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Mexico

Defending Democracy in the Coyoacán Borough of Mexico City

- News from around the world -

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On Wednesday, May 11, the Instituto Cultural y Educativo Coapa (Coapa Cultural and Educational Institute), located in the south of Mexico City, was shut down by the head of the Coyoacán Borough, Valentín Maldonado, using the argument that the institution did not have a Civil Protection Manual.

This requirement has been fulfilled in the appropriate way and in a timely fashion by school authorities, but this has all been in vain, since it is clearly Maldonado's aim to use any means to keep the school closed.

The reason behind this seemingly inexplicable measure is that the head of the school, Marcos Fuentes Franco, is an active leader of community movements in the Pedregales area of the Coyoacán Borough; these movements oppose the privatization of the public space belonging to a former asphalt plant that has been proposed as the site for a huge real estate development called "City of the Future." Fuentes has also been a leader in the defense of local water resources and an Art Center, and has headed up a community movement to prevent indiscriminate charges for property taxes.

The political motivation of this arbitrary move is clear: it is an attempt to intimidate a leader opposed to borough authorities' neoliberal, antidemocratic practices.

A petition has been launched to demand that borough head Valentín Maldonado cease his persecution of Marcos Fuentes and that the Instituto Cultural y Educativo Coapa (Coapa Cultural and Educational Institute) be immediately reopened.