

Residents Take Water Protest to Valencia -



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAUL WATSON



Residents affected by the lack of drinkable water in San Miguel de Salinas on Thursday took their protest to the doors of the Cortes Valencianas.

Over half of the houses (some 3000) and population (7500) in the municipality, receive water that is salty and contaminated by nitrates. The situation has continued for several years and has no immediate solution. It was the residents themselves that made scientific tests to verify their complaints, which were denied by the town hall until they were forced to make their own analysis and subsequently prohibit the water for consumption.

The 'Leader' met with a group of German, English and Spanish residents as they boarded a coach to Valencia to express their dissatisfaction at being, "victims of wild and uncontrolled urbanisation practices." They believe that the construction of houses should not be allowed without the provision of infrastructure and basic services.

San Miguel town hall announced that this month they will start the complex works to bring water to the Blue Lagoon and Las Filipinas urbanisations. They are supplied with water from wells despite one of the main canals of the Mancomunidad del Taibilla water consortium passing through the municipality which brings water to urbanisations in the

Orihuela area, literally adjacent to the affected area.

Over 50 residents demonstrated outside the parliament, before meeting with representatives of the political parties. They promised to intensify their struggle, demanding information and solutions to the problem from the Valencian Government, and they even generated a debate in the European Parliament on November 20th, which is awaiting further information before proceeding.

President of the Residents Association (AVSM), Manuel Gómez, was not content with the response of the PP representative in the Cortes, Serafín Castellano, who having contacted the mayor of San Miguel, Ángel Sáez, said the Provincial Delegation had guaranteed a subsidy for the 2 million euro budget for the project next year and that it would be resolved.

Despite claims that they had inherited rather than mismanaged the problem, the plans for this project are dated February 2006 and have taken this long already without even getting underway. Furthermore it is now expected to take at least nine months rather than the initially projected six. Sáez has said that he does not want to pass any of the cost on to residents and has an appointment with Conseller José Ramón García Antón to seek extra financing.