

## **Notes from Bioregional Congress, Mexico**

**excerpted from a posted letter by Starhawk**

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In November I spent two weeks in Mexico, first at the Bioregional Congress which was held in Tepoztlan, about an hour away from Mexico City. A year ago, the people of Tepoztlan began protesting the government's support of a plan for a corporation to build a golf course on land that was supposed to be protected. Essentially, they staged an ecological uprising, somehow succeeded in throwing the government out, barricading their streets and declaring themselves a nongovernmental zone. We were privileged to meet some of the local activists as well as many local herbalists and healers. The latter was important for me as I had the Nasty Flu through the whole Congress and had such bad laryngitis that I was forced to learn many annoying spiritual lessons about the virtues of silence.

For me, the highlight of the week was being asked to lead a spiral dance on the last night of the Congress, when I had fortunately recovered some of my voice. The moon was full, and we began with a pipe ceremony led by indigenous people of tribes from Venezuela to northern Canada. Then we spiraled with about four hundred people, chanting, "She changes everything she touches, and everything she touches, changes" -- in Spanish: "Ella cambia todo lo que toca, y todo lo que toca cambia." We also chanted the slogan of the Tepoztlan uprising: "Si, se puede," which means both "yes, we can", and "yes, it's possible." In the spiral, you pass every person in the ritual and can look into each other's eyes. To see such a diversity of faces pass by, of all the shapes and colors and ages that make up this continent, to feel linked in a common purpose and emotion across the vast diversity of our backgrounds and experience, was one of the most profoundly moving moments of my life.

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