

Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona

Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

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This is our simple word which seeks to touch the hearts of humble and simple people like ourselves, but people who are also, like ourselves, dignified and rebel. This is our simple word for recounting what our path has been and where we are now, in order to explain how we see the world and our country, in order to say what we are thinking of doing and how we are thinking of doing it, and in order to invite other persons to walk with us in something very great which is called Mexico and something greater which is called the world. This is our simple word in order to inform all honest and noble hearts what it is we want in Mexico and the world. This is our simple word, because it is our idea to call on those who are like us and to join together with them, everywhere they are living and struggling.

I – What We Are

We are the zapatistas of the EZLN, although we are also called “neo-zapatistas.” Now, we, the zapatistas of the EZLN, rose up in arms in January of 1994 because we saw how widespread had become the evil wrought by the powerful who only humiliated us, stole from us, imprisoned us and killed us, and no one was saying anything or doing anything. That is why we said “Ya Basta!” that no longer were we going to allow them to make us inferior or to treat us worse than animals. And then we also said we wanted democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexicans although we were concentrated on the Indian peoples. Because it so happened that we, the EZLN, were almost all only indigenous from here in Chiapas, but we did not want to struggle just for own good, or just for the good of the indigenous of Chiapas, or just for the good of the Indian peoples of Mexico. We wanted to fight along with everyone who was humble and simple like ourselves and who was in great need and who suffered from exploitation and thievery by the rich and their bad governments here, in our Mexico, and in other countries in the world.

And then our small history was that we grew tired of exploitation by the powerful, and then we organized in order to defend ourselves and to fight for justice. In the beginning there were not many of us, just a few, going this way and that, talking with and listening to other people like us. We did that for many years, and we did it in secret, without making a stir. In other words, we joined forces in silence. We remained like that for about 10 years, and then we had grown, and then we were many thousands. We trained ourselves quite well in politics and weapons, and, suddenly, when the rich were throwing their New Year’s Eve parties, we fell upon their cities and just took them over. And we left a message to everyone that here we are, that they have to take notice of us. And then the rich took off and sent their great armies to do away with us, just like they always do when the exploited rebel – they order them all to be done away with. But we were not done away with at all, because we had prepared ourselves quite well prior to the war, and we made ourselves strong in our mountains. And there were the armies, looking for us and throwing their bombs and bullets at us, and then they were making plans to kill off all the indigenous at one time, because they did not know who was a zapatista and who was not. And we were running and fighting, fighting and running, just like our ancestors had done. Without giving up, without surrendering, without being defeated.

And then the people from the cities went out into the streets and began shouting for an end to the war. And then we stopped our war, and we listened to those brothers and sisters from the city who were telling us to try to reach an arrangement or an accord with the bad governments, so that the problem could be resolved without a massacre. And so we paid attention to them,

because they were what we call “the people,” or the Mexican people. And so we set aside the fire and took up the word.

And it so happened that the governments said they would indeed be well-behaved, and they would engage in dialogue, and they would make accords, and they would fulfill them. And we said that was good, but we also thought it was good that we knew those people who went out into the streets in order to stop the war. Then, while we were engaging in dialogue with the bad governments, we were also talking with those persons, and we saw that most of them were humble and simple people like us, and both, they and we, understood quite well why we were fighting. And we called those people “civil society” because most of them did not belong to political parties, rather they were common, everyday people, like us, simple and humble people.

But it so happened that the bad governments did not want a good agreement, rather it was just their underhanded way of saying they were going to talk and to reach accords, while they were preparing their attacks in order to eliminate us once and for all. And so then they attacked us several times, but they did not defeat us, because we resisted quite well, and many people throughout the world mobilized. And then the bad governments thought that the problem was that many people saw what was happening with the EZLN, and they started their plan of acting as if nothing were going on. Meanwhile they were quick to surround us, they laid siege to us in hopes that, since our mountains are indeed remote, the people would then forget, since zapatista lands were so far away. And every so often the bad governments tested us and tried to deceive us or to attack us, like in February of 1995 when they threw a huge number of armies at us, but they did not defeat us. Because, as they said then, we were not alone, and many people helped us, and we resisted well.

And then the bad governments had to make accords with the EZLN, and those accords were called the “San Andrés Accords” because the municipality where those accords were signed was called “San Andrés.” And we were not all alone in those dialogues, speaking with people from the bad governments. We invited many people and organizations who were, or are, engaged in the struggle for the Indian peoples of Mexico, and everyone spoke their word, and everyone reached agreement as to how we were going to speak with the bad governments. And that is how that dialogue was, not just the zapatistas on one side and the governments on the other. Instead, the Indian peoples of Mexico, and those who supported them, were with the zapatistas. And then the bad governments said in those accords that they were indeed going to recognize the rights of the Indian peoples of Mexico, and they were going to respect their culture, and they were going to make everything law in the Constitution. But then, once they had signed, the bad governments acted as if they had forgotten about them, and many years passed, and the accords were not fulfilled at all. Quite the opposite, the government attacked the indigenous, in order to make them back out of the struggle, as they did on December 22, 1997, the date on which Zedillo ordered the killing of 45 men, women, old ones and children in the town in Chiapas called ACTEAL. This immense crime was not so easily forgotten, and it was a demonstration of how the bad governments color their hearts in order to attack and assassinate those who rebel against injustices. And, while all of that was going on, we zapatistas were putting our all into the fulfillment of the accords and resisting in the mountains of the Mexican southeast.

And then we began speaking with other Indian peoples of Mexico and their organizations, and we made an agreement with them that we were going to struggle together for the same thing, for the recognition of indigenous rights and culture. Now we were also being helped by many people from all over the world and by persons who were well respected and whose word was

quite great because they were great intellectuals, artists and scientists from Mexico and from all over the world. And we also held international encuentros. In other words, we joined together to talk with persons from America and from Asia and from Europe and from Africa and from Oceania, and we learned of their struggles and their ways, and we said they were “intergalactic” encuentros, just to be silly and because we had also invited those from other planets, but it appeared as if they had not come, or perhaps they did come, but they did not make it clear.

But the bad governments did not keep their word anyway, and then we made a plan to talk with many Mexicans so they would help us. And then, first in 1997, we held a march to Mexico City which was called “of the 1,111” because a compañero or compañera was going to go from each zapatista town, but the bad government did not pay any attention. And then, in 1999, we held a consulta throughout the country, and there it was seen that the majority were indeed in agreement with the demands of the Indian peoples, but again the bad governments did not pay any attention. And then, lastly, in 2001, we held what was called the “march for indigenous dignity” which had much support from millions of Mexicans and people from other countries, and it went to where the deputies and senators were, the Congress of the Union, in order to demand the recognition of the Mexican indigenous.

But it happened that no, the politicians from the PRI, the PAN and the PRD reached an agreement among themselves, and they simply did not recognize indigenous rights and culture. That was in April of 2001, and the politicians demonstrated quite clearly there that they had no decency whatsoever, and they were swine who thought only about making their good money as the bad politicians they were. This must be remembered, because you will now be seeing that they are going to say they will indeed recognize indigenous rights, but it is a lie they are telling so we will vote for them. But they already had their chance, and they did not keep their word.

And then we saw quite clearly that there was no point to dialogue and negotiation with the bad governments of Mexico. That it was a waste of time for us to be talking with the politicians, because neither their hearts nor their words were honest. They were crooked, and they told lies that they would keep their word, but they did not. In other words, on that day, when the politicians from the PRI, PAN and PRD approved a law that was no good, they killed dialogue once and for all, and they clearly stated that it did not matter what they had agreed to and signed, because they did not keep their word. And then we did not make any contacts with the federal branches. Because we understood that dialogue and negotiation had failed as a result of those political parties. We saw that blood did not matter to them, nor did death, suffering, mobilizations, consultas, efforts, national and international statements, encuentros, accords, signatures, commitments. And so the political class not only closed, one more time, the door to the Indian peoples, they also delivered a mortal blow to the peaceful resolution – through dialogue and negotiation – of the war. It can also no longer be believed that the accords will be fulfilled by someone who comes along with something or other. They should see that there so that they can learn from experience what happened to us.

And then we saw all of that, and we wondered in our hearts what we were going to do.

And the first thing we saw was that our heart was not the same as before, when we began our struggle. It was larger, because now we had touched the hearts of many good people. And we also saw that our heart was more hurt, it was more wounded. And it was not wounded by the deceits of the bad governments, but because, when we touched the hearts of others, we also touched their sorrows. It was as if we were seeing ourselves in a mirror.

II. – Where We Are Now

Then, like the zapatistas we are, we thought that it was not enough to stop engaging in dialogue with the government, but it was necessary to continue on ahead in the struggle, in spite of those lazy parasites of politicians. The EZLN then decided to carry out, alone and on their side (“unilateral”, in other words, because just one side), the San Andrés Accords regarding indigenous rights and culture. For 4 years, since the middle of 2001 until the middle of 2005, we have devoted ourselves to this and to other things which we are going to tell you about.

Fine, we then began encouraging the autonomous rebel zapatista municipalities – which is how the peoples are organized in order to govern and to govern themselves – in order to make themselves stronger. This method of autonomous government was not simply invented by the EZLN, but rather it comes from several centuries of indigenous resistance and from the zapatistas’ own experience. It is the self-governance of the communities. In other words, no one from outside comes to govern, but the peoples themselves decide, among themselves, who governs and how, and, if they do not obey, they are removed. If the one who governs does not obey the people, they pursue them, they are removed from authority, and another comes in.

But then we saw that the Autonomous Municipalities were not level. There were some that were more advanced and which had more support from civil society, and others were more neglected. The organization was lacking to make them more on a par with each other. And we also saw that the EZLN, with its political-military component, was involving itself in decisions which belonged to the democratic authorities, “civilians” as they say. And here the problem is that the political-military component of the EZLN is not democratic, because it is an army. And we saw that the military being above, and the democratic below, was not good, because what is democratic should not be decided militarily, it should be the reverse: the democratic-political governing above, and the military obeying below. Or, perhaps, it would be better with nothing below, just completely level, without any military, and that is why the zapatistas are soldiers so that there will not be any soldiers. Fine, what we then did about this problem was to begin separating the political-military from the autonomous and democratic aspects of organization in the zapatista communities. And so, actions and decisions which had previously been made and taken by the EZLN were being passed, little by little, to the democratically elected authorities in the villages. It is easy to say, of course, but it was very difficult in practice, because many years have passed – first in the preparation for the war and then the war itself – and the political-military aspects have become customary. But, regardless, we did so because it is our way to do what we say, because, if not, why should we go around saying things if we do not then do them.

That was how the Good Government Juntas were born, in August of 2003, and, through them, self-learning and the exercise of “govern obeying” has continued.

>From that time and until the middle of 2005, the EZLN leadership has no longer involved itself in giving orders in civil matters, but it has accompanied and helped the authorities who are democratically elected by the peoples. It has also kept watch that the peoples and national and international civil society are kept well informed concerning the aid that is received and how it is used. And now we are passing the work of safeguarding good government to the zapatista support bases, with temporary positions which are rotated, so that everyone learns and carries out this work. Because we believe that a people which does not watch over its leaders is condemned to be enslaved, and we fought to be free, not to change masters every six years.

The EZLN, during these 4 years, also handed over to the Good Government Juntas and the Autonomous Municipalities the aid and contacts which they had attained throughout Mexico and the world during these years of war and resistance. The EZLN had also, during that time, been building economic and political support which allowed the zapatista communities to make progress with fewer difficulties in the building of their autonomy and in improving their living conditions. It is not much, but it is far better than what they had prior to the beginning of the uprising in January of 1994. If you look at one of those studies the governments make, you will see that the only indigenous communities which have improved their living conditions – whether in health, education, food or housing – were those which are in zapatista territory, which is what we call where our villages are. And all of that has been possible because of the progress made by the zapatista villages and because of the very large support which has been received from good and noble persons, whom we call “civil societies,” and from their organizations throughout the world. As if all of these people have made “another world is possible” a reality, but through actions, not just words.

And the villages have made good progress. Now there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning to govern. And – even though little by little – there are more women going into this work, but there is still a lack of respect for the compañeras, and they need to participate more in the work of the struggle. And, also through the Good Government Juntas, coordination has been improved between the Autonomous Municipalities and the resolution of problems with other organizations and with the official authorities. There has also been much improvement in the projects in the communities, and the distribution of projects and aid given by civil society from all over the world has become more level. Health and education have improved, although there is still a good deal lacking for it to be what it should be. The same is true for housing and food, and in some areas there has been much improvement with the problem of land, because the lands recovered from the finqueros are being distributed. But there are areas which continue to suffer from a lack of lands to cultivate. And there has been great improvement in the support from national and international civil society, because previously everyone went wherever they wanted, and now the Good Government Juntas are directing them to where the greatest need exists. And, similarly, everywhere there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning to relate to persons from other parts of Mexico and of the world,. They are learning to respect and to demand respect. They are learning that there are many worlds, and that everyone has their place, their time and their way, and therefore there must be mutual respect between everyone.

We, the zapatistas of the EZLN, have devoted this time to our primary force, to the peoples who support us. And the situation has indeed improved some. No one can say that the zapatista organization and struggle has been without point, but rather, even if they were to do away with us completely, our struggle has indeed been of some use.

But it is not just the zapatista villages which have grown – the EZLN has also grown. Because what has happened during this time is that new generations have renewed our entire organization. They have added new strength. The comandantes and comandantas who were in their maturity at the beginning of the uprising in 1994 now have the wisdom they gained in the war and in the 12 years of dialogue with thousands of men and women from throughout the world. The members of the CCRI, the zapatista political-organizational leadership, is now counseling and directing the new ones who are entering our struggle, as well as those who are holding leadership positions. For some time now the “committees” (which is what we call them) have been preparing an entire new generation of comandantes and comandantas who, following a period

of instruction and testing, are beginning to learn the work of organizational leadership and to discharge their duties. And it also so happens that our insurgents, insurgentas, militants, local and regional responsables, as well as support bases, who were youngsters at the beginning of the uprising, are now mature men and women, combat veterans and natural leaders in their units and communities. And those who were children in that January of '94 are now young people who have grown up in the resistance, and they have been trained in the rebel dignity lifted up by their elders throughout these 12 years of war. These young people have a political, technical and cultural training that we who began the zapatista movement did not have. This youth is now, more and more, sustaining our troops as well as leadership positions in the organization. And, indeed, all of us have seen the deceits by the Mexican political class and the destruction which their actions have caused in our patria. And we have seen the great injustices and massacres that neoliberal globalization causes throughout the world. But we will speak to you of that later.

And so the EZLN has resisted 12 years of war, of military, political, ideological and economic attacks, of siege, of harassment, of persecution, and they have not vanquished us. We have not sold out nor surrendered, and we have made progress. More compañeros from many places have entered into the struggle so that, instead of making us weaker after so many years, we have become stronger. Of course there are problems which can be resolved by more separation of the political-military from the civil-democratic. But there are things, the most important ones, such as our demands for which we struggle, which have not been fully achieved.

To our way of thinking, and what we see in our heart, we have reached a point where we cannot go any further, and, in addition, it is possible that we could lose everything we have if we remain as we are and do nothing more in order to move forward. The hour has come to take a risk once again and to take a step which is dangerous but which is worthwhile. Because, perhaps united with other social sectors who suffer from the same wants as we do, it will be possible to achieve what we need and what we deserve. A new step forward in the indigenous struggle is only possible if the indigenous join together with workers, campesinos, students, teachers, employees...the workers of the city and the countryside.

(To be continued...)

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee – General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Mexico, in the sixth month of the year 2005.

Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Mexico.

(Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona)

III – How We See the World

Now we are going to explain to you how we, the zapatistas, see what is going on in the world. We see that capitalism is the strongest right now. Capitalism is a social system, a way in which a society goes about organizing things and people, and who has and who has not, and who gives orders and who obeys. In capitalism, there are some people who have money, or capital, and factories and stores and fields and many things, and there are others who have nothing but their

strength and knowledge in order to work. In capitalism, those who have money and things give the orders, and those who only have their ability to work obey.

Then capitalism means that there are a few who have great wealth, but they did not win a prize, or find a treasure, or inherit from a parent. They obtained that wealth, rather, by exploiting the work of the many. So capitalism is based on the exploitation of the workers, which means they exploit the workers and take out all the profits they can. This is done unjustly, because they do not pay the worker what his work is worth. Instead they give him a salary that barely allows him to eat a little and to rest for a bit, and the next day he goes back to work in exploitation, whether in the countryside or in the city.

And capitalism also makes its wealth from plunder, or theft, because they take what they want from others, land, for example, and natural resources. So capitalism is a system where the robbers are free and they are admired and used as examples.

And, in addition to exploiting and plundering, capitalism represses because it imprisons and kills those who rebel against injustice.

Capitalism is most interested in merchandise, because when it is bought or sold, profits are made. And then capitalism turns everything into merchandise, it makes merchandise of people, of nature, of culture, of history, of conscience. According to capitalism, everything must be able to be bought and sold. And it hides everything behind the merchandise, so we don't see the exploitation that exists. And then the merchandise is bought and sold in a market. And the market, in addition to being used for buying and selling, is also used to hide the exploitation of the workers. In the market, for example, we see coffee in its little package or its pretty little jar, but we do not see the campesino who suffered in order to harvest the coffee, and we do not see the coyote who paid him so cheaply for his work, and we do not see the workers in the large company working their hearts out to package the coffee. Or we see an appliance for listening to music like cumbias, rancheras or corridos, or whatever, and we see that it is very good because it has a good sound, but we do not see the worker in the maquiladora who struggled for many hours, putting the cables and the parts of the appliance together, and they barely paid her a pittance of money, and she lives far away from work and spends a lot on the trip, and, in addition, she runs the risk of being kidnapped, raped and killed as happens in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico.

So we see merchandise in the market, but we do not see the exploitation with which it was made. And then capitalism needs many markets...or a very large market, a world market.

And so the capitalism of today is not the same as before, when the rich were content with exploiting the workers in their own countries, but now they are on a path which is called Neoliberal Globalization. This globalization means that they no longer control the workers in one or several countries, but the capitalists are trying to dominate everything all over the world. And the world, or Planet Earth, is also called the "globe", and that is why they say "globalization," or the entire world.

And neoliberalism is the idea that capitalism is free to dominate the entire world, and so tough, you have to resign yourself and conform and not make a fuss, in other words, not rebel. So neoliberalism is like the theory, the plan, of capitalist globalization. And neoliberalism has its economic, political, military and cultural plans. All of those plans have to do with dominating everyone, and they repress or separate anyone who doesn't obey so that his rebellious ideas aren't passed on to others.

Then, in neoliberal globalization, the great capitalists who live in the countries which are powerful, like the United States, want the entire world to be made into a big business where mer-

chandise is produced like a great market. A world market for buying and selling the entire world and for hiding all the exploitation from the world. Then the global capitalists insert themselves everywhere, in all the countries, in order to do their big business, their great exploitation. Then they respect nothing, and they meddle wherever they wish. As if they were conquering other countries. That is why we zapatistas say that neoliberal globalization is a war of conquest of the entire world, a world war, a war being waged by capitalism for global domination. Sometimes that conquest is by armies who invade a country and conquer it by force. But sometimes it is with the economy, in other words, the big capitalists put their money into another country or they lend it money, but on the condition that they obey what they tell them to do. And they also insert their ideas, with the capitalist culture which is the culture of merchandise, of profits, of the market.

Then the one which wages the conquest, capitalism, does as it wants, it destroys and changes what it does not like and eliminates what gets in its way. For example, those who do not produce nor buy nor sell modern merchandise get in their way, or those who rebel against that order. And they despise those who are of no use to them. That is why the indigenous get in the way of neoliberal capitalism, and that is why they despise them and want to eliminate them. And neoliberal capitalism also gets rid of the laws which do not allow them to exploit and to have a lot of profit. They demand that everything can be bought and sold, and, since capitalism has all the money, it buys everything. Capitalism destroys the countries it conquers with neoliberal globalization, but it also wants to adapt everything, to make it over again, but in its own way, a way which benefits capitalism and which doesn't allow anything to get in its way. Then neoliberal globalization, capitalism, destroys what exists in these countries, it destroys their culture, their language, their economic system, their political system, and it also destroys the ways in which those who live in that country relate to each other. So everything that makes a country a country is left destroyed.

Then neoliberal globalization wants to destroy the nations of the world so that only one Nation or country remains, the country of money, of capital. And capitalism wants everything to be as it wants, in its own way, and it doesn't like what is different, and it persecutes it and attacks it, or puts it off in a corner and acts as if it doesn't exist.

Then, in short, the capitalism of global neoliberalism is based on exploitation, plunder, contempt and repression of those who refuse. The same as before, but now globalized, worldwide.

But it is not so easy for neoliberal globalization, because the exploited of each country become discontented, and they will not say well, too bad, instead they rebel. And those who remain and who are in the way resist, and they don't allow themselves to be eliminated. And that is why we see, all over the world, those who are being screwed over making resistances, not putting up with it, in other words, they rebel, and not just in one country but wherever they abound. And so, as there is a neoliberal globalization, there is a globalization of rebellion.

And it is not just the workers of the countryside and of the city who appear in this globalization of rebellion, but others also appear who are much persecuted and despised for the same reason, for not letting themselves be dominated, like women, young people, the indigenous, homosexuals, lesbians, transsexual persons, migrants and many other groups who exist all over the world but who we do not see until they shout *ya basta* of being despised, and they raise up, and then we see them, we hear them, and we learn from them.

And then we see that all those groups of people are fighting against neoliberalism, against the capitalist globalization plan, and they are struggling for humanity.

And we are astonished when we see the stupidity of the neoliberals who want to destroy all humanity with their wars and exploitations, but it also makes us quite happy to see resistances and rebellions appearing everywhere, such as ours, which is a bit small, but here we are. And we see this all over the world, and now our heart learns that we are not alone.

IV – How We See Our Country Which is Mexico

Now we will talk to you about how we see what is going on in our Mexico. What we see is our country being governed by neoliberals. So, as we already explained, our leaders are destroying our nation, our Mexican Patria. And the work of these bad leaders is not to look after the well-being of the people, instead they are only concerned with the well-being of the capitalists. For example, they make laws like the Free Trade Agreement, which end up leaving many Mexicans destitute, like campesinos and small producers, because they are “gobbled up” by the big agro-industrial companies. As well as workers and small businesspeople, because they cannot compete with the large transnationals who come in without anybody saying anything to them and even thanking them, and they set their low salaries and their high prices. So some of the economic foundations of our Mexico, which were the countryside and industry and national commerce, are being quite destroyed, and just a bit of rubble – which they are certainly going to sell off – remains.

And these are great disgraces for our Patria. Because food is no longer being produced in our countryside, just what the big capitalists sell, and the good lands are being stolen through trickery and with the help of the politicians. What is happening in the countryside is the same as Porfirismo, but, instead of hacendados, now there are a few foreign businesses which have well and truly screwed the campesino. And, where before there were credits and price protections, now there is just charity...and sometimes not even that.

As for the worker in the city, the factories close, and they are left without work, or they open what are called maquiladoras, which are foreign and which pay a pittance for many hours of work. And then the price of the goods the people need doesn't matter, whether they are expensive or cheap, since there is no money. And if someone was working in a small or midsize business, now they are not, because it was closed, and it was bought by a big transnational. And if someone had a small business, it disappeared as well, or they went to work clandestinely for big businesses which exploit them terribly, and which even put boys and girls to work. And if the worker belonged to his union in order to demand his legal rights, then no, now the same union tells him he will have to put up with his salary being lowered or his hours or his benefits being taken away, because, if not, the business will close and move to another country. And then there is the “microchangarro,” which is the government's economic program for putting all the city's workers on street corners selling gum or telephone cards. In other words, absolute economic destruction in the cities as well.

And then what happens is that, with the people's economy being totally screwed in the countryside as well as in the city, then many Mexican men and women have to leave their Patria, Mexican lands, and go to seek work in another country, the United States. And they do not treat them well there, instead they exploit them, persecute them and treat them with contempt and even kill them. Under neoliberalism which is being imposed by the bad governments, the economy has not improved. Quite the opposite, the countryside is in great need, and there is no work

in the cities. What is happening is that Mexico is being turned into a place where people are working for the wealth of foreigners, mostly rich gringos, a place you are just born into for a little while, and in another little while you die. That is why we say that Mexico is dominated by the United States.

Now, it is not just that. Neoliberalism has also changed the Mexican political class, the politicians, because they made them into something like employees in a store, who have to do everything possible to sell everything and to sell it very cheap. You have already seen that they changed the laws in order to remove Article 27 from the Constitution so that ejidal and communal lands could be sold. That was Salinas de Gortari, and he and his gangs said that it was for the good of the countryside and the campesino, and that was how they would prosper and live better. Has it been like that? The Mexican countryside is worse than ever and the campesinos more screwed than under Porfirio Diaz. And they also say they are going to privatize – sell to foreigners – the companies held by the State to help the well-being of the people. Because the companies don't work well and they need to be modernized, and it would be better to sell them. But, instead of improving, the social rights which were won in the revolution of 1910 now make one sad...and courageous. And they also said that the borders must be opened so all the foreign capital can enter, that way all the Mexican businesses will be fixed, and things will be made better. But now we see that there are not any national businesses, the foreigners gobbled them all up, and the things that are sold are worse than the those that were made in Mexico.

And now the Mexican politicians also want to sell PEMEX, the oil which belongs to all Mexicans, and the only difference is that some say everything should be sold and others that only a part of it should be sold. And they also want to privatize social security, and electricity and water and the forests and everything, until nothing of Mexico is left, and our country will be a wasteland or a place of entertainment for rich people from all over the world, and we Mexican men and women will be their servants, dependent on what they offer, bad housing, without roots, without culture, without even a Patria.

So the neoliberals want to kill Mexico, our Mexican Patria. And the political parties not only do not defend it, they are the first to put themselves at the service of foreigners, especially those from the United States, and they are the ones who are in charge of deceiving us, making us look the other way while everything is sold, and they are left with the money. All the political parties that exist right now, not just some of them. Think about whether anything has been done well, and you will see that no, nothing but theft and scams. And look how all the politicians always have their nice houses and their nice cars and luxuries. And they still want us to thank them and to vote for them again. And it is obvious, as they say, that they are without shame. And they are without it because they do not, in fact, have a Patria, they only have bank accounts.

And we also see that drug trafficking and crime has been increasing a lot. And sometimes we think that criminals are like they show them in the songs or movies, and maybe some are like that, but not the real chiefs. The real chiefs go around very well dressed, they study outside the country, they are elegant, they do not go around in hiding, they eat in good restaurants and they appear in the papers, very pretty and well dressed at their parties. They are, as they say, "good people", and some are even officials, deputies, senators, secretaries of state, prosperous businessmen, police chiefs, generals.

Are we saying that politics serves no purpose? No, what we mean is that THAT politics serves no purpose. And it is useless because it does not take the people into account. It does not listen to them, it does not pay any attention to them, it just approaches them when there are elections.

And they do not even want votes anymore, the polls are enough to say who wins. And then just promises about what this one is going to do and what the other one is going to do, then it's bye, I'll see you, but you don't see them again, except when they appear in the news when they've just stolen a lot of money and nothing is going to be done to them because the law – which those same politicians made – protects them.

Because that's another problem, the Constitution is all warped and changed now. It's no longer the one that had the rights and liberties of working people. Now there are the rights and liberties of the neoliberals so they can have their huge profits. And the judges exist to serve those neoliberals, because they always rule in favor of them, and those who are not rich get injustice, jails and cemeteries.

Well, even with all this mess the neoliberals are making, there are Mexican men and women who are organizing and making a resistance struggle.

And so we found out that there are indigenous, that their lands are far away from us here in Chiapas, and they are making their autonomy and defending their culture and caring for their land, forests and water.

And there are workers in the countryside, campesinos, who are organizing and holding their marches and mobilizations in order to demand credits and aid for the countryside.

And there are workers in the city who do not let their rights be taken away or their jobs privatized. They protest and demonstrate so the little they have isn't taken away from them and so they don't take away from the country what is, in fact, its own, like electricity, oil, social security, education.

And there are students who don't let education be privatized and who are fighting for it to be free and popular and scientific, so they don't charge, so everyone can learn, and so they don't teach stupid things in schools.

And there are women who do not let themselves be treated as an ornament or be humiliated and despised just for being women, but who are organizing and fighting for the respect they deserve as the women they are.

And there are young people who don't accept their stultifying them with drugs or persecuting them for their way of being, but who make themselves aware with their music and their culture, their rebellion.

And there are homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals and many ways who do not put up with being ridiculed, despised, mistreated and even killed for having another way which is different, with being treated like they are abnormal or criminals, but who make their own organizations in order to defend their right to be different.

And there are priests and nuns and those they call laypeople who are not with the rich and who are not resigned, but who are organizing to accompany the struggles of the people.

And there are those who are called social activists, who are men and women who have been fighting all their lives for exploited people, and they are the same ones who participated in the great strikes and workers' actions, in the great citizens' mobilizations, in the great campesino movements, and who suffer great repression, and who, even though some are old now, continue on without surrendering, and they go everywhere, looking for the struggle, seeking justice, and making leftist organizations, non-governmental organizations, human rights organizations, organizations in defense of political prisoners and for the disappeared, leftist publications, organizations of teachers or students, social struggle, and even political-military organizations, and they are just not quiet and they know a lot because they have seen a lot and lived and struggled.

And so we see in general that in our country, which is called Mexico, there are many people who do not put up with things, who do not surrender, who do not sell out. Who are dignified. And that makes us very pleased and happy, because with all those people it's not going to be so easy for the neoliberals to win, and perhaps it will be possible to save our Patria from the great thefts and destruction they are doing. And we think that perhaps our "we" will include all those rebellions...

(To be continued...)

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee – General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation

Mexico, in the sixth month of the year 2005.

Zapatista Army of National Liberation

Mexico.

(Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona)

V – What We Want To Do

We are now going to tell you what we want to do in the world and in Mexico, because we cannot watch everything that is happening on our planet and just remain quiet, as if it were only we were where we are.

What we want in the world is to tell all of those who are resisting and fighting in their own ways and in their own countries, that you are not alone, that we, the zapatistas, even though we are very small, are supporting you, and we are going to look at how to help you in your struggles and to speak to you in order to learn, because what we have, in fact, learned is to learn.

And we want to tell the Latin American peoples that we are proud to be a part of you, even if it is a small part. We remember quite well how the continent was also illuminated some years ago, and a light was called Che Guevara, as it had previously been called Bolivar, because sometimes the people take up a name in order to say they are taking up a flag.

And we want to tell the people of Cuba, who have now been on their path of resistance for many years, that you are not alone, and we do not agree with the blockade they are imposing, and we are going to see how to send you something, even if it is maize, for your resistance. And we want to tell the North American people that we know that the bad governments which you have and which spread harm throughout the world is one thing – and those North Americans who struggle in their country, and who are in solidarity with the struggles of other countries, are a very different thing. And we want to tell the Mapuche brothers and sisters in Chile that we are watching and learning from your struggles. And to the Venezuelans, we see how well you are defending your sovereignty, your nation's right to decide where it is going. And to the indigenous brothers and sisters of Ecuador and Bolivia, we say you are giving a good lesson in history to all of Latin America, because now you are indeed putting a halt to neoliberal globalization. And to the piqueteros and to the young people of Argentina, we want to tell you that, that we love you. And to those in Uruguay who want a better country, we admire you. And to those who are sin tierra in Brazil, that we respect you. And to all the young people of Latin America, that what you are doing is good, and you give us great hope.

And we want to tell the brothers and sisters of Social Europe, that which is dignified and rebel, that you are not alone. That your great movements against the neoliberal wars bring us joy. That we are attentively watching your forms of organization and your methods of struggle so that we can perhaps learn something. That we are considering how we can help you in your struggles, and we are not going to send euro because then they will be devalued because of the European Union mess. But perhaps we will send you crafts and coffee so you can market them and help you some in the tasks of your struggle. And perhaps we might also send you some pozol, which gives much strength in the resistance, but who knows if we will send it to you, because pozol is more our way, and what if it were to hurt your bellies and weaken your struggles and the neoliberals defeat you.

And we want to tell the brothers and sisters of Africa, Asia and Oceania that we know that you are fighting also, and we want to learn more of your ideas and practices.

And we want to tell the world that we want to make you large, so large that all those worlds will fit, those worlds which are resisting because they want to destroy the neoliberals and because they simply cannot stop fighting for humanity.

Now then, what we want to do in Mexico is to make an agreement with persons and organizations just of the left, because we believe that it is in the political left where the idea of resisting neoliberal globalization is, and of making a country where there will be justice, democracy and liberty for everyone. Not as it is right now, where there is justice only for the rich, there is liberty only for their big businesses, and there is democracy only for painting walls with election propaganda. And because we believe that it is only from the left that a plan of struggle can emerge, so that our Patria, which is Mexico, does not die.

And, then, what we think is that, with these persons and organizations of the left, we will make a plan for going to all those parts of Mexico where there are humble and simple people like ourselves.

And we are not going to tell them what they should do or give them orders.

Nor are we going to ask them to vote for a candidate, since we already know that the ones who exist are neoliberals.

Nor are we going to tell them to be like us, nor to rise up in arms.

What we are going to do is to ask them what their lives are like, their struggle, their thoughts about our country and what we should do so they do not defeat us.

What we are going to do is to take heed of the thoughts of the simple and humble people, and perhaps we will find there the same love which we feel for our Patria.

And perhaps we will find agreement between those of us who are simple and humble and, together, we will organize all over the country and reach agreement in our struggles, which are alone right now, separated from each other, and we will find something like a program that has what we all want, and a plan for how we are going to achieve the realization of that program, which is called the "national program of struggle."

And, with the agreement of the majority of those people whom we are going to listen to, we will then engage in a struggle with everyone, with indigenous, workers, campesinos, students, teachers, employees, women, children, old ones, men, and with all of those of good heart and who want to struggle so that our Patria called Mexico does not end up being destroyed and sold, and which still exists between the Rio Grande and the Rio Suchiate and which has the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Atlantic on the other.

VI – How We Are Going To Do It

And so this is our simple word that goes out to the humble and simple people of Mexico and of the world, and we are calling our word of today:

Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona

And we are here to say, with our simple word, that...

The EZLN maintains its commitment to an offensive ceasefire, and it will not make any attack against government forces or any offensive military movements.

The EZLN still maintains its commitment to insisting on the path of political struggle through this peaceful initiative which we are now undertaking. The EZLN continues, therefore, in its resolve to not establish any kind of secret relations with either national political-military organizations or those from other countries.

The EZLN reaffirms its commitment to defend, support and obey the zapatista indigenous communities of which it is composed, and which are its supreme command, and – without interfering in their internal democratic processes – will, to the best of its abilities, contribute to the strengthening of their autonomy, good government and improvement in their living conditions. In other words, what we are going to do in Mexico and in the world, we are going to do without arms, with a civil and peaceful movement, and without neglecting nor ceasing to support our communities.

Therefore...

In the World...

1 – We will forge new relationships of mutual respect and support with persons and organizations who are resisting and struggling against neoliberalism and for humanity.

2 – As far as we are able, we will send material aid such as food and handicrafts for those brothers and sisters who are struggling all over the world.

In order to begin, we are going to ask the Good Government Junta of La Realidad to loan their truck, which is called “Chompiras,” and which appears to hold 8 tons, and we are going to fill it with maize and perhaps two 200 liter cans with oil or petrol, as they prefer, and we are going to deliver it to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico for them to send to the Cuban people as aid from the zapatistas for their resistance against the North American blockade. Or perhaps there might be a place closer to here where it could be delivered, because it’s always such a long distance to Mexico City, and what if “Chompiras” were to break down and we’d end up in bad shape. And that will happen when the harvest comes in, which is turning green right now in the fields, and if they don’t attack us, because if we were to send it during these next few months, it would be nothing but corncoobs, and they don’t turn out well even in tamales, better in November or December, it depends.

And we are also going to make an agreement with the women’s crafts cooperatives in order to send a good number of bordados, embroidered pieces, to the Europes which are perhaps not yet Union, and perhaps we’ll also send some organic coffee from the zapatista cooperatives, so that they can sell it and get a little money for their struggle. And, if it isn’t sold, then they can always have a little cup of coffee and talk about the anti-neoliberal struggle, and if it’s a bit cold then they can cover themselves up with the zapatista bordados, which do indeed resist quite well being laundered by hand and by rocks, and, besides, they don’t run in the wash.

And we are also going to send the indigenous brothers and sisters of Bolivia and Ecuador some non-transgenic maize, and we just don't know where to send them so they arrive complete, but we are indeed willing to give this little bit of aid.

3 – And to all of those who are resisting throughout the world, we say there must be other intercontinental encuentros held, even if just one other. Perhaps December of this year or next January, we'll have to think about it. We don't want to say just when, because this is about our agreeing equally on everything, on where, on when, on how, on who. But not with a stage where just a few speak and all the rest listen, but without a stage, just level and everyone speaking, but orderly, otherwise it will just be a hubbub and the words won't be understood, and with good organization everyone will hear and jot down in their notebooks the words of resistance from others, so then everyone can go and talk with their compañeros and compañeras in their worlds. And we think it might be in a place that has a very large jail, because what if they were to repress us and incarcerate us, and so that way we wouldn't be all piled up, prisoners, yes, but well organized, and there in the jail we could continue the intercontinental encuentros for humanity and against neoliberalism. Later on we'll tell you what we shall do in order to reach agreement as to how we're going to come to agreement. Now that is how we're thinking of doing what we want to do in the world. Now follows...

In Mexico...

1 – We are going to continue fighting for the Indian peoples of Mexico, but now not just for them and not with only them, but for all the exploited and dispossessed of Mexico, with all of them and all over the country. And when we say all the exploited of Mexico, we are also talking about the brothers and sisters who have had to go to the United States in search of work in order to survive.

2 – We are going to go to listen to, and talk directly with, without intermediaries or mediation, the simple and humble of the Mexican people, and, according to what we hear and learn, we are going to go about building, along with those people who, like us, are humble and simple, a national program of struggle, but a program which will be clearly of the left, or anti-capitalist, or anti-neoliberal, or for justice, democracy and liberty for the Mexican people.

3 – We are going to try to build, or rebuild, another way of doing politics, one which once again has the spirit of serving others, without material interests, with sacrifice, with dedication, with honesty, which keeps its word, whose only payment is the satisfaction of duty performed, or like the militants of the left did before, when they were not stopped by blows, jail or death, let alone by dollar bills.

4 – We are also going to go about raising a struggle in order to demand that we make a new Constitution, new laws which take into account the demands of the Mexican people, which are: housing, land, work, food, health, education, information, culture, independence, democracy, justice, liberty and peace. A new Constitution which recognizes the rights and liberties of the people, and which defends the weak in the face of the powerful.

TO THESE ENDS...

The EZLN will send a delegation of its leadership in order to do this work throughout the national territory and for an indefinite period of time. This zapatista delegation, along with those organizations and persons of the left who join in this Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona, will go to those places where they are expressly invited.

We are also letting you know that the EZLN will establish a policy of alliances with non-electoral organizations and movements which define themselves, in theory and practice, as being of the left, in accordance with the following conditions:

Not to make agreements from above to be imposed below, but to make accords to go together to listen and to organize outrage. Not to raise movements which are later negotiated behind the backs of those who made them, but to always take into account the opinions of those participating. Not to seek gifts, positions, advantages, public positions, from the Power or those who aspire to it, but to go beyond the election calendar. Not to try to resolve from above the problems of our Nation, but to build FROM BELOW AND FOR BELOW an alternative to neoliberal destruction, an alternative of the left for Mexico.

Yes to reciprocal respect for the autonomy and independence of organizations, for their methods of struggle, for their ways of organizing, for their internal decision making processes, for their legitimate representations. And yes to a clear commitment for joint and coordinated defense of national sovereignty, with intransigent opposition to privatization attempts of electricity, oil, water and natural resources.

In other words, we are inviting the unregistered political and social organizations of the left, and those persons who lay claim to the left and who do not belong to registered political parties, to meet with us, at the time, place and manner in which we shall propose at the proper time, to organize a national campaign, visiting all possible corners of our Patria, in order to listen to and organize the word of our people. It is like a campaign, then, but very otherly, because it is not electoral.

Brothers and sisters:

This is our word which we declare:

In the world, we are going to join together more with the resistance struggles against neoliberalism and for humanity.

And we are going to support, even if it's but little, those struggles.

And we are going to exchange, with mutual respect, experiences, histories, ideas, dreams.

In Mexico, we are going to travel all over the country, through the ruins left by the neoliberal wars and through those resistances which, entrenched, are flourishing in those ruins.

We are going to seek, and to find, those who love these lands and these skies even as much as we do.

We are going to seek, from La Realidad to Tijuana, those who want to organize, struggle and build what may perhaps be the last hope this Nation – which has been going on at least since the time when an eagle alighted on a nopal in order to devour a snake – has of not dying.

We are going for democracy, liberty and justice for those of us who have been denied it.

We are going with another politics, for a program of the left and for a new Constitution.

We are inviting all indigenous, workers, campesinos, teachers, students, housewives, neighbors, small businesspersons, small shop owners, micro-businesspersons, pensioners, handicapped persons, religious men and women, scientists, artists, intellectuals, young persons, women, old persons, homosexuals and lesbians, boys and girls – to participate, whether individually or collectively, directly with the zapatistas in this NATIONAL CAMPAIGN for building another way of doing politics, for a program of national struggle of the left, and for a new Constitution.

And so this is our word as to what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. You will see whether you want to join.

And we are telling those men and women who are of good heart and intent, who are in agreement with this word we are bringing out, and who are not afraid, or who are afraid but who control it, to then state publicly whether they are in agreement with this idea we are presenting, and in that way we will see once and for all who and how and where and when this new step in the struggle is to be made.

While you are thinking about it, we say to you that today, in the sixth month of the year 2005, the men, women, children and old ones of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation have now decided, and we have now subscribed to, this Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona, and those who know how to sign, signed, and those who did not left their mark, but there are fewer now who do not know how, because education has advanced here in this territory in rebellion for humanity and against neoliberalism, that is in zapatista skies and land.

And this was our simple word sent out to the noble hearts of those simple and humble people who resist and rebel against injustices all over the world.

Democracy!

Liberty!

Justice!

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee – General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Mexico, in the sixth month, or June, of the year 2005.

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