

# Zapatista Coffee in Russia (and post-soviet states)

Fairtrade cooperative of Zapatista coffee distribution

## Background

This cooperative is created by left activists from St. Petersburg, inspired by Zapatista movement and the way they organize coffee distribution around the world.

Before that we have participated in multiple projects such as:

- Experimental educational and theatre project in Rosa's House of Culture: <http://dkrosa.org/en/>, in collaboration with <http://chtodelat.org/>
- Vegan Club: <http://vk.com/veganclub>
- Animal Rights Alliance: <http://animalrights.ru>
- Autonomous action <https://avtonom.org/>
- Anarchist Travelling <https://vk.com/freetravels>

Our cooperative mission is to research, promote and participate in global self-organization practices. It gave birth to a documentary about Zapatista movement ([trailer](#), [website in progress](#)) in Chiapas. Now it focuses on informing Russian-speaking population about the struggle of Mexican indigenous peoples. Lectures, screenings and video production are the main activities of our group since 2014 until today. The project is completely non-commercial, all events are free to enter.

# History of Zapatista coffee distribution in Russia

Zapatista coffee distribution in Russia began just 4 years ago. First coffee was brought by compas from Latvia to special events, activist meetings and festivals. After some time has passed, we asked compas from Latvia to bring more coffee, they helped us and then we could distribute coffee ourselves.

This coffee is brought from Germany and normally we distribute it with no additional charges in Internet, in solidarity cafe, during activist events and vegan festivals. We do this for more than 3 years already, but usually don't bring many packs from Latvia in order not to declare coffee on the border and because we are limited in money. But now activists from different places are asking us, how can they support Zapatistas and want to buy more coffee to start selling it in their places.

More requests started coming from December of 2015, when we started screening of documentary "People without faces" in different cities of Russia ([map](#)), like Nizhniy Novgorod, Perm, Omsk, Kazan, Moscow, St. Petersburg and in also in Minsk, Belorussia, and Riga.



*Screening in Minsk, Belorussia*

In summer of 2016 we decided to attempt to order Zapatista coffee directly from EZLN cooperatives by means of RedProZapa.

# The Cooperative

In attempt to find out how European cooperatives are organized, we have contacted German cooperatives: Cafe Libertad and Aroma Zapatista. They have provided a lot of useful information that helped us to estimate expenses and final coffee price and, finally, to start counting the amount of coffee we can afford to order.

According to fair trade principles, we have informed all participants about what the final price is composed of. We did not include any additional charges in the coffee price, just the cost of green coffee, seafreight, roasting, packing and modest salary of one person. Most of participants are our friends or people we met during documentary screenings. But we decided to distribute coffee also to places that do not position themselves politically. We agree to cooperate with those who are interested in Zapatista autonomy, fair trade and are ready to spread the word, that is it.

We expect green coffee is delivered straight to St. Petersburg port, so we can avoid any extra taxies, then we will roast and pack it here and then we will send it to local social centers and solidary cafes of other cities of Russia and former Soviet republics. We also would like to open cafe/social center/infoshop and broaden the range of products in future. By doing this we want people to get familiar with Zapatistas, their struggle and promote different model of production and distribution.

Now we estimate we can order and distribute around 15 bags.

## Plan of actions

The Cooperative goal now is to gain experience while making the first order. We want to go through each step ourselves and make Zapatista coffee something that is easy to find in Russia and post-soviet states.

The plan is:

- July-October 2016 - Call-out: inform all compas about possibilities of getting Zapatista coffee cheaper and directly from Russia (in progress)
- September-October 2016 - Count the final amount of coffee we can order and distribute (in progress)
- October 2016 - Represent Russia in RedProZapa meeting, participate in shared order from EZLN, collect experience about coffee storage and roasting from European colleagues
- October 2016-April 2017 - Experiment with one bag of green coffee to find a perfect roaster, organize roasting and packing
- April-May 2017 - Meet coffee in St. Petersburg port
- May-June 2017 - roast, pack it and send out to participants

## Contacts

With any questions please email to [zapatista@insiberia.net](mailto:zapatista@insiberia.net).