way of being, that is why many no longer want to continue being indigenous. Some of the indigenous no longer want to be indigenous because the discrimination due to their way of dressing or due to their way of speaking, due to the way in which we talk as peasants, because we have different languages.

## Germán (Member of the Vigilance Commission. MAREZ Benito Juárez)

To resist those problems we have the projects, autonomous education, autonomous health, but there are weak points where the government attacks us, because the government has tricks wherever it may be. For example, in the case of religions, many of us are Catholics and we still go to church, but if we want to do a baptism in the church they ask us for a birth certificate, if the compañeros do not have an official birth certificate because we are in resistance, they have to get it so that the baptism can be done, the first communion, or the need that each one has. The

minister, the president in the church, demands that the compas get their birth certificate so that he can baptize their children. I see in my municipality Benito Juárez, and have seen that there are compañeros who still have a position as a catechist or president, that is why the government knows that we are still needing to understand that part, we still believe what they tell us that if we do not come to church we are against God, but it is not like that, we still need to understand that.



# Resistance to the Evil Government's Attacks and Provocations

## Salomón (Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ Benito Juárez)

The evil government attacks us in various ways, in some towns in our zone there are military and police patrols, sometimes there are military helicopter flyovers where the villages are, in various parts of the highways the federal police make checkpoints, there are military bases installed at strategic points, there also is formation of paramilitary groups which attack the compañeros on recovered lands.

The government puts impediments so that in the Zapatista struggle no more economic aid from civil society enters, which has served for education, health, etcetera. They modify the laws, for example, now carrying money in cash in quantities greater than 100 thousand pesos, if you do it they fault you saying that the money comes from drug trafficking and money laundering.

The government has laws so that any organization which supports the communities with projects has to pay a tax and do their purchases by means of invoices. The impediment that it is putting on the municipal stores that we have is that they prevent us from buying merchandise from the factory because we do not have permissions and registries; in some products that we cannot commercialize in other states because we do not have the SAGARPA registry.

When the Zapatista struggle initiated we began to create the collective work that we already mentioned previously, but later the government began to attack us copying what is being fostered in the Zapatista struggle, it does that so that people no longer struggle and to try to convince the Zapatistas to leave the organization. The government has organized the Priista women in the raising of egg-laying hens, raising of pigs, bread-making, it has supported them with mills and other things. But in reality have these communities benefited from this aid? It did not do anything for them because it went to failure.

How are we resting in the face of these attacks? In some towns we continue pushing the collective work although there is competition in the work that we realize as cooperatives, bread-making collectives, crafts, raising of chickens, pigs, goats, and cattle. Our towns and authorities have not responded to the aggressions that the evil government has done. Dialogue has been done with the official authorities of the communities where there are problems, to find an alternative in a peaceful manner, to not fall into the provocations. The Junta de Buen Gobierno has done denunciations of the paramilitaries' aggressions which occur in our zone.

The paramilitaries have had a great deal of action in the lower zone of the North Zone. There were many problems, there were murdered compañeros, on some occasions they dug up torn-apart bodies; in my town they did a legally-obliged autopsy because that is what it came to. But how did those bodies arrive? They did not arrive whole, they arrived in sacks, as if they were not humans. What happened on that side is lamentable. There were disappeared compañeros.

The maximum leaders of the paramilitaries are in that town where I am from, some still are in prison. The maximum leaders are Samuel Sánchez, former congressman; Raymundo Hernández Trujillo; the other is Miguel Moreno Arcos, he is from Tumbalá; those are the maximum leaders of the paramilitaries in that place. Who supports the paramilitaries with weapons and uniforms? The municipal government, the municipal president himself together with the municipal DIF. In the high hours of the night the sectorial police themselves come delivering arms. The work of the paramilitaries from Paz y Justicia was in that way.

### **Juventino (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. MAREZ El Campesino)**

On June 18th, 1996 the paramilitaries from Paz y Justicia began to steal our belongings, among others the cattle, poultry, and they completely burned the compañeros' houses. The communities which suffered that aggression are Huanal, Jolnixtie, Patastal, and Corozil. Those paramilitary groups were from the same community Huanal, that is why the compañeros left from that town displaced and went to other communities to live. Those from Paz y Justicia are from Panchuc, Miguel Alemán, Agua Fría, and all the lower zone of Tila, they began to organize in that zone to attack us and our struggle.

In that time the compañeros also suffered the presence of the military, police, and the white guards; they took about 6 months to be able to return to their houses. What was happening in those towns was denounced and so civil society from human rights and others began to arrive, to investigate how the acts were happening.

### **Ana (Education Trainer. MAREZ El Trabajo)**

There were also attacks in La Dignidad municipality, I am from there, when we left displaced I was 9 years old. The paramilitaries burnt all the houses, they did away with all the compañeros' belongings, they killed the compañero in-charge, they dragged him through the community, they were pulling him with a rope, like a dead animal, they treated him like a dead dog. When we left displaced we were 600 in-total, children, elderly, young people. In '96 the attacks were very strong, they arrived to the house, they shot at-random, and the children ducked. I remember that we were very hidden, we got under the bed because how the threat was in that community gave fear.

The ejido where we lived before is Jesús Carranza, we left there, we went to a small community, five or six of us families got together in a house, those of us who left there were so many. We left there, we did not delay, we were only in that community for two weeks and we had to move to another place. We were in another community for eight months and we left there. Since there is a recovered land there close, now which is called San Marcos, they sent us there then and right now the compañeros live there, but no longer all those who left displaced because there were many who did not endure the shit, they returned, they now are Perredistas or Priistas.

Right now those who live in the community of San Marcos are all compas and are those who continue there now. But being in San Marcos we are living very difficult because not only the compañeros from San Marcos are working the recovered land that is there, there are three communities which are there, the place is divided. The compas where they cultivate their milpa,

where they make the bean field, many times rent it from other compañeros from Moyos who are Tzotziles, they are not compañeros, they are Priistas but they rent their land, the compañeros are eating like that.

Few compañeros go to the Jesús Carranza ejido to work their land, but it is with fear, as they say, they are not safe because they continue hating us. When the compas arrive, I have never returned to where my community was before, but the compañeros say that when they arrive they are not treated well but they are made fun of when they are there. In that community is the compañeros' plot, those who have their material house there know that right now the house has brush, but there it is, the children of the Priistas have not permitted, they make themselves owners of their plots, that has not been allowed because the authorities always intervene to see that problem when they try to take the plots.

With the evil government's attacks there have been various affected communities, it was not only Jesús Carranza, the compañeros from Bebedero, the compañeros from Moyos also suffered. There were various communities where there were many problems and murders. When they displaced us we had to go out without clothes, without anything. There was a great deal of sickness and many things happened. Maybe that is why the compañeros say that they are there because that happened to them and they continue having that anger of the history that they lived.

# The Evil Government's Economic Politics

## Ana (Education Trainer. MAREZ El Trabajo)

How does the evil government strike us in the economy? Each day the price of basic products is increasing, like soap, sugar, salt, rice, work tools for the countryside, materials for the construction of houses, gasoline, medicine, etcetera. The price of basic products is ever higher, but the salary of the workers continues dropping.

The products that we sell, like coffee, corn, chili, beans, and cattle, they pay us a very low price for because the coyotes who buy the products hoard them and place them on the international market. The towns that work the countryside are not those which determine the price of their products, those who determine it are the coyotes who have all the markets hoarded, the global financial system is the one that puts the product's price.

Since the evil government knows that poor people have many needs, it begins to buy their conscience, it gives them handouts like the Oportunidades program, aid for the elderly, scholarships for the children and youth who study, housing aid, hard floors, the construction of bathrooms, delivery of aid for the countryside, Procampo, agrochemicals, palm plants, rubber, and citrus, improved seeds; the improved seeds that they distributed are corn seeds, however they are in no way improved but genetically modified.

The gifts that the government sends are crumbs, they are left-overs that it sends because it knows that there is hunger in the people and it knows that with that it does not help them, on the contrary, it is making them ever more dependent. We are seeing clearly that although people are receiving all the resource that the government sends, it is not helping them to go forward but it is impoverishing them more.

It is like a child who we accustom from a young age to being given everything, when they grow they are going to want us to continue to give them. Right now the people are the same. If there are not those handouts then the whole world cries, there is a little revolt in the communities when their money has not arrived because they know that they now are indebted thinking that they are going to receive that money. People indebt themselves because they are confident that the government is going to give them things, for example, in the Las Gardenias community we have our general store, it belongs to us Zapatistas, and the Priistas come to get merchandise, then when they pay their Oportunidades are going to pay.

# Economic Politics in Autonomy

## Alondra (Member of the Women's Commission. Jacinto Canek Region)

We compañeros who are in the organization are already resolving some needs because there are compañeros who have learned to cultivate their parcels, like the planting of gardens and other crops which serve for our sustenance. This has helped to resolve the needs in our family, but many families are lacking to achieve this.

Our authority compañeros have the commitment to promote that each Zapatista family cultivate their parcels, planting the crops that grow in our region. It is necessary to learn what crops grow on our plot and rescue everything that our grandparents did, like preparing clay pots and griddles, planting the tree which is used as a gourd, because it is a way of not being very dependent on the capitalists' products.

What little we make from the sale of our products we have to learn to administer, it is necessary to not misspend it, it is necessary to know how to make it grow. In my community we still have clay pots, cups, griddles, there are us compañeras who know how to make clay crafts, we also use gourds to drink coffee, to drink pozol. There we are able to save what little we make, we have to learn to administer what we have to not misspend it.

Community economy: The communities have reinforced their economy creating the collective work, above all in the work in the country. This has helped a great deal in the struggle, it serves us for the compañero's fares who go to realize their work. The communities that do not have collective work have committed to creating their collective work.

There also are communities that have their cooperative stores and other communities that do not have it. It has gone well for the compañeros who work in the collective store, but there also are communities which have had problems due to competition. But the agreement of the compañeros is that it is necessary to not lose spirit, that is why they continue selling products that they do not have in other stores, like products from the region, like corn, beans, etcetera.

We need to care for our native seeds because it is the best and it is something that makes us be strong in the resistance. Some communities in our municipalities practice agroecology, the compañeros who do this work explain that it has helped to improve production and nutrition, that is why it is one of the tasks that is practiced in all the communities. The coffee producer compañeros from the five municipalities have achieved organizing themselves and forming a cooperative in which they on their own go to export their coffee to other countries and with a good price.

Municipal economy: In some municipalities they are doing their collective work like milpas, bean fields, cattle raising, and regional stores where basics are sold. This work has helped a great deal in the struggle, that is why the agreement is that it is very important for all the municipali-

ties to have their collective work. The municipal authorities have to be very clear in organizing, administering, looking-after, and taking care that the work grows.

Economy at the zone level: We are doing work at the zone level like the productive projects of cattle raising, which began just one year ago. This work is being done on a recovered land and we have 101 heads of cattle. The type of work which is being done is fattening. The municipalities organize ourselves to cover shifts with 10 *compañeros* per week. For the moment the work is going well and problems have not been presented.

## **Alex (Member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. Jacinto Canek Region)**

The *compañeras* and *compañeros* are doing their collectives, equally at the local, family, municipal, and zone levels. The work that is being done at the family level is that the *compañeras* or the *compañero* does their milpa, they plant their gardens, if the *compañera* cannot go out she also is working in the patio of her house doing garden planting. The man when he can helps the woman, because also in some communities pork-raising is done, this work is not being done in all the communities, the *compañeros* who are beginning to do that work are a certain few.

As in a general assembly of authorities that is always discussed, so the task that the authorities have right now is to promote the *compañeros* learning to do the work, beginning to grow the economy among ourselves, not awaiting the evil government's programs, we know that we do not depend on them, we know that we are in resistance.

Just the same it is done in the communities. There are *compañeros* in the towns where they have corn and bean collectives. This is how it is working in the towns. They name their directive group which coordinates all the work and it is coordinated with the town authorities. Also in the municipalities there are *compañeros* who have their collectives, milpa collective, general store collective. This is how it is working at the municipal level. There are municipalities which have a honey collective, they also have a collective where they have bees and they produce honey, later they sell it when they then have the production.

## **Questions**

*Regarding the cattle-herding work you said that you have 101 heads of cattle, how many did you begin with and how many hectares do those heads of fattening cattle have?*

We do not have an engineer who measures what we are occupying, but we have an approximation, we have to cover a plot in the zone which is 110 hectares. The idea is that all that land that we have comes to be cultivated, but there we go along little by little seeing how the work and the advance is going, through the needs that go along presenting themselves also the plot that there is going to be covered.

This work is recent, the zone is practicing it, it had not been worked but as they say, the need forces you to do something. The hectares that are fenced have approximately between 60 to 65 hectares, but that parcel does not have water. When we began with the *compañeros*, at first a watering hole which the rancher had made was used, but it turns out that when the dry-season comes it begins to dry out and a large extension had to be fenced, between 10 and 15 hectares in a way that the animals have somewhere to go to drink water.

The cattle still have not been sold because 20 animals just finished being selected, those which were already between 280 and 300 kilos, to fatten them a little more and then they are given release, but we are taking it by steps. The Junta is concerning itself with getting it, it has to invest another bit more so that the animals leave fat, because if not, we have no customer. We do not have a market still where it is going to be sold, but that work in the zone where we live is easy stuff, they come right where your parcel is.

*How did you obtain the fund to buy those 101 heads of cattle, was it from your own effort or how did you do it?*

That is job of the zone, so the Junta had to go gathering what was remaining from the small donations. Some donations came for the education area but it was studied that it was the best expense for those donations, for them to serve later on for a practical center which is for the youth that we are preparing, we want those donations someday to help generate that work. It is what is dreamed of, what the Junta de Buen Gobierno is dreaming of it, because if not, forget about it, our youth are going to migrate.

*What was the amount that you invested in that work?*

In the purchase of the calves the Junta has invested 500 thousand pesos and change, but then among all the posts, the wire, the cargo, the gasoline which has been spent to carry the posts and all that, transportation of the support base compañeros, close to 700 thousand pesos have been invested. Aside from that they are finishing renovating a weather vane, after that land was recovered they came to fuck it over with saying that the compañeros were not taking advantage of it. The last thing we needed was more vandalism, they destroyed it, they filled the deep pit with sticks, with rocks, so another fund was invested to clean it, a pump had to be put in so that the water could be used again. But now it again remained in-line functioning, it now is going to have its distribution network among various divisions. That is why it is being thought that there should be a permanent zone collective, which always remains there, we are those who are going to go along dying and the generations are going to go along coming to continue working, forwarding the work. That is the objective.

# Cultural Politics

## **Gerardo (Delegate of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. Felipe Ángeles Region)**

How does the capitalist system attack our culture? It does it through the media, like television, radio, internet, sky, magazines, with which it confuses and changes the youth's ideas and knowledge. The style of modern music and its instruments, television programs, the places to enjoy oneself like clubs, movie theaters, bars, also there is drug-addiction, alcoholism, and binge drinking. The ways of talking, of expressing oneself, the changes in how we feed ourselves, in the ways of working, in education, in the way of taking advantage of the environment, in marriage and religion.

How do we resist the attack on our culture? We are constructing our own media, like the radio transmitter and the community video. In education the use, writing, and reading of the mother tongue is being fostered. The knowledge and understanding of our grandparents is being taught to the children in the autonomous schools, through tales, legends, beliefs, and stories. We continue conserving the ways of observing religious and civil celebrations. We continue conserving and fostering the care of our native seeds and our way of feeding ourselves from the products that there are in our communities because they are healthy and organic. We continue conserving and fostering the ways of caring for mother earth, petitions, respect for the earth and everything that there is in our nature.

We are fostering the ways of shared living, *compañerismo*, brother and sisterhood, and services which we must give for the good of our towns. In the North Zone there are things that still are happening with our towns, sometimes among *compañeros*, those of us who are in the organization, sometimes they fight among neighbors, they fight in the family, there are clashes between brothers and sisters in-law, mothers and fathers in-law. That is still happening, that is why we talk there, the committee *compañeros* talked too, that we are still needing to understand better those words brotherhood and sisterhood. We discussed that as we are more divided the system guffaws more, because it likes it when the people is divided because it knows that when a people is divided it is weak, that is why we are trying to change those things.



# Work for the Resistance

## Nazario (Member of the Autonomous Council. MAREZ Rubén Jaramillo)

Some of the communities are creating collectives with their own efforts, without projects from the solidary brothers and sisters. The work that has been done are corn and bean collectives, among others, depending on what crop they are doing in each town, because in our zone there is hot land and temperate land, so we have to see what it is that can be planted in each place.

We have the experience of a collective work of the compañeras from a community which is called Victorio Grajales, in the MAREZ Vicente Guerrero. First the compañeras organized to begin the gardening and bean field work, not only they work, they did it together with the compañeros, because as we have said, that not only they are working but collectively among men and women.

The compañeras organized, they had to contribute to buy seeds to begin the work. As the work was advancing they achieved gathering a fund, so the compañeras organized in groups to make their agreements to begin other work, which is the raising of pigs, a cooperative store, the bakery, and the raising of chicken. The compañeras are in those groups, however each one did not take their path but rather they worked together; they gathered the fund for each work and decided to spend that money in common.

They were using the funds that they had to buy cattle little by little. They bought that cattle, but the compañeros also had to donate two hectares of land each one for the cattle to be maintained there. Since the number of heads a cattle was growing, they analyzed it, they thought about what to do with the fund that they already had and they began to organize again to buy more land, they came to the agreement to buy 20 more hectares to sustain the cattle that they have.

After that divisions arose among them, there are some who did not understand our struggle well and so they left. Those who left began to complain about their work, but the compañeros gave them their part so that there is no problem among them. But the those who still continue have always defended the land that they bought, that was not divided, they were always there with the compañeros, they continue as of now.

Before '94 we began this collective work of the compañeras, the resources were united, they went along gathering it in the work of the compañeras. Now they have a certain profit and they then began to buy cattle, we have the cattle in that community. They did not ask for money for that work, any loan, nothing, it is with the compañeras' own effort, but also the compañeros have helped to clean, do the weeding and the vaccination. That is what the compañeros had to work without projects from the solidary brothers and sisters and those who remained in the organization, doing that work, they are conscious of where what goes out is going to be spent and the work that is being done. We know that the resources are needed for the exit of the authority compañeros, of the various areas, there is where the profit is being used that this work generates.

It is like this, so you may know well how it is that they began with gardens and bean field work. It is the way in which one of the communities is working, although it is not like this in all of them, but they now are doing other work in this way to continue our resistance, so that the authority compañeros can continue in their different points of work.

There also are communities which have productive projects that have been aid from the solidary brothers and sisters. The projects in these communities do benefit the struggle, they have served to support the authority compañeros who go to the meetings with their fares. The productive projects of health, education, and women which the towns have received has benefited them and they have made the effort to make them grow, to ensure that the invested capital is not misspent.

The greater part of the collective work that we have are those which have received some projects from the solidary brothers and sisters; but there are some communities where the compañeros are not many, where there are two or three families, there is where they cannot be done, there also are towns that are doing the collective work because the authorities are sustained like that.

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