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Against (B)oligarchy, demagogy and corruption.

Autonomous struggle from the ground up!

El Libertario editorial collective

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(B)oligarchy is a play with words meaning Bolivarian oligarchy

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The year begins and it's already clear that the electoral circus will be used once again to tame the social struggle in Venezuela, a script routinely applied with success for the last 10 years. Elections for governors, state representatives and mayors are set for November 16, so the official politicians and the opposition started campaigning right after the Constitutional Referendum of December 2nd, again with the sneaky proposal to postpone collective demands in order to be elected to the contested positions. Both sides continue to sell the canard that given the importance of these elections to regain freedom or to advance the revolution nothing matters more in 2008 than to clear the road to victory at the ballot, after which these enlightened representatives of the people will work tirelessly and expertly to satisfy the electors' demands.

Let's not waste words explaining the lies behind such an offer, as anybody who has lived in this country and has heard or experienced what happens with those favored by the vote can attest to. In this bunch one can distinguish – among the thoroughly inept

and the mildly useless – the shamelessly corrupt from the influence peddlers, or the technocrats pretending to be efficient from the vociferous demagogues. Nevertheless, they all match each other in their quest to pacify (willingly or by force) anything that barely resembles autonomous struggle from below. Neither can we forget two things that were clear on December 2nd and about which they all remain quiet: on the one hand the military has the last word on the desired results, running roughshod over the idea that the popular will is what decides the elections; and on the other the dubious cleanliness of these ballots with the 15% of the affidavits and the 1,800,000 votes still uncounted by the CNE (the electoral court) in this referendum officially declared by a margin of 125,000 votes.

Given that this joke is repeated once again and we the people could very well stop paying attention, the comedians du jour swear up and down that now, yes, this time there will be excellent candidates committed unto death to the revolution or to democracy according to the verbose discourse from each side, and they will also mix heroic honesty (according to ideological preference, Che Guevara vs. Mother Teresa) with flawless managerial efficiency (ditto, transnational senior executive vs. finance commissar of the FARC). These hoarse siren songs have already started and you can be quite sure they will grow in the coming months, but the lie is obvious to anyone who wants to see once the final slate of candidates is imposed from above by the normal process of dirty tricks and partisan low blows, favoring the same old actors that have long been tricking us with their game of three card Monte together with some new faces ready to repeat the old swindle.

Given this panorama, we have no doubts about the road we will propose and support, the same road we have insisted upon for years. Compiled in this issue are some of its concrete expressions and proposals for action:

rebuilding the autonomy of the social struggles, the only route for those exploited and oppressed to advance a solution to their current problems. Nine years is more than enough to know that there's

nothing to be hoped for from the messianic leadership incarnated in Hugo Chávez and the previous four decades tell us something similar about the partisan bureaucracies that today form the opposition, so the real dilemma is whether we'll keep on riding the deadly electoral wagon that only brings us to these failed destinations or whether we'll all together build another alternative, harmonizing the individual with the collective, with conscious participation that does not delegate but trusts in our abilities, with horizontal organization, without authoritarian impositions of any kind, joining our demands with the capacity to solve them that exists in our collectives. This road will bring us the possibility of a positive and profound transformation in Venezuela.