

“Appeal from a partisan of individual and collective autonomy” by Raoul Vaneigem¹

Considering that the inhabitants of Oaxaca² have the right to live as they wish in the town and the region that are theirs;

Considering that they have been victims of a brutal aggression by the police, the military and the death squads paid for by a corrupt governor and a government whose authority they no longer recognize;

Considering that the Oaxaca inhabitants’ right to live is a legitimate right and that any illegality is the doing of the forces of occupation and repression;

Considering that the massive and peaceful resistance of the population of Oaxaca attests to both its resolution to not give in to threats, fear or oppression and its will to not respond to the violence of the police and paramilitary killers with a violence that would justify the work of suffering and death accomplished by the paid enemies of life;

Considering that the struggle of the people of Oaxaca is the struggle of millions of people who demand the right to live humanly and not as dogs in a world in which all forms of life are threatened by financial interests, the law of profit, wheeler-dealer mafias, the transformation into commodities of natural resources, water, land, vegetable and animal species, and women, children and men who are enslaved in their bodies and in their minds;

Considering that the global struggle undertaken in the name of life and against the totalitarian grasp of the commodity is what can prevent the people of Oaxaca from giving in to the despair that always loyally serves power because it paralyzes thought, removes self-confidence, and hinders the imagination and the creation of new solutions and new forms of struggle; and

Considering that international solidarity is too often content with emotional repetitions, humanitarian speeches and hollow declarations in which only the fatuousness of the orator is satisfied;

I hope that practical support is given to the popular assemblies of Oaxaca so that what is not yet a Commune can become one. Because what is in the process of beginning there is situated in the

¹ Raoul Vaneigem, “Appel d’un partisan de l’autonomie individuelle et collective,” datelined Mexico, 2 November 2006. Published by La Voie du Jaguar on 15 November 2006: <https://www.lavoiedujaguar.net/Appel-d-un-partisan-de-l-autonomie>. Translated by NOT BORED! 19 May 2021. Footnotes by the translator.

² In May 2006, a nonviolent teachers’ strike was attacked by the police. In response, the residents rebelled and ultimately formed the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca.

line of the Paris Commune and the Andalusian, Catalan and Aragonese collectives of 1936-1938 in which experiments with self-management laid down the bases of a new society.

To this end, I appeal to the creativity of each person to the tackle questions that, without prejudging their pertinence or their interest, are bound to come up, rightly or wrongly, in the constitution of a government of the people by the people, that is to say, a direct democracy in which individual demands are taken into consideration, examined in the light of possible harmonization and given a collective accreditation that allows for their satisfaction.

-- If it is possible and desirable that the parents of the victims of police repression and occupation take legal action against the governor and the authorities responsible for the killings and other instances of violence, how can they be guaranteed international support?

-- How can the imprisonments, the actions of paramilitary groups and the return of the region into the bloody hands of the corrupt be prevented?

-- Beyond the outbursts of indignation provoked by the barbarism of the police and the various mafias, how can the population of Oaxaca be given effective guarantees of the aspiration that it hasn't stopped expressing (namely, "we no longer want to be beset by violence")?

-- How to act so that no oppression is carried out against the individuals and collectives that are involved in the defense of the universal right to live?

-- What support can international solidarity give to the civil resistance in Oaxaca so that this civil resistance simply becomes the legitimacy of the people to govern themselves directly through recourse to direct democracy?

And in the long-term:

-- How can we help the Oaxaca Commune (if it wants help) to work together on the organization of the provision of food and goods that are useful to individuals and collectives?

-- How can we help popular associations ensure themselves of the management of transportation, healthcare services, water supplies and electricity without depending on the powers "on high"?

-- What international support can be furnished to the project of "alternative education" that is being sketched out in Oaxaca after the long teachers' strike?

-- Is there no scientific association that could facilitate the development of natural, non-polluting energy sources in the Oaxaca region? The goal would be two-fold. On the one hand, to avoid those that are established in an authoritarian fashion to the benefit of the State and the multinationals, as has been the case in the past. On

the other hand, to recall that preoccupations with energy sources and the environment only have meaning for us in the context of self-management. Because, placed in the service of self-managing communities, they don't simply allow independence from the petroleum-based and technological mafias; they also gradually inaugurate the cost-free service that is guaranteed by their renewable character and their inexhaustible sources, once the costs of investment have been covered. And this idea of cost-free energy, which also implies cost-free transportation, healthcare and education, is – in addition to being an absolute weapon against market tyranny – the surest guarantee of our human wealth.

Each time a revolution has refused to consider its highest priority to be the improvement of everyone's everyday life, it has provided weapons for its own repression.