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ABC-SA protests the murder of CIPO-RFM activists

Michael Schmidt

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The ABC (SA)'s Anti-Repression Network, the Anti-War Coalition and the Freedom of Expression Institute were among more than 100 signatories of a protest petition that was sent to Mexico's ambassador to South Africa, M de Maria y Campos, protesting the murders by death-squads of 27 members of the Indigenous Popular Council of Oaxaca — Ricardo Flores Magon (CIPO-RFM), numerous attacks on CIPO-RFM autonomous municipalities and the shutting down of their community radio station.

The CIPO-RF embraces well over 1,000 members in 24 autonomous villages in Oaxaca state, southern Mexico. It is named after Oaxacan anarchist revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magon who was murdered in the American prison of Fort Leavenworth in 1922, a martyr to anti-imperialism if ever there was one. CIPO-RFM has close fraternal ties with the Zapatistas' indigenous councils and autonomous municipalities in neighbouring Chiapas state.

Although it is an unarmed formation that uses passive resistance tactics, CIPO-RFM has come under severe repression

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from death-squads, apparently backed by the neo-liberal Mexican state under President Vicente Fox. This state is acting as the instrument of destructive US imperialist policy in Central America and has filled its jails with almost 400 political prisoners, many jailed for life for “crimes” of resistance to Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA-ALCA).

March 21 was called by the CIPO-RFM as an international day of protest against the killings by the death-squads that serve US-Mexican elite interests against the peasantry, working class and the poor. Given the prior plans for the anti-war march on March 19 and given the common American imperialist source of both the Mexican and Iraqi people’s pain, we combined our protest with those of our comrades in the social movements.

The ABC (SA)’s action also recalled the centenary of the ABC, founded in Tsarist-occupied Poland in 1905 during the uprising of that year, and now with an operational presence in some 64 countries across the globe. The ABC and its fellow centenarian organisation, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), have demonstrated a militant libertarian longevity that has far outlasted any of the facile “communist” internationals that were mere fronts for nationalist foreign policies.

As an African anarchist delegate to Zapatista-held Chiapas in 1996 and a personal acquaintance of CIPO-RFM delegate Raul Gatica, who is in hiding in fear of his life, I appeal to the international anarchist community to shame the Mexican government into calling the dogs off our vulnerable comrades in Oaxaca.