

Mexico and beyond 28.3.-8.4.2009

Brasil in retrospect is a developed country and in many ways industrialized like Europe or North America. It is not a developing nation anymore. With the advantages this may bring but also with many disadvantages of a raging capitalism, environmental destruction and a big gap between very rich and very poor. We met many fascinating people there and many great projects working for the change we need. Still it did not touch me from the depth of my heart, like Peru could do it for example. There we found such a deep connectedness to the land and old, old culture that was touching. We do not know what it is, but it is strong and reminds me of what we are living for beyond all the things we believe to need on the outside. It is connected with a deep inner peace.

When we flew from Brasil to Mexico we stopped 6 h in Lima before we could fly on. There we were surrounded by Andean music, artesanias and culture once more and felt very touched by it and sensed how much we already had missed it.

For those, who have not become our friends yet and accidentally came to this page, we would like to introduce to you ZEGG. We are proud to live and work there for the paradise the world could be. Its webpage is: www.zegg.de in english, german, spanish, greek.

Cortés first saw Tenochtitlán on 8 November 1519. Upon viewing it for the first time, Cortés and his men were stunned by its beauty and size. Cortés put Moctezuma under house arrest, hoping to rule through him. Tensions increased until, on the night of June 30, 1520 - during a struggle commonly known as "La Noche Triste" - the Aztec revolted against the Spanish intrusion and managed to capture or drive out the Europeans and their allies. They elected a new king, Cuauhtémoc. Cortés decided to lay siege to Tenochtitlán in May of 1521. For three months, the city suffered from the lack of food and water as well as the spread of disease brought by the Europeans. Cortés and his allies landed their forces in the south of the island and fought their way through the city, street by street, and house by house. Finally, Cuauhtémoc had to surrender in August of 1521.

The Spaniards practically razed Tenochtitlán to the ground. Cortés first settled in Coyoacan, but decided to rebuild the Aztec site in order to erase all traces of the old order. Although the Spanish preserved Tenochtitlán's basic layout, they built Catholic churches over the old Aztec temples and claimed the imperial palaces for themselves. Tenochtitlán was renamed "Mexico," its alternative name, as the Spanish found this easier to say. (source: Wikipedia)

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Zocalo (main square), Mexico DF City

It was the center of a rich and proud culture, beautiful to see in it's splendour. It was build on and around a flat lake. The lake was used for Aquaculture and for a kind of raised beds fertilized with bird shit from the mountains. How awesome it must have been for the Spanish conquerers to see. How strange to witness a high culture when they expected wild Indians.



Pre-columbian



1850

1900

2009

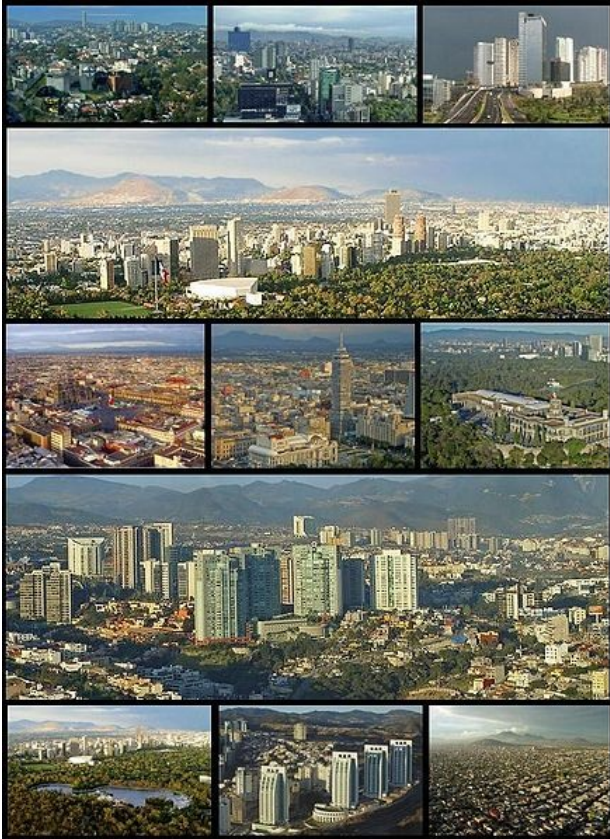
They conquered, enslaved, raped and killed the population and completely destroyed all the beauty that was. Blew up the temples with Dynamite. Melted the maserfull artwork of silver and gold to bring the treasure to Europe. Forced the people to convert to Christianity and be slaves in the silver mines they exploited. The church justified it all and declared it as a good deed.

When will we stop to be proud of this history?

Almost all the gold “we own” in Europe and also in the USA, effectively is stolen. All that sits e.g. in Fort Nox, where most of the German gold reserves are held hostage, should be given back. All of the crown jewels. And still all this could not heal the wounds. It needs us to recognize what happened and witness the pain stored in the collective body of the earth.

The famous Mexican painter Diego Rivera painted this history as it probably was in great big murals in the National Palace next to the Zocalo. He also had a vision of how this nightmare could stop. Maybe now we enter a space and time of deep change of consciousness needed to alter our lifes to live in peace.





Mexico City, (2,240 m/7,349 ft)

Mexico City is huge, dense, highly populated. Greater Mexico City has a population exceeding 22 million people. Probabely you can find anything there. From the creed people follow to lifestyles to goods.

It was originally built as Tenochtitlan by the Aztecs in 1325 on an island of Lake Texcoco. The city was almost completely destroyed in the siege of 1521, and was redesigned and rebuilt in the following years following the Spanish urban standards. In 1524 the municipality of Mexico City was established, known as México Tenustitlán, and as of 1585 it is officially known as ciudad de México.

The city grew as the population did, coming up against the lake's waters. The 15th century saw a proliferation of churches, many of which can still be seen today in the historic center. However, flooding was a constant problem, and in the 17th century projects to drain and fill in parts of the lake were begun in earnest. This process would continue for most of the city's history until the lakes disappeared.

Today Mexico City has a severe water problem and drains water from a great distance around it making agriculture very difficult.



It makes me think.

Think how different it could have been, if the Conquerers had come as messengers. Here in Mexico, in Latin America, in North America, everywhere. How powerful it is to imagine how different the story could have been:

People from Europe on ships, where welcomed and fed upon their arrival (which really happened). What if they had met and joined wisdom and beauty? What if they had not come with closed and religiously indoctrinated minds of superiority, but melted together in peace and mutual recognition? If they had met in understanding? They traveled each others lands, learned and supported. Symbiosis happened and the best of both was taken for the benefit of all, of the two people and of the earth.



How different would the earth look today if the history at this point would have been different? How beautiful would this emerging new culture have been? How much more peaceful and enjoyable life thereafter and what would have become of us today in this vision? In what cities would we live? Would we have destroyed the environment to this amount? Would we still have a world split in poor and rich? Would we adhere to a financial system that is called Capitalism? Questions without answers. Can we imagine? It heals a sore spot in me when I do.

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Figurine from Teotihuacán

Teotihuacán, an ancient Temple City

Teotihuacan is an enormous archaeological site in the Basin of Mexico, containing some of the 3rd largest pyramidal structures in the world. It is also known for its large residential complexes and its colorful well-preserved murals.

Teotihuacan was, at its apogee in the first half of the 1st millennium CE, the largest city in the pre-Columbian Americas. During its zenith it may have had more than 100,000 inhabitants placing it among the largest cities of the world in this period. Although it is a subject of debate whether Teotihuacan was the center of an empire, its influence throughout Mesoamerica is well documented; evidence of Teotihuacano presence, if not outright political and economic control, can be seen at numerous sites in Veracruz and the Maya region. Often it has been suggested that Teotihuacan was in fact a multiethnic state.

The city and the archaeological site was located approximately 40 kilometres (25 mi) northeast of Mexico City. The site covers a total surface area of 83 km² and was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.

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It was impressive to see for us and to imagine the size of the ancient settlement.





The pure amount of labour, of moving mountains of stone, obviously without metal tools or the use of the wheel. How could they plaster it all with plaster that



in places survived until today, 2000 years later? How could they make a plaster as smooth as a polished stone surface – still today?

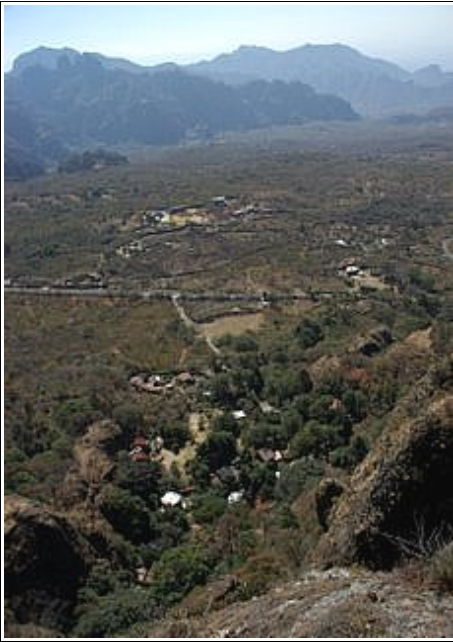
How could they have painted it all with pictures and patterns predominantly in red? How could they produce a paint that stays red until today? How could they produce so much food for 100.000 people without oil and the wheel? Where they forced to do it? Where they convinced of what they did?



Why did they disappear?



Popocatépetl



Huehuecoyotl, in Tepoztlan, Morelos

Huehuecoyotl was started in 1982 after ten years of living as nomads traveling all over the world. Some of them were members of "The Illuminated Elephants Traveling Gypsy Theatre". Today it continues as the "La Caravana Arcoiris" to travel South America. They were using theatre for peace and environmental education. Others came from activists youth groups from various countries. Back then they lived in converted buses and vans which served as homes, offices, kitchen and studio spaces for the 30 members of their smallbut powerful tribe. Others came

together from their residencies in Mexico City and beyond.



Huehuecoyotl is a beautiful place. It is a germ situated between steep rocks. They first built a community center and then their amazing and organically grown houses. From an earlier visit 7 years ago I still remember them mentioning that they also lost a lot of their community feeling in the time when everybody was building. The private ownership of houses has become a big problem now, when people move out and e.g. rent their house to just someone to live there. Or when they are on their way traveling to earn money, what leads most of them away half the year. When we where here it was quite deserted. Houses then are empty or rented out.

New people do have it difficult to find a place to stay sometimes or will have to move constantly. For young people this situation and the high entrance fee is a huge threshold.

Today they still practice a scaled down version of nomadism and at present some of their members are leading a multi-year caravan throughout Latin America.

Other members travel to different parts of the world taking their performances to schools and adult audiences playing original and traditional music from Latin America and the Caribbean.

