

# 'Shining Path North' begins separatist rampage in Mexico

by Valerie Rush

As the narco-terrorist "Zapatistas" prepare to return to the warpath on the eve of Mexico's presidential change, more than a dozen allied "indigenous and peasant" organizations in the north of the state have declared a large chunk of territory a "liberated and autonomous region." Thousands of impoverished and desperate Indians have been manipulated into seizing local, state, and federal offices in the occupied townships, invading farms and ranches, slaughtering livestock and leveling farmhouses, tearing down the Mexican flag, and warning that government officials trying to enter these areas will be arrested on sight.

At an Oct. 27 press conference announcing their "civil insurgency," 16 alphabet-soup organizations—some of them linked to the narco-terrorist URNG in neighboring Guatemala—confirmed their separatist aims, demanded a withdrawal of federal troops from the area, and defended the Zapatistas and their commander, Chiapas "theology of liberation" Bishop Samuel Ruiz. They also convoked a National Convention of Indians and Peasants for Oct. 29 in Mexico City, which will demand a rewriting of the national Constitution and the imposition of defeated leftist candidate Amado Avendaño as governor of Chiapas.

One of the organizations, the Regional Organization of Ocosingo Coffee Growers (ORCAO), announced that it had shut down schools and fired over a thousand teachers in four townships under its control, comprising 100 Indian communities. The schools would not be reopened, the ORCAO spokesmen insisted, until the teachers "come up with a new education project in accordance with the needs of the Indians." Health clinics were next in line to be closed down, they announced. Such measures, declared ORCAO, were in accordance with the determinations made at the Zapatistas' "National Democratic Convention" held Oct. 10-12 in Chiapas.

## Are Chiapas 'killing fields' next?

If this targeting of schools, health facilities, and farms sounds terrifyingly familiar, it should. The infamous "killing fields" of the Khmer Rouge began in the villages of Cambodia, where doctors, teachers, and other supposed purveyors of "decadent European culture" were the first to be marked

for elimination. The "indigenist" Shining Path terrorists in Peru modeled themselves explicitly on the Khmer Rouge, and that model has now moved north.

The comparison of the Zapatista insurgents to the fanatic Khmer Rouge and Shining Path goes beyond land seizures and school closures, however. An *EIR* correspondent recently interviewed citizens in Chiapas from a wide social spectrum, including priests, Indians, and farmers, and came away with bloodcurdling stories of torture, mutilation, and murder by the Zapatista fundamentalists that strikingly parallel the reports of Shining Path genocide against enslaved Ashaninka Indians now breaking into the Peruvian media.

Exemplary is the case of Mariano Encino Jiménez, a member of Mexico's mass-based ruling party, the PRI. In December 1992, Mariano got into a drunken brawl with a fellow named Francisco from the Anciez (Emiliano Zapata National Peasant Association), the predecessor of today's Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). Mariano killed Francisco during the fight, and the next day handed himself over to the local authorities. Anciez organized a mob to demand that Mariano be turned over to them, which the Zapatista mayor did. Anciez then forced a group of Indians from the PRI party to torture Mariano with a hammer and chisel—they pulled out his teeth one by one, gouged out his eyes, cut off his ears, tongue, and testicles—and he died from loss of blood after three days. The story was told to *EIR* by one of the agonized participants.

The same "treatment" was given to an Anciez dissident some months later, who was burned alive before he could die from his torture. Also last year, two soldiers were killed by Anciez—their corpses showed they had been tortured to death with a chainsaw. And in mid-October, an old man was mutilated and murdered; his ten-year-old grandson, witness to the deed, barely escaped amid a hail of machine-gun fire. Farmers—many of them with less than five acres of land—are being kidnapped by the Zapatistas, their livestock slaughtered or sold off, and their homes burned to the ground.

The numbers of refugees fleeing into Chiapas's main cities, where Army troops are stationed, has swollen to over 14,000, causing a crisis for lack of food, clothing, medicine, and shelter. The Mexican Red Cross, unable to travel through

the crisis zones because of Zapatista roadblocks, has announced that it will no longer be providing aid.

### **'Project Democracy' blackmail**

Under blackmail by the international human rights lobbies and by the "Project Democracy" crowd in and around Washington, the outgoing Mexican government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari has refused to expose the Zapatistas as a terrorist creation of foreign anthropologists and Marxist "theology of liberation" fanatics, being used as a battering-ram against the Mexican nation-state. Instead, it has allowed them to be portrayed as simple Indians rebelling against "exploitation" by Mexico's institutions—the government, the military, the church.

Not only has the Salinas government granted repeated concessions to the Zapatistas, including reining in Army troops in Chiapas and even assigning human rights overseers to monitor military "behavior," but it has turned its back on the vast majority of Chiapas citizens who are begging the government to restore the rule of law to the ravaged state.

It is because most of Mexico—along with the rest of the world—has been kept in the dark about what is really going on in Chiapas, that an ongoing deployment of some 400 Chiapas farmers determined to bring the truth to the rest of the country is having a dramatic effect. Several hundred of these farmers have begun holding demonstrations at the statue of Independence in downtown Mexico City to demand that the government use its troops to restore order to Chiapas, to ask restitution for the land, crops, and livestock stolen from them by the terrorists, and to demand that schismatic Bishop Samuel Ruiz—a self-appointed "mediator" between the Zapatistas and the government—be investigated for his treasonous role as a Zapatista commander. More than 100 of these farmers have been on a hunger strike to dramatize their plight.

One of their leaders, farmer Adolfo Najera Domínguez of the Coalition of Citizen Organizations of Chiapas, has begun a tour with representatives of the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA), under the sponsorship of the Forum of Rural Producers based in northwest Mexico. The Forum, which had earlier led mass demonstrations and marches against the usury which is destroying Mexico's agriculture sector and which has repeatedly urged a revamping of Mexican banking along "American System" lines, was one of the first to sound the alarm about the "Shining Path North" in Chiapas.

Najera, who received many death threats warning him against the tour, has already spoken in the states of Sonora, Guanajuato, and Baja California, and will be going to Jalisco, Nuevo León, and Chihuahua next. Najera emphasized that those who are being stripped of their homes and land are not the "rich and exploitative latifundists" so malevolently portrayed in Zapatista propaganda, but hundreds of small and medium-sized farmers—Indian and mestizo alike.

Instead of answering this terrorism with a "definitive so-

lution," said Najera, "the truce [President] Salinas gave the insurgents allowed them to acquire more sophisticated weaponry. . . . They were the ones who broke the dialogue and this shouldn't be allowed; it is time for the Army to intervene, to establish peace and extirpate this evil. The people voted for peace, not war: 80% of the voters rejected the presidential candidate allied to the Zapatistas." Najera added that the objective of this group was to achieve the separation of the Mexican southeast, giving the pretext to certain foreign economic interests to intervene in the region and seize its oil.

Najera's report has had a shockwave effect, receiving extensive coverage in virtually every local and regional newspaper in the areas where he has traveled. His forums have been attended by a broad cross-section of the population—from farmers like himself, to businessmen, priests, students, housewives—who are universally stunned by his descriptions, and by the implications for the rest of the country.

### **Operation Spearhead**

The inauguration of President-elect Ernesto Zedillo is scheduled for Dec. 1, and shortly thereafter the seating of governors-elect around the country. In Chiapas, the Zapatistas and their allies have already made it clear that they will not permit the inauguration of Governor-elect Enrique Robledo. Declared Zapatista chieftain "Subcommander Marcos": "If Robledo is imposed as governor, there is going to be a war here. And 'here' means Mexico, not just Chiapas. If they want bullets, we will give them bullets. We will not answer with another white flag," referring to last January's ceasefire.

That the Zapatistas are but the spearhead of a destabilization plan which has included the assassinations of some of Mexico's leading figures, and which is designed to eventually unseat Zedillo himself, is suggested by the deployments of leaders of the leftist PRD party Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Amado Avendaño to Europe, where they seek political and financial backing for the next destabilization phase. The PRD, a prominent member of the Castro-spawned São Paulo Forum along with its armed Zapatista brethren, was badly defeated in the October national elections, but has no intention of letting that reality get in its way. As MSIA spokesman Hugo López Ochoa told a forum in Chiapas recently, the PRD/Zapatista demand to seat Avendaño is intended "as a spearhead to question the entire presidential election, prevent Zedillo's inauguration, and provoke a national crisis which would facilitate their separatist plans."

Also "coincidentally" traveling through Europe is Manuel Camacho Solís, the frustrated PRI presidential contender and former Chiapas peace commissioner. Camacho, a key insider in the undermining of Mexico's institutions, is planning to release his memoirs on inauguration day, which call for a "liberal revolution against a united government and church" in Mexico.