

# Indigenous Organizations and the EZLN create the Traveling Seminar: “Tata Juan Chávez Alonso”

## TRAVELING SEMINAR “TATA JUAN CHÁVEZ ALONSO”

June 2013.

*We are the Indians that we are, we are peoples, we are Indians.  
We want to continue to be the Indians that we are; we want to continue to be  
the peoples that we are; we want to continue speaking the language we speak;  
We want to continue thinking the words that we think;  
we want to continue dreaming the dreams that we dream;  
we want to continue loving those we love;  
we want to be now what we already are;  
we want our place now; we want our history now, we want the truth now.*  
Juan Chávez Alonso. Words presented at the National Congress,  
March, 2001. Mexico.

Brothers and Sisters:

Compañeras and compañeros:

This is the word of a group of indigenous organizations, native peoples, and the EZLN. With this word we want to bring among us the memory of a *compañero*.

After one year without him, with his memory as company, we want to take another step in this long struggle for our place in the world.

His name is Juan Chávez Alonso.

We were and are the path for his step.

With him, the *purépecha* people became travelers amongst the people who gave birth to and who sustain these lands.

*Tata* was, and is, one of the bridges that we built with others in order to see ourselves and recognize ourselves as what we are and where we are.

His heart was and is the perch from which the indigenous peoples of Mexico look, even though we are not seen, from which we speak but are not heard, and from where we resist, which is how we walk through life.

His path and his word always sought to give voice and echo to the pains and grievances of that Mexico below (the “basement” of Mexico).

The National Indigenous Congress is one of the great houses that his hands helped to build.

The struggle for the recognition of indigenous rights and culture has, in him, in his memory, a reason and an engine to persevere.

Rather than fleeting condolences and a quick forgetting of his absence, we, a group of indigenous organizations and peoples, have looked for the way to extend his walk with us, to raise his voice with ours, to expand the heart that, with him, we are.

We, as the collective color of the earth, have agreed in our hearts and minds to build a space in which the word of the indigenous peoples of Mexico and this continent that we call “America” can be heard without intermediaries. This space will carry the name and history of this brother and *compañero*.

We have decided to name this space the “**Seminario Tata Juan Chávez Alonso**,” in order to emphasize how much our native peoples have to teach others during these calendars of pain that now shake all the geographies of the world. In this space we will be able to listen to the lessons of dignity and resistance of the native peoples of America.

As a continuation of the efforts that took shape during the “First Encounter of Indigenous Peoples of America” celebrated in October of 2007 in Vicam, Sonora, on the territory of the Yaqui tribe, the seminar “Tata Juan Chávez Alonso” will hold its sessions at different locations of indigenous America throughout the continent, in accordance with the geographies and calendars agreed upon by those who convoke this seminar and those who join along the way.

This seminar is meant to build a forum in which the indigenous peoples of the continent can be heard by those who have an attentive and respectful ear for their word, their history, and their resistance.

Indigenous organizations and representatives and delegates of native peoples, communities, and neighborhoods will have the floor.

In order to inaugurate this forum, we will hold the:

FIRST SESSION OF THE  
**TRAVELING SEMINAR “TATA JUAN CHÁVEZ ALONSO”**

Here different native peoples, organizations, and communities will speak in their own voice about their histories, pains, hopes, and above all, their resistance.

This first session will have the following characteristics:

1. The first session of the Seminar “Tata Juan Chávez Alonso” will be held Saturday and Sunday August 17-18, 2013, at CIDECI in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México.
2. The organizations that have convoked this seminar now constitute the “Organizing Commission,” which will invite the participation of other indigenous peoples and agree upon all things related to the method of this first session.
3. The “Organizing Commission” will extend a special invitation to organizations, groups, and individuals who have consistently accompanied the struggle of the indigenous peoples.
4. Those who have convoked the forum and those indigenous peoples and organizations of Mexico and the American continent invited by the “Organizing Commission” will participate in this first session with their word.
5. The various sessions of this seminar will be open to the general public.
6. More information regarding the calendar and schedule of participation will be made public by the Organizing Commission at the appropriate time.

Within the framework of the Seminar “Tata Juan Chávez Alonso,” and with Don Juan’s gaze as our horizon, the participating indigenous organization and peoples will also meet on their own to propose (extending an even wider invitation) the relaunching of the National Indigenous Congress of Mexico,

and simultaneously make a call to the indigenous peoples of the continent to resume our encounters.  
For recognition and respect for indigenous rights and culture.

CONVOKED BY:

Nación Kumiai.

Autoridades Tradicionales de la Tribu Yaqui.

Tribu Mayo de Huirachaca, Sonora.

Consejo Regional Wixárika en Defensa de Wirikuta.

Comunidad Coca de Mezcala.

Radio Ñomndaa de Xochistlahuaca, (Pueblo Amuzgo), Guerrero.

Comunidad Zoque en Jalisco.

Organización de Comunidades Indígenas y Campesinas de Tuxpan (Pueblo Nahuá), Jalisco.

Comunidad Nahuá en Resistencia de La Yerbabuena, en Colima.

Colectivo Jornalero de Tikul (Pueblo Maya Peninsular), Yucatán

Comunidades Purépechas de Nurío, Arantepacua, Comachuén, Urapicho, Paracho, Uruapan,

Caltzontzin, Ocumicho.

Comuneros Nahuas de Ostula.

Comunidad Nahuá Indígena de Chimalaco, en San Luis Potosí.

La Otra indígena Xilitla (pueblo Nahuá).

Comunidad Mazahua de San Antonio Pueblo Nuevo, Edomex.

Comunidad Ñahñu de San Pedro Atlapulco, Edomex.

Centro de Producción Radiofónica y Documentación Comunal de San Pedro Atlapulco (Pueblo Ñahñu), Edomex.

Comunidad Nahuá de San Nicolás Coatepec, Edomex.

Ejido Nahuá de San Nicolás Totolapan, DF.

Comuneros Nahuas de San Pedro Atocpan, DF.

Mujeres y Niños Nahuas de Santa Cruz Acapulco, DF.

Mazahuas en el DF.

Centro de Derechos Humanos Rafael Ayala y Ayala (Pueblos Nahuá y Popoluca), de Tehuacán, Puebla.

Asamblea Popular Juchiteca (Pueblo Zapoteco), Oaxaca.

Fuerza Indígena Chinanteca “KiaNan”.

Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca-Ricardo Flores Magón, (Pueblos Zapoteco, Nahuá, Mixteco, Cuicateco), Oaxaca.

Comité de Bienes Comunales de Unión Hidalgo, (Pueblo Zapoteco) Oaxaca.

Unión Campesina Indígena Autónoma de Río Grande (Pueblo Chatino y Afromestizo), Oaxaca.

La Voz de los Zapotecos Xichés en Prisión, Oaxaca.

Temazcal Tlacuache Tortuga de la comunidad de Zaachilá, (Pueblo Zapoteco), Oaxaca.

Colonia Ecológica la Minzita, (Pueblo Purépecha), Morelia, Michoacán.

Colectivo Cortamortaja de Jalapa del Marqués (Pueblo Zapoteco), Oaxaca.

Radio Comunitaria Totopo de Juchitán (Pueblo Zapoteco), Oaxaca

CIDECI-UNITIERRA, Chiapas.

CCRI-CG del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Pueblos Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Chol, Tojolabal, Zoque, Mame y Mestizo), Chiapas.

Mexico, June 2, 2013.

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See and listen to the videos that accompany this text:

In memory of Don Juan Chávez Alonso. Produced by the Cooperativa de Condimentos para la Acción Cinematográfica.

El Comandante Guillermo, introduces Don Juan Chávez Alonso at the Festival of Dignified Rage (Digna Rabia), in CIDECI, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México.

Baile tradicional “Los Viejitos,” performed by students of the Casa del Estudiante Lenin, Michoacán, México.