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Wading in the blood of Armageddon

# Lying for a living, corporate 'news'

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Day in and day out, it seems that each issue of the daily newspaper NOTICIAS: VOZ E IMAGEN DE OAXACA documents its quota of grisly murders, robberies, executions, and kidnappings, usually made more dramatic by accompanying color photographs. A week ago (Sat, 5 April) I got a letter from a friend in the U.S. inquiring what I thought, "as someone who lived through the height (at least in media attention) of the rebellion, of [the essay]" "Broken Barricades: The Oaxaca Rebellion in Victory, Defeat, and Beyond". [1] My anarchist friend, an unusually well-informed American, continued, "I was also hoping you could give me some insight as to what's going on [in Oaxaca] now, I haven't heard any news from the movement. Are the neighborhood groups still active? It seems from afar that the central APPO has dissolved, which may be good as it also seemed that its bureaucratic structures had been hijacked and further bureaucratized by Stalinists. I was also wondering about your analysis . . . (maybe you or Nancy or some of your friends have written something specifically from hindsight I haven't read?) . . . [I]f you have the time I'd love to hear your thoughts."

I had, in fact, been totally unaware of the website and the article on the Oaxaca struggle that my friend called to my attention. Written from an avowedly revolutionary anarchist perspective, the article sees the rebellion here as having had an initial victory and then suffering defeat. Looking towards a future 'successful' anarchist revolution, the goal of the author(s) is to understand what 'went wrong' so that such 'mistakes' may be avoided the next time. Whether or not one is in favor of such an anarchist revolution, and whether it is contemplated as being achieved non-violently or not, the article is in marked contrast to the shallow accounts provided in corporate news reporting. At least here the purpose is to gain some real understanding. I believe the corporate mega-media has precisely the opposite objective – to keep us profoundly ignorant, which is why we must rely on building a truly grassroots global news and information infrastructure.

Several recent postings on the listserv of the Oaxaca Study-Action Group (OSAG) highlight the conflict between our legitimate need to understand the events that are shaping our lives and the manipulative (and largely effective) efforts of giant capitalist interests to keep us ignorant. [2]

A short item, titled The big media, keeping the general population ignorant reports an impromptu 'poll' of five Oaxacans soon after two Triqui women community radio news announcers were murdered Monday (7 April) afternoon. Although the news was reported in the Tuesday issue of NOTICIAS: VOZ E IMAGEN DE OAXACA, and was spreading like wildfire on the internet, not one of those five had heard of the killings when queried Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning. [3]

A second note titled On the murder of the two indigenous Triqui women community radio announcers gives a fuller account showing how the internet "truly runs circles around practically all the corporate media, not just in the rapidity with which it brings light to bear on the latest depredations against nature and humanity, but in the equally essential aspect of trying to understand and reveal WHY all these terrible things are happening. In a word, the internet provides context – the historical, geographical, ecological, cultural context that allows us to understand in a deep way the events through which we are forced to live." [4]

A third item, of far broader scope, focuses on the systematics of contemporary high-speed commercial journalism by a well-informed freelance journalist who examines the falsification of reality during the height of the military crackdown in Oaxaca in 2006. [5] To those of us who are deeply committed to the struggles of poor peoples everywhere to better their lives, i.e. we who want to do more than simply preach to the choir, it may be instructive to juxtapose this article, written for a respectable academic-based publication, with another article by the same author at about the same time on the same subject, but for publication in an avowedly left radical periodical.[6] [6]My impression is that each article is an effort to honestly convey to the likely readers of that journal an understanding of the violent events in Oaxaca City in 2006, but framed in somewhat different overriding assumptions, which makes the comparison of interest.

– Completed 20 April 2008, G.S.

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[1] The essay, "Broken Barricades: The Oaxaca Rebellion in Victory, Defeat, and Beyond" is at [http://www.collectivereinventions.org/Broken\\_Barricades.html](http://www.collectivereinventions.org/Broken_Barricades.html) It is linked to from a web page authored by "Collective Re-inventions" which is at <http://www.collectivereinventions.org/>. There is no information about the 'Collective' on these pages, nor does my friend have identifying information. It's interesting material, obviously written from far away (probably in the U.S., I would guess).

[2] The Oaxaca Study-Action Group (OSAG) is a Yahoo discussion listserv. The posted items are archived and open to all at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/oaxacastudyactiongroup/>.

[3] The big media, keeping the general population ignorant, is at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/oaxacastudyactiongroup/message/4145>

[4] On the murder of the two indigenous Triqui women community radio announcers, is at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/oaxacastudyactiongroup/message/4154>.

[5] *Notre Dame Magazine*, April 2008 issue, Robert Joe Stout article on the Oaxaca struggle, at <http://www.nd.edu/ndmag/sp2008/stout.html>.

[6] *New Politics*: a journal of socialist/democratic/egalitarian/radical/feminist/pro-labor thought, Winter 2008 issue, Robert Joe Stout article on the Oaxaca struggle, at <http://www.wpuni.edu/newpol/issue44/Stout44.htm>.