

# ZAPATISTA COMMUNIQUÉS:

## THEM & US: The Smallest of them All

FEBRUARY - MARCH, 2013

CCRA ZAPATISMO DOSSIER #4



Center for Convivial  
Research & Autonomy

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### Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All Introduction. Zapatista National Liberation Army

February 2013.

For several years now, while in the politics of above they fought over the booty of a shattered nation, while the media was either silent or lied about what was happening, while the original peoples of this land went out of fashion and returned to a corner of oblivion, their lands looted, their inhabitants exploited, repressed, displaced, disrespected...

*The indigenous Zapatista peoples,  
Surrounded by the federal army,  
pursued by state and municipal police,  
attacked by paramilitary groups formed  
and equipped by governments from  
across the political spectrum in Mexico  
(PRI, PAN, PRD, PT, PVEM, MC and  
the other names taken by the  
parasitical Mexican political class),  
hounded by agents of the different  
national and foreign spy agencies,  
seeing their bases of support, men and  
women, beaten, displaced,  
imprisoned...*

*The indigenous Zapatista peoples*

*without show,  
without any imperative other than duty,  
without instruction manuals,  
without any leaders but ourselves  
without any referent other than the  
dream of our dead,  
with only our history and memory as  
weapons,  
looking near and far into calendars and  
geographies,  
with our guide: Serve, not Serve  
yourself/ Represent, not Supplant/  
Construct, not Destroy/ Obey, not  
Command/ Propose, not Impose/  
Convince, not Defeat/ Go Below, not  
Climb Above.*

*The Zapatista peoples, the indigenous  
Zapatistas, the indigenous Zapatista  
bases of support of the eezeelen, with  
a new way of doing politics,*

*We made  
We make  
We will make  
Freedom.  
FREEDOM  
OUR FREEDOM!*

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**Note of clarification:**

The texts that will appear in this seventh and final part of “Them and Us” are fragments taken from the “First Grade Notebook from the Course: *Freedom according to the Zapatistas. Autonomous Government I,*” and “First Grade Notebook from the Course in: *Freedom according to the Zapatistas. Autonomous Government II.*” The Spanish version is ONLY for *compas* who are part of the Sixth (We hope there will be versions in the original languages as determined by the National Indigenous Congress, as well as in English, Italian, French, Portuguese, Greek, German, Euskera, Catalanian, Arabic, Hebrew, Galician, Kurdish, Aragonese, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Japanese, and other languages, according to the support of *compas* of the Sixth around the world who know about the task of translating). These notebooks form part of the support material for the course that the Zapatista bases of support will give to the *compas* of the Sixth in Mexico and from around the world.

All of the texts are authored by the Zapatista bases of support, men and women, and they include not only the process of the struggle for freedom, but also their critical and self-critical reflections about our path. That is, they demonstrate how we Zapatistas see freedom and how we struggle to achieve it, exercise it, and defend it.

As our *compañero* Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés has already explained, our *compas* from the Zapatista bases of support are going to share the little we have learned about the struggle for freedom, and the *compas* of the Sixth can see what is useful or not for their own struggles.

This class in the little Zapatista school, as you now know, is called “Freedom according to the Zapatistas,” and it will be given directly by *compañeros* and *compañeras* who are bases of support of the *eezeelen*, who have carried out the various tasks of government, vigilance, and other diverse responsibilities in the construction of Zapatista autonomy.

In order to be admitted to the little school, in addition to being invited, the *compas* of the Sixth and special invitees will need to take a few preparatory, previous, or propaedeutic courses (or however you say what comes before kindergarten), before passing into “first grade.” These courses will be given by *compas* from the support teams of the EZLN’s Sixth Commission and have as their only



objective to give you the basic elements of neo-Zapatista history and our struggle for democracy, liberty, and justice.

In geographies where there aren’t *compas* from the support teams, we will get you the syllabus so that all invitees can prepare.

The dates and times, that is, the calendars and geographies in which the courses will be given by the Zapatista bases of support, will be announced in the appropriate moment, always carefully taking into account the situation of each individual, group, or collective invitee.

All of the invitees to the course will receive it, no matter if they can come to Zapatista territory or not. We are studying the possible forms or ways to reach your hearts, whatever your calendar and geography may be. So don’t worry.

Okay then. Cheers, now just prepare your heart, and, of course, your pencils and notebooks.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.  
SupMarcos.  
Mexico, February of 2013.

P.S. THAT GIVES LESSONS IN MANNERS. This seventh and final part of the series “Them and Us” consists of various parts and is ONLY for the *compas* of the Sixth. Along with part V (which, as its numeration indicates, is called “**The Sixth**”) and the last of part VI. **The Gaze 6: We are He,**” form part of the private correspondence that the EZLN, through its spokespeople, directs to the *compas* of the Sixth. In each of these parts, as in the present writing, we clearly signal to whom the texts are addressed.

For those who are not *compas* and try to mock, enter into polemics, argue, or respond to these texts, we remind you that reading or commenting on the correspondence of others is what is done by gossipers and/or police. So you should keep track of what category you’re in. In addition, your comments only reflect a vulgar racism (you’re so critical of TV and yet you merely repeat its clichés), and reiterate your lack of imagination (which is a consequence of lack of intelligence... and laziness about reading). Although, of course, you will have to broaden your silly little chant of “*marcos no, ezln yes*” to “*marcos and moisés no, ezln yes,*” and then later, “*CCRI-CG no, ezln yes.*” Later on, if you hear

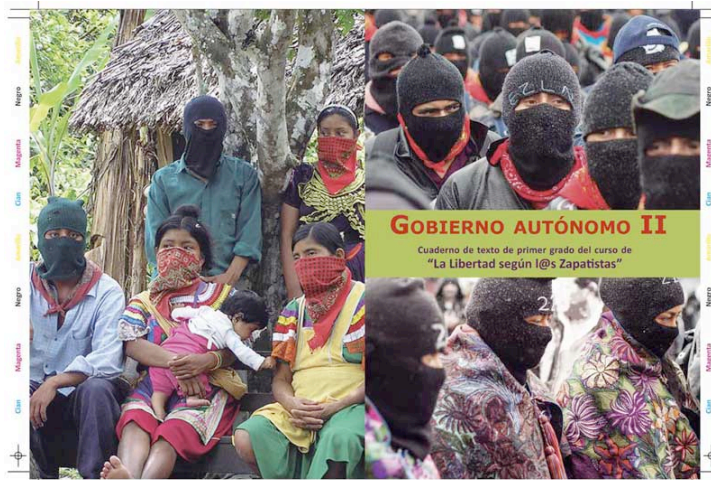
the direct word of the Zapatista bases of support (which I doubt will happen), you will have to say “*ezln no, ezln neither*”), but it will already be too late.

Oh don't be sad. When we put up music videos by Ricardo Arjona, Luis Miguel, *Yustin Bibier* or Ricky Martin, you can feel interpellated. Meanwhile, stay seated, keep looking at the calendar from above (those 3 or 6 years pass quickly), move a little to the right (as you are accustomed to doing), and step aside a little, we don't want to splash [implicate] you...

*¡Órales razaaaaaa! ¡Y venga a darle al baile! ¡Ajúa!*

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico.

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all/>]



## Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All 1 Learning to govern and govern ourselves, that is, to respect and respect ourselves. Zapatista National Liberation Army

February 2013.

**Note:** the notebooks that make up the support material for the course “Freedom According to the Zapatistas,” are a product of meetings that the Zapatista bases of support in all zones have carried out to evaluate their work in the organization.

*Compañeras and compañeros from the communities in resistance of the 5 caracoles,<sup>1</sup> tzotziles, choles, tzeltales, tojolabales, mames, zoques y mestizos, gathered to ask and answer questions among themselves, exchange experiences (which are different in each zone), and to criticize, self-criticize, and evaluate what they have done so far and what they still have to do. These meetings were coordinated by our compañero Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés, and were recorded, transcribed, and edited for the notebooks. Since during these meetings the compas shared among themselves their thoughts, histories, problems, and possible solutions, they themselves named the process: “the sharing.” These are a few loose fragments of the Zapatista sharing:*

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(...)  
*We are here to share our experiences, and one of these is, as we Zapatistas say, that we govern together, we govern as a collective. What can we share about the way in which you govern together, collectively?*

*The way we work is by not separating ourselves from the people. Always, with issues of regulations, plans, activities, and work, we have to get information from the people, and the [community] authorities have to be present in making the plans, making the proposals.  
(...)*

*We are thinking and working through various things, and we think that part of the duty of autonomous government is to attend to whoever comes to our office with an issue. Whether or not that issue can be resolved, it must be heard. This is for whoever comes in, Zapatista or not, that is how we work. The exception to this is people from the government or people sent from the government, in which case they are not attended to. But as long as that is not the case, anyone from any social organization is heard. Also in our work we are always vigilant about honoring the seven principles of “rule by obeying.” We consider this to be necessary, to be our obligation, in order not to make the same mistakes and develop the same habits of the entities of bad government. So the seven principles are what govern us.*

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*The first Aguascalientes, built in Guadalupe Tepeyac, was where we took our first step toward organization and toward our own way of exercising our rights. This Aguascalientes was a cultural, political, social, economic, and ideological center. When Ernesto Zedillo<sup>2</sup> betrayed us in a [military] offensive that dismantled the Aguascalientes, he thought our organizational politics would come to an end. But the*

opposite happened, because that same year, 1994, it was declared that we would build five more Aguascalientes.

(...)

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These municipalities decided where their municipal seat would be, and began to think about names for the municipalities, what they would be called when the Aguascalientes was ready. The first autonomous municipality, La Garrucha, was called Francisco Gómez; the municipality that is today San Manuel was before Las Tazas; Taniperlas was renamed Ricardo Flores Magón; San Salvador was named Francisco Villa. All of these names honored *compañeros*. Francisco Gómez, a name we all know now, was a *compañero* who gave his life to our cause, he died in combat in Ocosingo on January 1st. San Manuel honors the *compañero* Manuel, founder of our organization. Ricardo Flores Magón, we know was a warrior of social struggle in our history. And Francisco Villa was also a revolutionary that we all know. So our municipalities were formed as agreed in our community assemblies, and in the regional assembly we decided on their names. *Compañeros*, those are the few words that I have to say and now other *compañeros* or *compañeras* will explain what comes next.

(...)

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The principal problems that we had since the beginning of [inaudible], the problem of alcoholism, how is this problem now in your zone?

So in those days, at the beginning of 1994, a little after the war, some joined [the organization] out of fear. The war started, we all got together, we joined up for various reasons, but we joined up. Some did so consciously, but others out of fear. So those that joined out of fear, well of course they weren't happy doing the work of the organization, so what did they do? We had the order not to drink alcohol, but they drank anyway, while trying to hide it. So what did we do? We didn't punish them, what we did—and this is why we have the commission of elders—was have this commission explain to them why we made this rule, and explain the damage they were doing to themselves. So those who want to obey keep going, and those who don't leave. That is our answer.

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*Compañeros* and *compañeras*, good afternoon to everyone.

I come from a village called \_\_\_\_\_, which is part of the municipality Francisco Villa. I am here representing the Junta de Buen Gobierno [Good Government Council], my cargo<sup>3</sup> was Consejo ["Council"], from 2006 to 2009. I am going to explain how the responsibilities we have today came about. It's not my job yet to explain where we started in 1994, rather, I'm going to tell a little about where we started after 1994. Before, in 91, 92, what was the cause of the armed uprising? It was the domination, marginalization, humiliation, injustice, and the norms or laws of the bad governments and the landowning exploiters. In those days, our parents and grandparents were not taken into account, they suffered, and didn't have land to work and maintain their

children. So the Zapatista pueblos began to organize, we said "enough of so much humiliation." So we rose up in arms, we weren't bothered by having to walk at night, or by hunger.

So we trained and educated ourselves, and we saw that organized, united, we could do things, and that we would be able to do many more things. After the uprising, we began to look at how to advance the training of our autonomous authorities in each municipality. That's why we are all gathered here, to talk and share how our autonomous governments began to function. Why do I want to explain a little about this? Because I think that from that point on we were advancing toward where we are now. On this subject the *compañero* \_\_\_\_\_ is going to explain how we are working in our municipalities and in the Junta de Buen Gobierno today. That's all I have to say, *compañeros*.

*Compañeros*, as the other *compa* already told you, now our *compañero* \_\_\_\_\_ is going to try to explain a little because he was the founder of our autonomous government in Caracol III, in la Garrucha, they were the first authorities. So they are going to share how they worked, how they were, how they began, and how things have been until today.

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(...)

Ah I forgot to mention something before, about a month after we began our work, an organization called CIOAC [of PRD affiliation], kidnapped one of our *compañeros* along with a truck, so we had to denounce this but we didn't have any idea how to make a denunciation. Members of the Junta de Buen Gobierno and municipal councils had to go and speak, a few words each, to make this denunciation, as a team, and that's how we went about making the denunciation, but we got it out. And that's why we started designating a secretary, a cook, someone who sweeps up, because we had to clean up our own office and our work area, we didn't have anyone especially for those tasks and that's how we still do it today.

(...)

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(...)

So we went on working like that and we reached 2003, when the Juntas de Buen Gobierno were formed. We didn't know still, in our zone, if the leadership of the association of municipalities would one day be the authorities, the government. But in 2003, when the Juntas de Buen Gobierno were born, the people and the association of municipalities decided that those eight *compañeros*, members of the Leadership of the Association of Municipalities, would become the authorities of the Junta de Buen Gobierno. And those eight *compañeros* are those who take on the cargo of the Junta de Buen Gobierno for its first period, from 2003 to 2006.

So that's how it happened, and under those conditions, the Junta de Buen Gobierno did not yet have an adequate space to work in. A few days before the existence of Juntas de Buen Gobierno was made public, the pueblos quickly and urgently constructed a space for the Junta de Buen

Gobierno, as well as a place for each of the autonomous municipalities in the center of the Caracol. These were built with the materials that the pueblos had in that moment—used wood and used tin sheets—and that’s how we started, building those spaces, and in less than a week they were ready. So the offices were ready when we made the Juntas public in August of 2003. After they were made public the pueblos gathered together, proud of having created another entity of government as part of our autonomy. We held a party, a big celebration, to formally install the new autonomous government, and give it the office we had built and the materials with which we had supplied it.

We could say it was a bunch of stuff, but what the pueblo gave the Junta de Buen Gobierno was a table with two chairs, those were the supplies, and the space, a little smaller than this room we are in now. Those were the conditions at that time. A few days later, someone donated a very old machine [computer] and with that the work began. We received the space almost empty and that’s how we started, work initiatives arose and we got going, setting up the space.

In this work, as you can see, in the zone where we work, there are different forms of being, different forms of dressing, different colors, different beliefs, different ways of speaking, and so in that work we respect our compañeros and compañeras, regardless of how they are. The only thing that interests us is the will and capacity to work, so all of this about how someone is doesn’t concern us.

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(To be continued...)

I testify to this.  
From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.  
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.  
Mexico, February 2013.

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico.

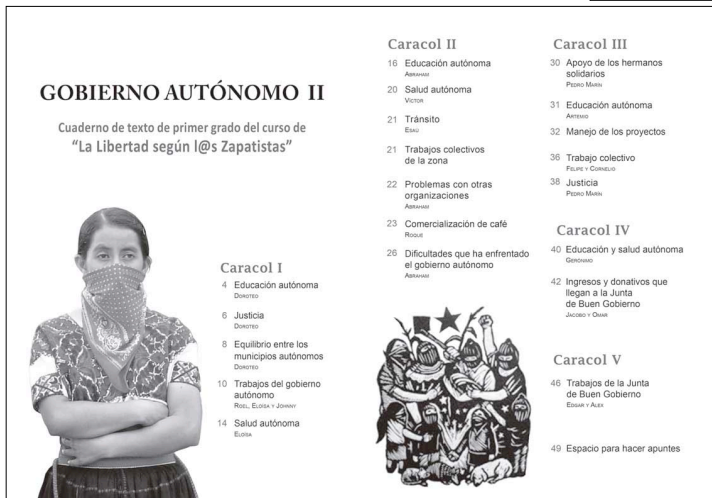
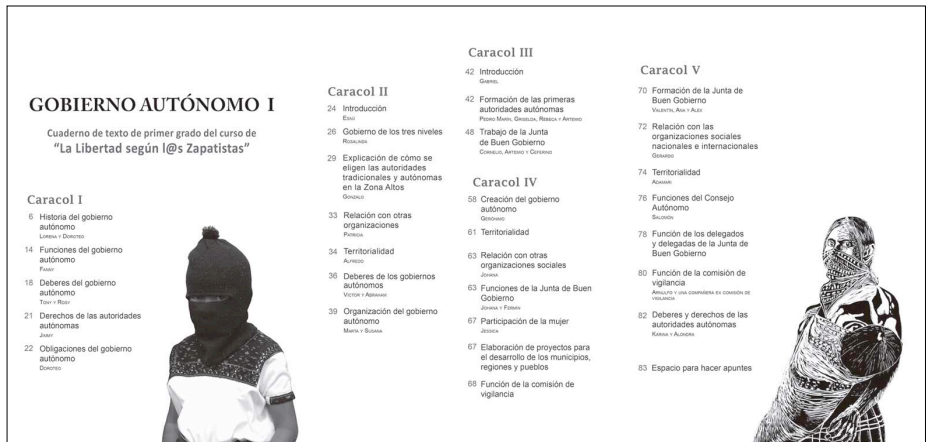
[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all-1/>]

Notes

1. The Caracoles, literally “shells” or “spirals” were announced in 2003 as the homes of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, or Good Government Councils. They replaced the five Zapatista “Agua Calientes,” one in each zone of Zapatista territory. When the EZLN first announced their existence they were described, in addition to being the seats of the self-government system, as “doors to enter into the communities” and “windows to see in and out.”
2. Ex-president of Mexico, 1994-2000.
3. Cargo is like a combination of duty and task, or charge; it also refers to a position of responsibility.

(...)

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## Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All 2

### How is it done?

#### Zapatista National Liberation Army

February 2013

Note: *Compas*, at another time (that is, if there is one) I will explain to you how our EZLN is organized. For now, we don't want to distract you from the "Sharing." We only want to clarify that you will see something about an "Information Commission." This commission is made up of *compañeras* and *compañeros*, *comandantes* and *comandantas*, (the **CCRI**, or Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee), who are watching over the work of autonomy, supporting the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* (Good Government Councils), and who keep the Zapatista bases of support informed as to how everything is going.

For now, then, more fragments from the Zapatista "sharing":

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(...)

*This is how we work, then. The last question here asks: How do you resolve problems? Yes there have been problems in the municipality. Land problems, threats, problems with electricity, yes they exist, and I think that these problems exist in all of the communities because it isn't just bases of support who live together, we have even more problems where we live in the official [ruling party] pueblos where our enemies are, where those who govern are, where there are paramilitaries, that's where we have these problems. But we have to figure out how to govern ourselves, even though it is difficult to learn this because, as other *compañeros* have said, there is no instruction manual. There is not a guide for this, there isn't anything written down anywhere that tells us what to do; rather, we have to remember that this is how our ancestors served when they weren't named by officials but rather by the people, and they served the people, and they didn't get a salary. Corruption and bad service began when salaries entered into the equation.*

*It is in this way, in the little that I have done in my pueblo and in my municipality, that I have been able to serve, although as I said, we continue to learn, we do not just know how to do things because we are older. We continue learning with everyone [male and female]. I think this is the purpose of the distinct levels [of government], and the commissioners and agents, they each have a function but they lack a way to resolve problems. In our case, we have to learn how to govern because we are not trained in this, because we as *campesinos* are more focused on the countryside, our law is the machete, the file, and the pozol<sup>4</sup> that we carry with us. So, I don't know if I'm wrong *compañeros*, but this is what I have to share with you.*

(...)

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*We have had a lot of meetings and made many agreements, more than just once we had to arrive at an agreement. We learned that this is difficult work; it isn't easy to do. Why?*

*Because as I said a little while ago, we don't have a guide, there is no manual that we can look at to see what to do, a guide we can follow; we learned through our work with our people.*

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(...)

*Compañeros, this is what we have been talking about and I won't add much more about the way we want to work. Many times the Junta cannot do the work alone, even though that idea crosses our minds; rather, the work must be based on coordination with the councils, and the committees [CCRI], so that we can carry out this idea of how we think things should work, this is what we have seen in some cases.*

*For example, with respect to the cargos,<sup>5</sup> the responsibilities, we see the difficulty of having lots of work to do. When I had my cargo, we saw that sometimes there was work that the Junta didn't have the capacity to cover. For example, at that time there weren't drivers for the clinic, the Junta had to be the driver, it had to be the cook, it had to fetch firewood; there were a lot of tasks and on top of that we had all of the office work to do, like studying the pending issues, pending tasks or municipal issues that hadn't been resolved, and there just wasn't time for everything. Now I see, and this crossed our minds then, that we needed support, another driver in that case, because sometimes in the middle of the night we would have to go and get someone who was seriously ill, and it was the Junta that had to go, and would get back at three or four in the morning. This problem crossed our minds but we couldn't find a solution, the situation presented itself, but we couldn't resolve it.*

*One example during my turn as Junta was that we wanted to diagnose which illnesses were the most frequent in the municipalities. We couldn't define this in the Junta, not even with the information we had. I had to ask the mando [local Zapatista authority], as is required, as to whether or not I could go to the municipalities for this information. So I asked the municipalities and some of the municipalities again did not act, some gave this response – they had consulted the people regarding which illness was most frequent and it was typhoid, there had been a typhoid breakout, but they hadn't formed the councils [we asked for]. So work gets done when the process functions well, like a machine. When a machine doesn't function, or a piston or a cylinder doesn't work, the car can't go up the hill; it doesn't have the force. This is what happened with our authority, although the Junta thinks or wants to make a proposal for approval in the assembly, sometimes, many times, it doesn't get approval and doesn't go anywhere.*

*But yes, this is a necessity. I saw at that time that there was a lot of work that year because we didn't have a driver. Now I see that they are rotating drivers to tend to the clinics, and to do the related work of washing the car, checking the tires, getting gasoline, the Junta isn't responsible for that now.*

*With this step, things are getting better, and I think that like this, bit by bit, it will continue to get better, as long as we are thinking and studying the necessities that arise, because the work in the zone or the municipality is also growing little by little. Little by little, more compañeras will participate because the work is growing. So we see here that what is really important is coordination among everyone, taking everything into account, in order to develop proposals and new ideas for how we can work.*

*It is important not to lose contact with the people. These days I hear sometimes that things for which the people were consulted at one point can now be done without consultation, that they can change a few words without the people knowing. This is a problem and can cause things to run amok, because if we teach the people and explain to them, and then all of the sudden leave them aside, they start to talk, to argue.*

*This can create disagreements, or cause them to speak badly of the authorities, and many times we need to go back and explain to the people. As we said earlier today, the Junta has to be very clear on the seven principles. **[This refers to the 7 principles of “lead by obeying” that guide the Juntas de Buen Gobierno: Serve, not Serve yourself/ Represent, not Supplant/ Construct, not Destroy/ Obey, not Command/ Propose, not Impose/ Convince, not Defeat/ Go Below, not Climb Above.]***

*The point is to convince the people, not to overcome them with the force of authority, you have to explain to them the reason for modifying certain rules or accords, you have to explain this to them; because if I am an authority and I don't explain to them why we do or don't do something, the question arises – was this point consulted with the people? This could create a grievance even if the people understand the decision, so explanations are meant to convince them and not to overcome them by force, so that people do not get discouraged or confused. This is what I wanted to explain a little more, because that's where dissent begins and how people get demoralized, this is how I see the problem.*

*You must always be close to the people so that this does not happen.*

*There are also people who might want to do something without majority agreement, so you have to explain to them that it can't be done, we have had a few cases like this. There are people who come to the office and even raise their voice to the authorities, but we can't accept their proposal because it depends on having majority approval. In these cases one has to be clear, one has to explain to the people and try to convince them, try to help them understand why we do things this way. This is what I think, compañeros, and this is what I try to explain about the seven principles, it is what I have understood, what I have learned a little about. I have not learned much because I only worked in that role for three years and little by little I realized how things needed to be. At that moment we couldn't do the work easily because we entered as new [authorities] without support, but now there are compañeros who have stayed on for one more year to accompany the new authorities, so they have some support.*

*But when we began it wasn't like that, we had only the support of the committees **[CCRI]**, they were there, and with that support, gradually we were able to understand things. I understood a little, and that is what I could explain to you compañeros.*

*(...)*

*How were they chosen?*

*They were chosen by the assembly; something like where we find ourselves now. In each municipality we convoked an assembly of the entire base and directly chose the group of compañeros to do that would do the work of autonomy.*

*What is their work? What work were these compañeros going to do? Because we had practically no knowledge about this, maybe a few people had some, but the majority had no knowledge about this task, what would we do? We would work on autonomy, we would govern ourselves, but “how” is the question that arose, what is it exactly that we're going to do? Well, no one knew the answer, but with the passage of time, with these authorities in place, problems arose that they would have to handle. There really were problems in each of our pueblos, in each of our municipalities.*

*What were the problems that the authorities faced at that time?*

*At that time, the principal problems we faced were alcoholism, domestic problems, problems between neighbors, and some agrarian problems.*

*So what did this group of compañeros do when a problem presented itself?*

*What they did was discuss it: first the person with the complaint would come and they listened to that person's problem. When they had listened, they would call in the other party, they listened to both sides. So this group of compañeros listened, first they listened to what the problem was and who was right. When they could see that the person with the complaint was right, then they had to talk with the other compañero with whom the first had the problem.*

*At that time, the authorities would try to give them ideas, that is, convince both sides to arrive at a peaceful solution without so much drama.*

*This is what the authorities did with other types of problems as well, in agrarian issues for instance, they would convince the compañeros not to fight, not to fight over a piece of land. If one compañero's land was being taken by somebody else, then they had to explain to the compañero who was taking the land why this shouldn't be, what is right, is right.*

*(...)*

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*(...)*

*Yes, that is true, but my question then is if you need to make a rule, who proposes the idea? Where does the idea come from regarding what the rule should be? Who is it that says, ‘I propose this’? Where does the idea come from? And so on. What do you do to unite the voice of the people, if it is originally the Junta's idea? Does the Junta take this on or do*

they still need the support of the *compañeros* of the Information Commission? Or who is it that says that we need to create a rule here?

**Another *compañero*'s response:** *What you have described, where an initiative comes directly from the *compañeros* who are authorities, an initiative for a rule comes directly from the *compañeras* who are in authority, that hasn't happened yet. It is between *compañeras* and *compañeros*.*

*No, compa, my question is as Junta de Buen Gobierno, not as *compañeras*. As Junta de Buen Gobierno, and this is just an example that I am giving, it doesn't have to be specifically about a rule or law. When you see that there is a need or there is a problem - I use the example of a rule because it requires a relation – the Junta de Buen Gobierno isn't going to impose a law, and so we want to discuss how it is that you handle this. Because it is here that democracy enters into play, and this is what we want to understand. Because as you told us, there won't always be insurgent leaders present, and, as we understand, the Information Commission, or the CCRI [Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee] won't always be there either. So you as the Juntas de Buen Gobierno, how do you approach something that needs to be handled, a law or a problem, some issue that needs to move forward, a project or whatever it may be. How do the Juntas de Buen Gobierno, the MAREZ [Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities in Rebellion], the authorities and the people relate?*

That is, how is democracy made?

(...)

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To be continued...

*I testify.*

*From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.*

*Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.*

*Mexico, February 2013*

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico.

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all-1/>]

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Notes

4. *Pozol* is a highly nutritious drink made of the dough from ground corn mixed with water. It is commonly consumed in the Mexican countryside as a midday meal.
5. *Cargo* is like a combination of duty and task, or charge; it also refers to a position of responsibility.

## Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All 3 The *Compañeras*. The long path of the Zapatistas. Zapatista National Liberation Army

February 2013.

**NOTE:** Below are fragments of the Zapatista women's "sharing," which form part of the notebook "Women's Participation in Autonomous Government." In these extracts, the *compañeras* talk about how they see their own history of struggle as women, and, along the way, shatter some of the racist, sexist, anti-zapatista ideas that people across the political spectrum hold about women, about indigenous women and about Zapatista women.

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*Good morning everyone. My name is Guadalupe, from the pueblo Galilea, in the Monterrey region. As you have heard, there are regions that don't have an autonomous municipality, and I come from one of those. My *cargo*<sup>6</sup> is education promoter, and I represent Caracol II "Resistance and Rebellion for Humanity" of the Altos [highlands] zone of Chiapas. To start I am going to give you a small introduction to the subject.*

*We know that in the beginning of life, women had a very important role in society, among the peoples, in the tribes. Women did not live like we live now; they were respected, they had the most important role with regard to the*

*conservation of the family, they were respected because they gave life, just like now we respect the mother earth because she gives us life. In that time, women had a very important role, but this changed over time with the arrival of private property.*

*When private property was established, women were relegated to another level, and what we call "patriarchy" began by dispossessing women of their rights and looting the earth itself. So it was when private property began that men began to rule. We know that with private property came three great evils: the exploitation of all of us – men and women – but more so of women; as women we are also exploited by the neoliberal system. We also know that with this came men's oppression of women, just for being women. And as women we also in that time suffered discrimination for being indigenous. So we have these three great evils; there are others, but we are not talking about those right now.*

*For those of us in the organization [EZLN], lacking so many rights as women, we saw that it was necessary to fight for equality between men and women, and that is how our Women's Revolutionary Law was written. Here in the Altos Zone perhaps we have not made great advances; they have*



been small advances, slow ones, but we are advancing *compañeras* and *compañeros*.

So we're going to talk here about how we have advanced in the different levels, the different areas, and the different places where we work. We are also going to talk about how we, men and women, analyzed the Revolutionary Law before we came here; we analyzed how we are doing on each of the points of the Women's Revolutionary Law, so we're going to talk about that too. It is very important that not only women participate in this analysis, but that men also participate, in order to hear what we think, what we say. Because if we are talking about a revolutionary struggle, a revolutionary struggle isn't made only by men nor only by women, it is the work of everyone, it is the work of the people and as people we are children (*niños* and *niñas*), men, women, young people (*jóvenes* and ***jóvenes***), adults, and elderly (*ancianos* and *ancianas*). We all have a place in this struggle and that is why we all need to participate in this analysis and the work that is pending.

(...)

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(...)

*Compañeros, compañeras, my name is **Eloísa**, of the pueblo Alemania, San Pedro Michoacán municipality, I was a member of the Junta de Buen Gobierno [Good Government Council], of the Caracol I "Mother of the caracoles. Sea of our dreams." We are going to talk a bit about the subject of the *compañeras*, and my job is to talk about the *compañeras'* participation before 94 and a little about how we began to advance after 94.*

So as we talked about in our zone, at the beginning we as *compañeras* did not participate, our *compañeras* from before did not have this idea that we could participate. We had the thought or idea that we women were only good for taking care of the home or the children or for cooking; maybe it was that same capitalist ignorance that put that idea in our heads. But we as women were also afraid that we weren't able to do things outside of the home, nor were the *compañeros* willing to allow that space.

Just as we didn't have the freedom to participate, to speak, we also thought that men were worth more than we were. When we were under our parents' dominion, they did not give us the freedom to leave home, *machismo* was very strong then. Maybe the *compañeros* were like that not because they wanted to be, but because ideas of capitalism or of the system had also penetrated their thinking. Also the *compañeros* are not accustomed to doing the tasks of the household, taking care of the children, washing clothes, and cooking food, and so it is difficult for them, it is hard for them to take care of the children so that their *compañeras* can leave to do their work.

As I said before, the *compañeras* who live under our parents' dominion or still live with our parents have this mode of respect, if our parents say we can work, then we go where

we want to work. But if our parents say you're not going, as they sometimes do, well sometimes we obey, sometimes we have it in our heads that we must respect our parents' wishes. So there are times that our parents don't let us go, or it has also happened that they think that if they let their daughters leave home then instead of going to our assigned work, we are going to do other things, things that will later get our parents into problems, and they will have to take responsibility for fixing our problems as women. This is sometimes what our parents or our husbands think, for those who are already married, this is what is sometimes going through their minds.

(...)

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*Compañeros and compañeras, good afternoon to all of you present here today. My name is **Andrea**, from the pueblo of San Manuel, municipality Francisco Gómez of Caracol III "La Garrucha." We come as representatives of the *compañeras* of the zone of Garrucha, to share what we are able to; we don't bring very many words, as the great majority of us speak Tzeltal.*

I am going to start with what we know about how the *compañeras* suffered before 94. There were many humiliations, mistreatments, and rapes, but the government didn't care about this, its work was to destroy us as women. They didn't care if a woman was sick or asking for help, none of that mattered to them.

But we as women, today, we can't let that happen to us now, we must go forward. In those days we suffered, as the other *compañeras* have commented. In those days when there were so many humiliations, what did the bad government and the landowners do? They didn't concern themselves with the *compañeras*.

What did the landowners do? They had the *compañeros* in peonage, and the *compañeras* had to get up very early to work and then the poor women had to continue working alongside the men. There was much slavery, but *compañeros* we don't want this anymore, that is why we began to participate, as *compañeras*. In those days we didn't participate, they had us as if we were blind, mute. What we want now is for our autonomy to function, for women to participate, to not stay behind. We will continue to go forward so that the bad government can see that we will not let them exploit us as they did our ancestors. We don't want that anymore.

It wasn't until the year 94 that we knew about the Women's Law. It is so good, *compañeros*, that this law existed, that we have been able to participate. From that year forward, there have been mobilizations where the *compañeras* have participated, for example, in the National Referendum women participated. I was present at that time, I was 14 years old and I was there for the National Referendum. I didn't know very well how to participate or to speak, but I did what I could *compañeras*.

Women have struggled, have demonstrated their capacity for struggle, and the government now realizes that women won't give up either, they will keep going. And now, as I said, we want our autonomy to function. Now that we have rights as women, what we are going to do is build, do our work; it is now our obligation, as they say, to keep going.

So a question for those of us who are present here, maybe for one of the *compañeras* that follows me: do you know who made the Revolutionary Law? If someone wants to answer they can, because someone fought for this law and defended us. Who was it that fought for us *compañeras*? It was Comandanta Ramona, she made this effort for us. She didn't know how to read or write, nor did she speak Spanish. So why don't we, *compañeras*, make this same effort? She, who already made this effort, is our example. She is the example that we are going to follow going forward in our work, to demonstrate what we know in our organization.

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It is my job to represent the *compañeras* who are going to participate on the subject of women, there are 5 *compañeras* who are going to participate. Good afternoon to everyone. My name is **Claudia** and I come from the Caracol IV of Morelia. I am one of the bases of support from the pueblo Alemania, region Independencia, autonomous municipality "17 de Noviembre". I am going to read a short introduction before entering our sub-themes. I am going to read the text, because if I just say it, being up here in front, I'm going to forget what I want to say.

Before, a long time ago, we suffered mistreatment, discrimination, and inequality in the home and in the community. We always suffered, they told us that we were mere objects, that we weren't good for anything, because that is what our grandmothers had taught us. They only taught us to work in the house, in the field, to take care of the children and the animals, and to serve our husbands.

We did not have the opportunity to go to school, that's why we do not know how to read or write, much less speak Spanish. They told us that women do not have the right to participate or to complain. We didn't know how to defend ourselves, nor did we know what rights were. That's how our grandmothers were educated by their bosses who were the ranchers.

Some of us still today have this idea that we must only work in the house, because that suffering has continued to imprison us in that idea even now, But after December of 1994, the autonomous municipalities were formed and there is where we began to participate, to learn how to do this work, thanks to our organization which gave us a space for our participation as *compañeras*, but also thanks to our *compañeros*, to our parents who began to understand that we have a right to do this kind of work.

(...)

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**Compañera Ana.** It is our turn again, the Zona Norte, the participants who are going to speak on the themes that we analyzed in our Caracol are here. I am going to begin with an introduction.

Many years ago there was equality between men and women, because there wasn't one who was more important than the other. Inequality began little by little with the division of labor, when the men became those who went to the field to cultivate food, went hunting to complement our food supply, and women stayed in the house to do domestic work, as well as the weaving and spinning of clothes and the making of kitchen utensils like pots, glasses, clay plates. Later another division of work arose when some people began to work in livestock. Cattle began to serve as a form of money, they were used as exchange. With time this activity became the most important, even more so when the bourgeoisie arose, who dedicated themselves to buying and selling in order to accumulate profits. All of this work was done by men, and that is why it is men who rule the family, because only the man earned money for family expenses, and the work of women was not recognized as important. That's why women were viewed as less, weak, incapable of work.

That was the custom, the way of life the Spanish brought when they came to conquer our peoples, as we said before, it was the friars who educated and instructed us in their customs and knowledges. From that point on they taught us that women had to serve men and pay attention to their orders, that women must cover their heads with a veil when they go to church, and that a woman shouldn't let her gaze wander just anywhere, she must keep her head down. It was believed that it was women who make men sin, and that is why the church did not permit women to go to school, much less occupy cargos.

We as indigenous peoples adopted as a culture the way that the Spanish treated their women, that is why inequality between men and women arose in our communities and continues to this day. These are examples:

Women were not allowed to go to school, and if a young girl left to study somewhere she was looked upon badly by the people in the communities. Little girls weren't allowed to play with little boys, or to touch their toys. The only work women were to do was in the kitchen and raising children. Young single women did not have the freedom even to walk around the community or in the city, they had to be shut up in their house, and when they got married they were exchanged for alcohol or other goods without even giving their word as to if they were in agreement or not, because they did not have the right to choose their spouse. Once they were married they could not go anywhere alone or talk to other people, especially men. Women were mistreated by their husbands and there was no concern of justice, these mistreatments happened mostly when men were drinking. Women had to live their whole lives like that, in suffering and abuse.

Another thing that mothers did was instruct their daughters how to serve food to their brothers, so that later on they

would live well with their husband and not be mistreated. It was believed that the reason for mistreatment was that the woman did not learn to serve her husband and do everything he said.

But our grandfathers and grandmothers also had good customs that we continue to practice today. They did not worry much when someone was sick, because they knew medicinal plants and they knew how to take care of their health. They didn't worry about lack of money because they cultivated everything they needed to feed themselves. That's why women were strong, they were workers, they made their own clothes, calhidra [lime], and even though they didn't know their rights, they could go forward.

(...)

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(To be continued...)

I testify.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

Mexico, February 2013.

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico.

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all-3-the-companeras-the-long-path-of-the-zapatistas/>]

#### Notes

6. *Cargo* is like a combination of duty and task, or charge; it also refers to a position of responsibility.



# Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All 4

## The Compañeras: Taking on the cargo<sup>7</sup>

### Zapatista National Liberation Army

February 2013

*There is nothing more subversive and irreverent as a group of women from below saying, to others and to themselves: “we.”*

Don Durito

**Note:** Below are more fragments from the Zapatista women’s ‘sharing,’ only now the *compañeras* are discussing their work and the current problems that they face in their *cargos* of leadership, the teaching and carrying out of justice, and the managing of resources, along with some reflection on the thorny issue of “gender equity” in the construction of a world that proposes to be inclusive and tolerant, a world where “no one is more, no one is less.”

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(...)

*Yes, we have had to settle cases like this. Once we had a case—I will comment here on what the other compañera already mentioned—when we had barely entered the Junta [Good Government Council], they put the two of us in charge of a team and a problem was brought to us. A compañera complained that she was being mistreated by her husband. It is an incredible story and it was a really ugly situation for us. The compañera said:*

*“I want a separation from my husband,” but this now ex compa already had two wives.*

*We investigated the situation. We called the children of the first wife and of the second, and from there we started to come up with a solution. That’s why it took us awhile, the situation was really messed up. We had asked the compañera:*

*“And what is it that he did to you?” thinking that he had only hit her.*

*No, this darned guy had hung the compañera from by her feet and hit her, same as with two of his other children. And so we had to find a solution. What was our solution? The compañera asked for a separation, so we did this by distributing their belongings between the first wife and her children, because it was the man who had committed the offense and we couldn’t leave her with nothing, and the second wife, because she already had a grown son. We didn’t leave anything to the man, we left the rest to the son so that our decision would be clear to the man. We divided up all of his things, this is how we solved the problem, we decided in favor of the compañera who had come to us to make her complaint.*

(...)

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(...)

**Yolanda:** *We’re going to continue with what I am to talk about, which is a little bit about the law [Women’s Revolutionary Law]. As you know, this law was created*

*precisely to address the situation that the compañeras lived on a daily basis. This is why it was created, because before the law they suffered a lot, as we have already heard and I won’t repeat now. This law is already written; we have it in the five caracoles.*

(...)

*But we see that it is very important that we study this law well, because if we don’t really understand what it is that this law tells us, as we have discussed a little bit in this zone, the same history can repeat itself again, where it is forgotten that woman is the giver of life, as we have heard happened before. If we don’t understand this law that we Zapatistas have, this could occur again.*

*This law was not made so that now women could give the orders, it wasn’t so that women could dominate their husbands, their compañeros; this is not what it means. That’s why we need to really study this law, because that is not the reality that we are going to create, nor do we want to follow the history that we have now, where the compañeros who are machistas [chauvinist] give the orders. But if we misinterpret this [law], the same thing could happen but where the compañeras will give the orders and the poor compañeros will be left out, and this is not what we want.*

*What we are after is something like a construction of humanity, this is what we are trying to change, and this requires another world. It is like the goal of everything we are doing, men and women, because as we have already heard, it isn’t a woman’s struggle and it isn’t a man’s struggle. When we’re talking about revolution they must go together, among all men and women, that is how struggle is made.*

*It can’t be that the compañeros say we are struggling here, making revolution, but only compañeros take on the cargos and the compañeras stay in the house. That is not a struggle for everyone. What we want is a struggle for everyone, men and women, this is what we want.*

*But let’s be clear that we are still learning this first law, it still makes us a little dizzy, because the truth is that as compañeras it is still very difficult for us to take on a cargo, any cargo.*

(...)

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(...)

*You mentioned that there is a commission of honor and justice. What is its job and what is the role of the compañeras there?*

*On the question of honor and justice and the role of the compañeras, just like in the municipality we take turns, we have two **consejas** [like council or advisor, female], two consejos [male], and one man and one woman assigned to honor and justice. So for example if a compañera has a problem, for example in the case of a rape, she would go*

talk to the *compañera* assigned to honor and justice. That *compañera* from the honor and justice commission then coordinates with the man on the honor and justice commission so that the *compañera* with the problem doesn't have to feel uncomfortable with the male *compa*. That is how the honor and justice commission works.

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(...)

At the zone level, we have another example that is a job done especially by women *compañeras*. It is a women's initiative where they created a cafeteria-store, that is, they have a small cafeteria and a small grocery store. They started with a loan of 15 thousand pesos and hatched their idea for this project. The initiative was made by the regional and local leaders in coordination with the Junta, which supported them with tables, dishes, and other useful things for the cafeteria. Various people cooperated to make this happen, but it was these *compañeras* who had the idea, did the work, and organized it all.

They began with 15 thousand pesos, they have organized their leadership responsibilities, and the *compañeras* in charge locally take turns at the zone level preparing and selling the food. They reported to us that, in their first business ever, they made a profit of 40 thousand pesos. With this 40 thousand pesos they could pay back the loan that they had taken out, which was 15 thousand pesos, and they had 25 thousand pesos left over.

Then they began to think that they were missing some of the things that they needed to round out the project. The Junta had supported them, as I said, with dishes and tables, but they began to think that with their earnings they wanted to improve things a little, and so they used these profits to better equip themselves. Now they are working like this, they have their leadership, the work rotates among the *compañeras*, and every year they change the makeup of the leadership. The communities control what is sold there, and they have informed us that they currently have 56,176 pesos in cash according to their last account balance.

All of this is work that we have been doing at the zone level, not with the objective to divide it up among ourselves or to spend these small funds that we are generating, but rather to be prepared for anything that we might need in the zone, for the things that will help us in the struggle.

(...)

We know that in the Tzeltal Jungle zone there are *compañeras* who are **comisariadas** (like commissioners), or *agentas*, how does it work there for these *compañeras* to be **comisariadas** and *agentas*, tell us, share with us how it is. Are there *compañeras* who function as local authorities? How do they do this? How do these *compañeras* work? Because there are also *compañeros* who are *comisariados* and *agentes*. What we want to do here is share how it is that we teach ourselves, help ourselves, prepare ourselves. In this case, especially with respect to the *compañeras*, how do the *compañera* authorities work in the communities?

What do the *compañeras* do in their communities as a **comisariada** or **agente**?

The **agentas**, for example, in my community, are the ones who watch over the community, who keep vigil over certain kinds of problems, things like small interpersonal issues, or problems with animals that cause harm or damages. It is the *agente* who is responsible for solving these types of problems. They also hold meetings to provide guidance on how to avoid problems with alcohol and drug addiction. These *compañeras* always participate, in every meeting, providing this guidance to avoid arriving at more serious problems. The **comisariadas** also hold meetings to discuss land issues—the care of the surrounding lands and the use of agro-chemicals. We planned all of this out as regulations that the **comisariadas** and *agentes* administer within the communities to maintain this control.

For the *compañeras* who have already become **agentas**, whose job is it to solve problems in the communities, can they already solve the problems themselves, or do they do it with the support of *compañeros*?

In my community, sometimes the *compañeras* request the support of a local authority to listen to an issue if they aren't sure how to participate, so they may ask for counsel. That happens often, but there are times when they [the authorities] aren't there and the *compañeras* do it alone. For example, in my community, the *agente* is a *compañera*, and so is the substitute *agente*, and so the two of them have resolved problems themselves. As they have seen it done a few times, they follow this example and create solutions.

(...)

Of the 60 members, are they half *compañeras* and half *compañeros*?

Yes *compañero*, we are half and half, no one is more, no one is less.

(...)

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(To be continued...)

I testify.

From the mountains of Southeastern Mexico.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

Mexico, February 2013.

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico.

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all-4-the-companeras-taking-on-the-cargo/>]

## PARTICIPACIÓN DE LAS MUJERES EN EL GOBIERNO AUTÓNOMO

Cuaderno de texto de primer grado del curso de "La Libertad según l@s Zapatistas"



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## Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All 5 The Money Zapatista National Liberation Army

March 2013

**Note:** Money, cash, bills, benjamins, clams, *dinero*, the economy, the finances, etc. The economic question isn't only about where the resources come from (some people's morbid curiosity about this will be satisfied in the little school, don't worry), but also how they are managed (do the authorities get paid? nobody's sticking their hand in the cookie jar for personal gain? etc.), and, above all, how do we keep track of everything? Wait a second! The Zapatistas have a banking system?! Well, continue to be scandalized because, as we have said, this is what the Zapatistas do, unsettle "decent people's consciences." The following are fragments from the "sharing" on the economies of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* [Good Government Councils].

\_\*\_

*So, up until now there hasn't been any monetary support [for the authorities of the JBG], and that is how we came to realize that money cannot do the work of autonomy or the work of governing. We have realized this, because no one is getting paid for the work that they do. It's true, I'll tell you, that some do receive support from their community for their work, in the form of basic grains or something similar, whatever the community decides is appropriate, but never money. And that is how we have been working these nine years in the Junta.*

(...)

*How do the members of the Junta travel to your caracol?*

*If there is transportation [usually a bus or smaller collective van], then they go in that, and if there is no transportation, then they walk. The Junta's limited resources cover the cost of their transport, yes, so they do receive financial support for their transport costs, but nothing more. If it costs 20 pesos then they are reimbursed 20 pesos when they arrive.*

*The compañeros and compañeras that work in these cargos<sup>8</sup> of the authority, as was already mentioned, do it out of conscience, of their own volition. But these compañeros also live in communities where there are many compañeros, and so there is also communal work, organizational initiatives to organize resistance. And so these compañeros, some of them, have the right to do their work in their free time, and therefore don't have to also participate in the collective and communal work in their community.*

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*Autonomous government manages the different work areas, including education, commerce, health, communication, justice, agriculture, transportation, campamentistas, [people who come to stay in the Zapatista villages for awhile], **BANPAZ** (the Zapatista Autonomous Popular Bank), **BANAMAZ** (the Zapatista Women's Autonomous Bank), and administration. These are the work areas managed within the autonomous government. In the beginning, when the Junta de Buen Gobierno began, there weren't very many compañeros and so each compañero had three or four work areas, because there were very few of them. By the second period of the Junta there were already 12 compañeros, and*

so the work that they had to do began to balance out a little better, they only had two or three areas per *compañero*.

In this third period of the Junta de Buen Gobierno we now have 24 people and the work has balanced out. The different work areas are divided among *compañeras* and *compañeros*; the Junta has two teams, and there are 24 of us, so we each cover 15 days per month. In each of these different work areas there are two *compañeros* and two *compañeras*, and that is how the Junta de Buen Gobierno functions, those are the areas it manages. That's all *compañeros*. So now we'll move on to the next *compañero*. (...)

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(...)  
In the communities—as we were discussing with the *compañeros*, because we have a little bit of knowledge of the zone—there are collective fields of beans and corn, cattle collectives, collective stores, and chicken collectives. There are small businesses, not permanent businesses that are there all the time, but sometimes when there are small events, people bring their small businesses to them. The *compañera* said that one community in her region started with a chicken farm business, and every now and then they kill a chicken or two and make tamales, then they sell these tamales and little by little they amassed a fund and ultimately used this fund to buy a corn mill. That is how they created their cooperative work.

Another *compañero* knows of another community that has another way of doing things, it is a center where many people from other communities come, and there the *compañeras* organized themselves to make a *tortilleria* [tortilla store], but not because they bought one of those machines that we see in the cities and are there dispensing tortillas from an assembly line. These *compañeras* are there with their press, making their tortillas by hand and selling their tortillas to the people who buy them, and that is their collective work.

This is how they organize many other things in the communities. And what is this for? Well it is so that when a *compañero* in this community, it may be the education promoter or the health promoter, has to go and do their work, the community can give them something to cover their transport costs, so that they can do their work.

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Here in the Caracol II of Oventic, we receive visitors, national and international. Many of those visitors only come in order to visit the center, the Caracol, but some who come wish to support the community leave a small donation. If they decide to leave a small donation, they don't leave much, they leave it here with the Junta who receives it, and the donor receives a receipt for their visit from the Vigilance Commission. The Vigilance Commission also sends a receipt to the **CCRI** [Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee], the original stays with the Junta, and a copy goes to the donor. The small donations are gathered and the Junta administers them. They use them for whatever expenses we have here in the Caracol center, and that is

how we spend the donations, but they are small donations, people don't leave much, it depends, it may be 40 or 50 pesos or 100 pesos or so. But if it gets spent, it is not only the Junta that knows, because each month the Junta makes a report; we make an end of the month report each month.

When the Junta makes its reports, the Junta members don't do it alone, but rather all 28 of us members get together to make the report, including some *compañeros* from the **CCRI**, so that together we can see how the resources that we have here in the Junta in the caracol have been spent, or how the Junta de Buen Gobierno administers them.

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Another obligation of the autonomous government is to govern with sincerity and honesty all of the economic inputs and outputs in each area of government, because all of the goods and materials are for everyone. As I explained a little while ago, the Junta can't just manage these resources willy nilly, including those donated by *compañeros* in solidarity.

Each area of the [good] government in the municipalities, in the Junta, makes their monthly report, and our reports are very detailed, even 50 pesos spent somewhere has to be noted, it should be clearly stated how those 50 pesos were spent, and that is how we do our report. As I said a little while ago, it's not just a couple of members who make the report, but all 28 of us get together, including *compañeros* from the **CCRI**, and that is how we work here in the caracol center.

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Also we have a Funds Commission, here in our zone we have a small fund. As the *compañera* explained, there are three women's [work] areas, for example herbalists, [bone] healers, and midwives. One time in this work area they elaborated a project, but it wasn't only for the herbalists, healers, and midwives, but rather for the central clinic, or the health project, which included the three groups or areas of herbalists, healers, and midwives. This project had a budget for food, which was 50 pesos per day, and the workshop was for three days, so the course costs 150 pesos for the food, but apart from that there were also transportation costs, which also had a budget that depended on the *compañeras'* distance traveled and amount spent. And so it was in this budget, in this project, in the entire zone, that all of the regional authorities, the autonomous councils, realized the importance of creating a fund.

The agreement reached was that we wouldn't spend the entire amount budgeted for food, but rather just a small contribution, or 10 pesos paid by each *compañera*. But because it was three days, each course or workshop would cost 30 pesos, and so there was some left over. According to the agreement of the assembly of authorities, the rest would be saved as a fund for the zone, not the region, but the zone. Also regarding transportation, an agreement was reached to only spend 50% of the budget, and the community would contribute 50% also, and so 50% was left over for the fund of the zone.

Why did we do it like this? Because we had seen here in our zone that the economic resources are more and more scarce when we have some kind of movement, and that's why we decided to save part of the money as a fund. And that is how we created this support, the fund for the zone, and that is why we created the Fund Commission, the Savings Commission. I'm not sure if that answers your questions.

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Who approves the report on the finances and the general report, if there is no one in charge (sticking their hand in the cookie jar)?

Well, during our time as Junta, we worked all together, there wasn't anyone else who checked the report, only the entire Junta team. But each time we wrote a report on our spending we sent a copy to the Information Commission; all of the purchase reports as well, we planned the food purchases together with the Information Commission. We all decide together in the office of the Information Commission, with the Vigilance Commission also present; the three offices would meet, and we would come to an agreement regarding whether we were going to buy something, or if we were going to have a commission how much its costs would be, and how to report its expenses to the Junta. Each shift would give an account, because each shift would elect a secretary and a treasurer, who would be responsible for the money, who would keep track of it, we didn't all control it together. If a *compañero* were responsible for a quantity of money, for example, 10 thousand pesos, he would be responsible for administrating this money for 10 days, and this *compañero* would be responsible for managing the economy, the expenses, the secretary, and the treasurer. At the end [of that 10-day shift] we would tally how much was spent and if a *compañero* was missing 100 or 200 pesos, then he would owe that money because he had been responsible for administrating it during those 10 days. This is what we did during each shift, check to see if the accounts balanced, we didn't let it pile up until the end, but rather during each shift we would be checking to see if it added up to the 10 thousand pesos that corresponded to that 10-day shift. But the purchases were always made on agreement of the three offices.

The question is, do you have data to ensure that these *compañeros* are telling the truth? That no money is missing? What facts ensure this?

*Compañeros*, the response to this question is that this is done with the receipt, the record of money entering. If there is a certain amount, let's say 50 thousand pesos, taken in during a given time, then the *compa* whose turn it is, as the other *compañero* said, will manage this 50 thousand pesos for 10 days. If he spends three or four thousand of that, he has to provide a report regarding what the expenses were along with the receipts for whatever he spent, or for the commissions that didn't have any expenditures except for food, so that the account is balanced. And it has to add up correctly, because it isn't only the administrator who is keeping track, but also the Vigilance and Information

Commissions, because they also have a list of how much money is being managed.

And if it isn't delivered with a receipt, how can it be verified?

The way that we do it is that all of the money that comes in must have a receipt, because if a *compañero* in solidarity comes to give a donation, they have to have a receipt to deliver or to tell their collective or organization how much was donated. Copies of this receipt stay with the Junta and with the Information Commission, so nothing can be lost as all donations are recorded. And the financial outputs are handled by the Junta with the commission that is currently learning how to balance the accounts.

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(To be continued...)

I testify.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

Mexico, March 2013.

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico.

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all-5-the-money/>]

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#### Notes

7. The Caracoles, literally “shells” or “spirals” were announced in 2003 as the homes of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, or Good Government Councils. When the EZLN first announced their existence they were described, in addition to being the seats of the self-government system, as “doors to enter into the communities” and “windows to see in and out.”
8. Cargo is like a combination of duty and task, or charge; it also refers to a position of responsibility.





# Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All 6

## The Resistance.

### Zapatista National Liberation Army

March of 2013.

**NOTE:** The following fragments talk about the resistance of the zap... wait! There's a Zapatista Airforce?! The Zapatista health system is better than the health system of the bad government?! For over 20 years, the Zapatista communities have resisted, with their own ingenuity, creativity, and intelligence, all of the various counter-insurgency efforts waged against them. The so-called "Crusade against Hunger"<sup>9</sup> of the current *Priista* overseers does nothing but reiterate the fallacy that all that indigenous people want is a hand-out rather than Democracy, Liberty, and Justice. This counter-insurgency campaign does not come alone, but is accompanied by a media campaign (the same type of media campaign that today in Venezuela once again shows its desire for a coup against a people that will know how to gain strength from their pain), the complicity of the political class as a whole (in what should be called the "Pact **against** Mexico,"<sup>10</sup>) and, of course, a military and police escalation: in Zapatista territories the paramilitaries are emboldened (with the consent of the state government), federal troops intensify their provocations during patrols "to locate the Zapatista leadership," the "intelligence" agencies are reactivated, and the justice system reiterates its ridiculousness (which rhymes with Cassez<sup>11</sup>) in denying freedom to teacher *Alberto Pathistán Gómez*, thus condemning him for being indigenous in Mexico in the 21st century. But the teacher resists, not to mention the Zapatista indigenous communities...

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*Good morning compañeros, good morning compañeras. My name is Ana, from the current Junta de Buen Gobierno [Good Government Council], fourth generation 2011-2014, from Caracol<sup>12</sup> I in La Realidad. I am going to talk to you a bit about ideological resistance, the subtheme that the two of us—the compañero and I—are to talk about. I am first going to talk about the ideology of the bad government. The bad government uses the mass media to control and misinform the people, for example via television, radio, soap operas, cellphones, newspapers, magazines, even sports. They insert commercials on television and on the radio to distract people, and soap operas to hook people and make them think that what happens on television is going to happen to us. In the bad government's education system, those who aren't Zapatistas are ideologically managed so that their kids are in school, properly uniformed, every day, but just for the sake of appearances, it doesn't matter if they learn how to read or write. They also get them scholarships for school, but in the end this just benefits the companies that sell supplies or uniforms. How do we resist all of the bad government's ideological wrongs in our Caracol? Our principal weapon is autonomous education. There in our Caracol the education promoters are taught the true history of the people, so that*

*this knowledge can be conveyed to the children, along with the knowledge of our [Zapatista] demands. We also began giving political talks to our young people so that they are awake and aware and don't fall easily into government ideologies. We are also giving talks to the people on the 13 [Zapatista] demands, via the local authorities in each village. That is the little I can explain to you, next the compañero will talk to you.*

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(...)

*There are also programs, part of the government projects. The government began to bring in projects so that our brothers and sisters would accept these projects and believe they are good and forget about their own work; so that these brothers and sisters now don't depend on themselves but rather on the bad government.*

*What do we do to resist these things? We began to organize ourselves to do collective work, as some of the compas have already said, we do collective work at the village, region, municipal, and zone levels. We do this work to satisfy our own needs, different types of work, it is how we resist falling into the bad government's projects and how we work to depend on ourselves, not on the bad government.*

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*There [in our zone] there is a huge hospital in a community called Guadalupe Tepeyac, and right now a children's hospital is being constructed very close by, about a half hour or an hour away, in the center of La Realidad. But what is happening, what have we seen in that hospital in Guadalupe Tepeyac? In spite of the fact that the government has a lot of equipment, people arrive from different communities, from different municipalities, and what happens? Let's say they need to do an ultrasound, for example, or a lab analysis. As the doctors there know, our hospital is very close by, our Hospital-School "**The Faceless of San Pedro.**" The doctors at the government hospital know that they can't do the analysis there because they don't have the trained staff to do it, they have the machine but not the staff. So what they do is give the consultation there and send the patient to our hospital, to the Zapatista hospital-school. So [the patient] goes [to the Zapatista hospital] to do the analysis—just look at the level we're reaching, compañeros— and of course there are rules in this hospital to charge this person a fee, and they do the analysis for them.*

*Then people begin to realize, begin to admire, that while in the official hospital there isn't a solution to their problems as many would expect, when they come to our hospital, although humble, as we say, they are told what problems are detected with the ultrasound or in the laboratory analysis. The hospital of Guadalupe is there but there is just one lab analyst and there are many things that that lab analyst can't*

do, so they send the patient to our hospital-school. There we have a *compañero* who is trained and who has now trained various other *compañeros*, so he does the different analyses. But not just that, this *compañero* has an advantage over the lab analyst in the official hospital, who just does the lab test and that's it, and then sends the patient to another doctor to receive treatment. What the *compañero* in our hospital does when people are sent from the hospital in Guadalupe is perform the lab analysis and at the same time provide the prescription and the treatment for the illness, because our *compañero* has a lot of knowledge in that area of lab work.

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(...)

To explain a little more about the rural city [constructed, with media applause, by the "left" government of the corrupt Juan Sabines Guerrero], at the beginning houses were constructed. According to what the *compañeros* have told us, the materials that they used in construction were those things called **triplay** [3-ply, or plywood], very thin boards, not like the planks that we have here. Currently the constructions are inflated like balloons; when there are strong winds and when it is the hot and in the rainy season the materials with which the houses are built are essentially rubbish. That's the way it is. So in some communities in that municipality, families went to live [in the rural city] for a few days, and according to the media there's a kitchen that was constructed with the dimensions of 3x3, really small, and a little room, a living room on the side. But it's not possible to do anything because if they made their hearth there, well how would they put their hearth or its fire there? They couldn't.

Currently it is not functioning, the families went for a few days, but what we know is that they had to return to their community. Some families are still there but the conditions are very bad conditions. They say that on a little hill above where the houses are, they made water tanks but these are not working, *compañeros*, they're not working. They say that there is a bank there to invest money—I don't know if it's a world bank, or a state or municipal bank, I don't know, but it's not working. There are just empty shells, already rubbish. It's not, like they say, a "rural city," which is a very pretty name but really there's nothing there. That's why the *compañeros* say, why should we believe in these projects and such things? They're all lies.

(...)

As the *compañeros* say, it's part of the enemy's war, that's why if some *compañeros* in this zone have let themselves be convinced by these ideas it's because the war has gotten this far, not because now they're going to have a more dignified life. In many places there are those who leave the organization or those who are now in political parties, but the *compañeros* who are bases of support have had a better life. The rural city—everything they have said and all that they are doing there—is clearly pure lies.

To help you understand the ideological manipulation enacted by the bad government in Santiago El Pinar, they promised the women there that they would give them egg-laying hen

farms. So you know these hen farms use chicken feed, and when they gave them the farms they gave them a lot of chickens to lay eggs, and it was great in the beginning because the hens laid a lot of eggs, but the government didn't seek out a market where they could sell their eggs. The hens laid a lot of eggs but then what were they supposed to do? They couldn't compete with the big grocery stores that sell eggs. So what they tell us is that they divided up the hens, but then the government stopped providing the feed, and the chickens became sickly and they stopped laying eggs. And so the women asked "now what do we do? We have to cooperate. But how can I cooperate if I already ate the eggs? Where will I find money?" And the hens died; what the bad government says doesn't bring results. They do all of this just so that the cameramen come and film the inauguration [of the rural city], that everything looks nice or whatever. But this all lasts one month, two months, by three months it's all over.

So among other things is the problem, as the *compa* was saying, that the houses are worthless because they inflate, as they say, like a toad. The women are accustomed to making their tortillas either on a hearth or over a fire on the floor, but an earthen floor, and in this case the houses have wooden floors, plywood, and you can't have a fire there. And so they gave people gas cylinders that no one knows how to use and the gas doesn't even last a month, and so now you have the cylinders tossed out as garbage and stoves that don't work. Also, we know that the life of peasants, of the indigenous, is such that behind one's house there are vegetables, sugarcane, pineapple, plantains, whatever there may be, as is our way of life, but [in the rural city] there is nothing, simply a house and that's it. So the people don't know what to do, because now their lands are far away and they need to go there to work, but it is another expense to come and go.

The politics of the bad government is to put an end to life in common, to community life, so that you leave your land, or you sell it, and if you sell it you're screwed. It is a politics of injustice, it creates more poverty. All of the millions that they receive from the UN, which is the Organization of United Nations, is kept by the bad government – state, municipal, and federal – and used to organize those groups that provoke problems in the communities, above all for those of us who are the Zapatista bases of support.

It is the continuation of the much-touted policy, which now they don't want to hear mentioned, and which we no longer hear about in the media, the Puebla-Panama Plan.<sup>13</sup> Now it has different name because the Puebla-Panama Plan was highly criticized, but it is the same thing, they only changed the name so that they could go on individualizing the communities, to put an end to the life in common that still exists.

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*This is more or less how we are doing our work in the resistance, because we are talking about resistance. And in this work, our compañeros who work in the cornfield or the coffee groves, or who have some cattle, sometimes they sell their animal and so they have a little bit of money left. And the bad government is attacking us with their projects for cement floors, for housing, for housing improvement, and the other things that these PRLista brothers receive in other communities.*

*But the PRListas are getting accustomed to the money, their gaze is set on the government and they look to the government to give them more money and projects. So the same thing that some of our compañeros from Garrucha described is happening in the Caracol in Morelia. Sometimes these [PRLista] brothers sell the corrugated metal, and because it is a government project, the government thinks that its party is growing, but the reverse is happening, we compañeros who are in resistance are using some of the fruits of our labor to buy these things that party supporters are selling.*

*We'll give you an example: to buy a sheet of corrugated metal in the hardware store costs about 180 pesos, but [the PRListas] come and sell them for 100 pesos, or 80 pesos; and they also have cement blocks from the government, which might be 5, 6, or 7 pesos in the hardware store, but they sell them for 3 pesos, or 2 pesos. Our compañeros, who are in the resistance and aren't accustomed to spending the fruit of our labor, buy these and it may be that one day you will see that in some new population centers there are colored corrugated metal roofs,<sup>14</sup> but really it came from the work of the [Zapatista] compañeros. That is what is happening there.*

*But the government has realized where its project is heading. It isn't benefiting the party followers, the PRListas, but rather is being taken advantage of by the Zapatistas, that is where their housing materials are ending up. Now it's not just the materials, but also the mason. When the material arrives, the mason is already there because they already realized that the Zapatistas were working on their houses. That is why [the government] is changing the project again, the bad governments have tried many things from 94 up to today.*

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*All right compas, let's explain again the resistance to the military, for example what the compañera already explained. It's my job to explain what happened in 1999 in the ejido of Amador Hernández in the municipality of General Emiliano Zapata.*

*At that time, on August 11, the military arrived and we compañeras and compañeros resisted their entrance into our community. The military wanted to take over the community, but when the soldiers arrived at a dance hall the compañeras confronted them; they kicked them out of that community and made them retreat to a place outside of it. But we didn't stop there, we made an encampment. And everyone in the zone participated, which is the Caracol of La Realidad. People from civil society came also and all of those in the resistance had to endure a lot, because it was the season of **chaquistes** [tiny biting insects] and of mud, as is the rainy season. And through all of this we didn't yield to their provocations, we didn't confront them militarily, but rather we came peacefully.*

*And during this encampment, we organized dances; we danced in front of the soldiers. And the people had religious ceremonies, the compas organized event programs, and sometimes spontaneously we gave talks about the politics of struggle.*

*What did the soldiers do? It seems we began to convince them, because we were face to face with them, and so what the military commanders did was put out speakers so that the soldiers couldn't hear our words and withdraw them to a place a little bit further out.*

*What happened then? The compañeros invented new ideas, I think you have probably heard about the little paper airplanes: we wrote why we were having the encampment on the paper airplanes and threw them at the soldiers and the soldiers picked them up. That was the Zapatista Army's first air force, in Amador Hernández, but it was pure paper.*

(...)

*All of this, compas, happened during the resistance to the military incursion, and once we got into a shoving confrontation with the soldiers—there were compañeros and compañeras standing opposite the soldiers who were in two lines. There was one compa—a short little compa—and as the military pushed us with their shields, they had clubs also, this compa stepped on a soldier's foot, and then the soldier stepped on the compa's foot. There was another, much bigger, soldier there, and he curiously began to laugh because the compa was stepping on soldiers' feet and they were stepping on his. So this big soldier starts to laugh and the little compa said to this jerk "what are you laughing at little guy?" even though the soldier was much bigger and the compa much smaller.*

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*This is what I have seen and what we are seeing. There you have the results. We didn't eat tostadas in vain in order to carry out the encampment, tostadas give strength and wisdom. We depended on collectivism a lot. Why do I speak*

*this way compañeros? Excuse the word, compañeras. We learned there with many compañeros in each community, in each municipality, how to face the fucking soldiers that come into our communities to harass us. There the compañeras learned to defend themselves, with I don't know what, with sticks they kicked out the soldiers, however they had to do it, with rocks, or with shouts and insults, but they did it. That's how the compañeras organized themselves, I saw it and I remember clearly that the compañeras were convinced that they must confront [the military]; they demonstrated what they are capable of.*

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*The authorities also began to take turns and to hear the needs that we presented to them in each community, in each region, and in each municipal seat. And so we worked, and little by little we advanced. Once the organization was in place, we began to create more, to begin the work of health and education, and now as the compañera mentioned, we already have a health clinic in our municipality, called the "Compañera María Luisa" [the nom de guerre of Dení Prieto Stock, fallen in combat on February 14th, 1974, in Nepantla, Mexico State, Mexico], and one in the ejido of San Jerónimo Tulijá, called "Compañera Murcia-Elisa Irina Sáenz Garza," named for a compañera who struggled and who died in combat at the El Chilar ranch [in the Lacandón Jungle, Chiapas, Mexico, February 1974], there close to where we are, where they died just borders where we are, that is how we named the clinic.*

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**Dení Prieto Stock**

**Elisa Irina Sáenz Garza "Murcia"**

(To be continued...)

I testify.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

Mexico, March 2013.

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all-6-resistance/>]

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## Notes

9. Translator's note: Soon after assuming the Mexican presidency, Enrique Peña Nieto announced what he calls his "National Crusade Against Hunger," inaugurated in Las Margaritas, Chiapas, area of Zapatista influence. See the EZLN's previous mentions of the Crusade in "[Them and US III: The Overseers](#)" and "[Ali Baba and his 40 thieves.](#)"
10. Translator's note: Refers to the "Pact for Mexico," a political agreement regarding national political priorities made immediately after Enrique Peña Nieto's inauguration between all three principal political parties, the PAN, PRI, and PRD.
11. Translator's note: Refers to Florence Cassez, French citizen accused of participating in a gang-related kidnapping in Mexico in a highly controversial case. She was incarcerated 7 years of a 60-year sentence, before her case was thrown out for breaches of legal procedure. She was released on January 23, 2013 and returned to Paris.
12. Translator's note: The Caracoles, literally "shells" or "spirals" were announced in 2003 as the homes of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, or Good Government Councils. When the EZLN first announced their existence they were described, in addition to being the seats of the self-government system, as "doors to enter into the communities" and "windows to see in and out."
13. Translator's note: The Plan Puebla Panama (PPP) was a multi-billion dollar development program launched in 2001 by then president of Mexico Vicente Fox (PAN) "to promote regional integration and development" of Southern Mexico and Central America, and later extended to Colombia. The plan was highly criticized because it laid the groundwork for neoliberal free trade agreements and infrastructure at the expense of people of the region. Today, the "Mesoamerican Project" is basically a remake of the PPP with security elements added from the Mérida Initiative, itself a remake of the controversial drug-war oriented Plan México.
14. Translator's note: Government issued corrugated metal for house roofs is orange, so the colored roofs would seem to imply government support.

# Them and Us, Part VII: The Smallest of them All 7 On Doubts, Shadows, and A One-Word Summary. *Zapatista National Liberation Army*

March 2013

## **Doubts**

If after reading the excerpts from the compañeras and compañeros of the EZLN you still think that the indigenous members of the Zapatistas are manipulated by the perverted mind of Supmarcos (and now by Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés) and that nothing has changed in Zapatista territory since 1994, then there's no hope for you.

I wouldn't recommend that you turn the television off or that you stop regurgitating the circular arguments that tend to be circulated by the intellectuals and their followers, because if you did so your mind would be empty. Go ahead and keep thinking about how the recent telecommunications law will democratize information, that it will increase the quality of programming, and that it will make cell phone service better.

But if you thought this way, you would never have made it to this part of "Them and Us," so let's just take it as a hypothetical that you are a person with an average IQ and immersed in progressive culture. With these characteristics, it is very probable that you practice constant doubt in the face of just about everything, so it's only logical to assume that you doubt what you have read here in the previous pages. To doubt is not something that should be condemned, it is one of the healthiest (and most forgotten) intellectual exercises available to humanity—especially if it is exercised with respect to a movement like the Zapatista or neo-Zapatista movements, about which so many things have been said (the majority of which do not even come close to what we are).

Let's leave to one side the fact that it was undeniable even to the mainstream press that tens of thousands of indigenous Zapatistas simultaneously took 5 municipal seats in the Southeast states of Chiapas [a reference to the events of December 21, 2012].

Let's leave that aside and deal head on with doubts: if nothing has changed in the Zapatista indigenous communities, why have they grown? Weren't they saying that the EZLN was history? That the ezln's errors (okay, okay, Marcos' errors) had come at the cost of their existence (their "media" existence, but they never mentioned that part)? Wasn't the Zapatista leadership disbanded? Hadn't the EZLN disappeared and all that remained of them was the vague memories of those outside of Chiapas who feel and know that struggle isn't something that can be subject to the comings and goings of fads?

Ok, let's ignore this fact (that the EZLN grew exponentially during these times when they had fallen out of fashion) and abandon any attempt to raise these concerns (concerns that will only lead to the editing of your comments on articles in the national newspapers or your banning from these sites, "for ever more").

Lets return to methodical doubt:

What if the words that appeared in the previous pages that were supposedly from indigenous Zapatistas (men and women) were actually written by Marcos?

That is, what if Marcos just simulated that others were the ones that wrote and felt those words?

What if the autonomous schools don't actually exist?

What if...the hospitals and the clinics, and the accountability process, and the indigenous women in leadership positions, and the productive lands, and the Zapatista air force, and.....?

Seriously, what if none of the things that those indigenous people talk about exist, what if those indigenous people don't exist?

In sum, what if everything is just a monumental lie created by Marcos (and Moisés since that's the process we've now begun) in order to console those leftists (don't ever forget that they're dirty, ugly, bad, irreverent) who are always present and who are always just a few, very few, a tiny minority, with mere illusion? What if the Supmarcos made all that stuff up?

Wouldn't it be good to place your doubts side by side with reality?

What if it was possible for you to see for yourself those schools, the clinics, the hospitals, those projects, those women and men?

What if you could listen directly to those Mexican, indigenous, Zapatista men and women, making an effort to speak in Spanish so that they could explain, so that they could tell you their history, not to try to convince or recruit you, but just so that you could understand that the world is very big and it has many worlds inside itself?

What if you could concentrate on observing and listening, without talking, without giving your opinion?

Would you take up that challenge? Or would you continue taking refuge in your cynicism, that solid and wonderful castle of reasons not to do anything?

Would you ask to be invited? Would you accept that invitation?

Would you come to a little school in which the professors (women and men) are indigenous and whose mother tongue is considered a mere "dialect"?

Would you be able to contain your desire to study them as if they were anthropological, psychological, legal, esoteric, or historiographic objects? Would you hold back your desire to interview them? To tell them your opinion? To give them your advice? To give them orders?

Would you look at them? That is, would you listen to them?

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## Shadows.

On one side of this light that now shines you can't see the form of the strangely shaped shadows that have made it all possible. Because another of the paradoxes that characterize Zapatismo is that it is not light that creates the shadows, rather, it is from these shadows that light is born.

Women and men from corners near and far across the planet made possible what we will show you, but they also enriched, with their gaze, the path of these indigenous Zapatista men and women who today once again raise the banner of a dignified life.

Individuals (women and men), groups, collectives, all types of organizations, and at all different levels, contributed so that this small step of the very smallest could be taken.

From all five continents arrived gazes that, from below and to the left, offered their respect and support. And with this respect and support not only schools and hospitals were built, but we also the indigenous Zapatista heart that, through those gazes, through those windows, were able to look out to all of the corners of the world.

If there is a cosmopolitan place on Mexican lands it is certainly Zapatista territory.

In the face of all this support nothing but an effort of equal magnitude would have sufficed.

I think, we think, that all those people from Mexico and the world can and should share in this small joy that today walks through the mountains of Southeastern Mexico and has an indigenous face.

We know, I know, that you are not expecting, that you are not asking for, that you do not demand this great embrace that we send you. But this is the way that the Zapatistas (men and women) thank our companer@s (and we especially thank those who knew how to be nobody). Perhaps without intending to, you were and are for us (women and men) the best school. And it goes without saying that we will not spare any effort to assure that, regardless of your calendars and geographies, you will always respond affirmatively to the question of whether it was worth it.

To all (women) (I apologize from the depths of my sexist essence, but women are a majority both quantitatively and qualitatively) and to all (men): thank you.

(...)

And, well, there are shadows and then there are shadows.

The most anonymous and imperceptible [of these shadows] are some short-statured women and men whose skin is the color of the earth. They left behind everything that they had, even if it wasn't much, and they became warriors (women and men). In silence, in darkness, they contributed and continue to contribute, like no one else, so that all of this could be possible.

And now I am referring to the insurgents (women and men), my compañer@s.

They come and go, they live, they struggle and die in silence, without making any fuss, and without anyone, besides ourselves, noticing them. They have no face and no

life to themselves. Their names, their stories, may only come to mind after many calendars have come and gone. Maybe then around a fire, while the coffee is at a boil in an old pewter pot and the fire of the word has been ignited, someone or something will toast to their memory.

Regardless, it won't matter much because what this has been about, what it is about, what it has always been about, is to contribute in some way to build those words with which the Zapatista stories, anecdotes, and histories, real and imaginary, begin. Just like how what is today a reality began, that is, with a:

**"There Will Be a Time..."**

*Vale*. Health, and let there always be listening and the gaze.

(this will not continue)

In name of the women, men, children, elderly, insurgents  
(men and women) of

The Zapatista Army for National Liberation.

From the Mountains of Southeastern Mexico.

Subcomandante Insurgent Marcos.

Mexico, March 2013.

An Anticipatory P.S.: There will be more writings, don't get happy ahead of yourselves. They will be primarily from Subcomandante Insurgent Moisés regarding the little school: the dates, the places, the invitations, the sign-up, the propaedeutics, the rules, the grade levels, the uniforms, the school supplies, the grades, the extra help, where you can find the exams with all the answers etc... But if you ask us how many grade levels there are [in our little school] and how much time it will take until graduation, we will answer: we (women and men) have been here for more than 500 years and we are still learning.

P.S. That Gives Some Advice Regarding Attendance at the Little School: Eduardo Galeano, a sage in that difficult art of observing and listening, wrote the following in his book, "The Children of the Days," on the March calendar:

"Carlos and Gudrun Lenkersdorf were born and had lived in Germany. In 1973 these illustrious professors arrived in Mexico. They entered the Mayan world, a Tojolobal community, and they introduced themselves with the following words:

'We came to learn.'

The indigenous people were silent. Later someone would explain the silence:

'This is the first time that someone has said that to us.'

Learning, they stayed there for years and years.

From the indigenous languages they learned that there is no hierarchy that separates the object from the subject, because I drink the water that drinks me and I am observed by everything I observe, and they learned how to greet people in the following way:

'I am another you.'

'You are another me.' "

Take heed of Don Galeano, because it is only by knowing how to observe and listen that one learns.

P.S. That Explains Something About Calendars and Geographies: Our dead say that we have to know how to observe and listen to everything, but that in the south there will always be a special richness. As you may have noticed from watching the videos (there are many videos still left over, perhaps for another time) that accompanied the communiqués in this “Them and Us” series, we tried to thread together many calendars and geographies, but we dug into our much respected southern region of Latin America. This was not only because of Argentina and Uruguay, lands wise to rebellion, but also due to the fact that according to us (women and men), there exists in the Mapuche people not only pain and rage, but also an impeccable integrity in the struggle and a profound sagacity for those who know how to observe and listen. If there is a corner of the world toward which bridges must be built, it is Mapuche territory. It is thanks to those people and to all the disappeared and all the imprisoned of this pained continent that our memory still lives. I’m not sure about the other side of these words, but I know that from this side of these words, “Neither forgive nor forget!”

A Synthetic P.S.: Yes, we know that this challenge has not been and will not be easy. Great threats and blows of all types will come from all directions. That is how our path has been and will be. Terrible and marvelous things make up our history. It will continue to be this way. But if you were to ask us how we would summarize all of this in one word: the pain, the sleepless nights, the deaths that hurt us, the sacrifices, the continual effort to swim against the tide, the loneliness, the absences, the persecution, and, above all, the stubborn memory of those who came before us and are no longer here, it would be something that unites all the colors that exist below and to the left no matter what their calendar or geography. More than a word, it is a cry:

Liberty.....Liberty!.....LIBERTY!

*Vale de Nuez.*

The Sup putting away his computer and walking, always walking.

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/them-and-us-vii-the-smallest-of-them-all-7-on-doubts-shadows-and-a-one-word-summary/>]

## Dates and other Details for the Little Zapatista School *Zapatista National Liberation Army*

March, 2013.

*Compañeras* and *compañeros*, brothers and sisters of the Sixth:

### **Regarding visits, caravans, and projects.**

As you all know, we are preparing our classes for the little schools; that is what we will be focusing on for now so that they turn out well and make for good students.

And we, together with the [autonomous] authorities, think that there are things that we will not be able to attend to so as not to distract ourselves from this task, for example: agreeing to do interviews, or exchanging experiences, or receiving caravans, or work teams, or discussing ideas for a project. So please don't make a trip here for nothing, because neither the *Junta de Buen Gobierno* [Good Government Council], the autonomous authorities, nor the project commissions will be able to attend to you in these matters.

If a person, group, or collective is thinking of bringing a caravan with some kind of support for the communities, we ask you to please wait for the appropriate time, or if you have already arranged the trip, then please leave whatever you bring in CIDECl, with Doctor Raymundo, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.

We aren't saying that caravans of support can never come, but they CAN'T come now, because we want to focus on the little school. We want to let you know this, so that you don't misunderstand why you are not attended to.

We want to let you know this so that you don't plan trips that require conversations with our authorities; we won't be able to attend to you for the simple reason that all of our efforts will go toward our little school, which is for you, for Mexico and the world, and that is why we are directing all our efforts there.

So while we will be in the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* of the 5 *caracoles*; we won't be able to attend to you, but you can visit the *caracoles*.

The same goes for ongoing projects in the 5 *Juntas*, there are things that we won't be able to attend to, we can only do what is within our ability and which does not require consultations or a lot of movement for our people. If something does require these things, it will be tended to at another time.

We want you to understand us; for us, it is not the time for caravans, projects, interviews, exchanges of experiences, or other things. For us Zapatistas (women and men), it is time to prepare for the little school. We WON'T have time for other things, unless the bad government wants to really mess with us and then yes, that would change things.

We believe that you, *compañeras* and *compañeros*, brothers and sisters, understand us.

### **Regarding the School**

Here we will give you the first details about the little school, so that those of you who will take classes can begin to make preparations.

1. Everyone who feels convoked is invited to the *fiesta* of the *Caracoles*. The *fiesta* will be in all 5 *caracoles*, so you can go to whichever you want. The arrival date will be August 8th, the *fiesta* will be on the 9th and 10th, and the return date will be the 11th. Note: The *fiesta* to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the *Caracoles* is not the same thing as the little school. Don't confuse them.

2. With this *fiesta*, the Zapatista bases of support celebrate the 10th anniversary of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, but not only that.

3. These days will be the beginning of our little school, which is very *other*, where our *bosses*—that is to say, the Zapatista bases of support—will give classes on their thought and action on liberty according to Zapatismo: their successes, their failures, their problems, their solutions, the things which have moved forward, the things that have gotten bogged down, and the things that are missing, because what is missing is yet to come.

4. ***The first course (we will have many, depending on when those who attend are able), of the first level is 7 days long, including the arrival and departure time. The arrival date will be August 11th, the class begins on August 12th, 2013 and ends on August 16th, 2013. And the departure date will be August 17th, 2013.*** Those who finish the course and would like to stay longer can visit the other *caracoles* outside of where they had their course. The course is the same in all of the *caracoles*, but people can visit *caracoles* different from the one they were assigned, but at that point they will be on their own.

5. Little by little, we will explain how registration works for the little school of liberty according to the Zapatistas, but we will let you know now that it is laic and free of cost. The pre-registration will be with the Support Teams of the Sixth Commission, national and international, on the Enlace Zapatista web page, and by email. Students will then register at CIDECI, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. We will begin sending the invitations, according to our capacities, as of March 18, 2013.

6. The school is not open to anyone who wants to come; rather, we will invite people directly. We will take care of these *compas* who we invite, we will give them food, a place to sleep that is clean and satisfactory, and we will give each of them a guardian (or *guardiana*), their own "*Votán*,"<sup>15</sup> who will make sure that they are well and that they don't suffer too much in the class, only a little, but always, yes, some.

7. The students will need to study very hard. The first level has 4 themes: Autonomous Government I, Autonomous Government II, Participation of Women in Autonomous Government, and Resistance. Each theme has its own textbook. The textbooks have between 60 and 80 pages each, and the parts that SupMarcos already gave you to look at are only a tiny part of each book (3 or 4 pages). Each textbook costs 20 pesos, which is what we calculated as the cost of production.

8. This first level of the course lasts for 7 days and/or however much time a *compa* has available, because we know people have their work, their family, their struggle, their

commitments, that is to say, their own calendar and geography.

9. The first course is only first grade, there is still much more to come, meaning that the school isn't finished quickly; it will take a long time. Whoever passes the first level can go on to the second one.

10. Regarding costs: each *compa* has to cover their own costs to get to CIDECI, in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, and to get back to their corner of the world. From CIDECI they will go to the little school to which they are assigned and when they finish, they will return to CIDECI and from there each one will go home. In the school, which is in the village, they won't want for anything; it may be beans, rice, or vegetables, but their table will not be lacking. There the costs for each student will be covered by the Zapatistas. Each student will live with an indigenous Zapatista family. During the days that they are in school this will be the student's family. They will eat, work, rest, sing, and dance with this family, who will also walk them to their assigned school, to the education center. And the "*Votán*," the guardian or *guardiana*, will always accompany them. That is, we will watch out for each student. If they get sick we will cure them, or if it is serious we will take them to a hospital. But whatever is in their head when they arrive and when they leave, well, we can't do anything about that; what each *compañero* or *compañera* does with what they see, hear, or learn, is their responsibility. That is, we will teach them the theory; the practice they will see about themselves in their own corner of the world.

11. The costs of the school we will figure out ourselves. Maybe we'll have a festival of music and dancing, or some paintings or artisanal goods, but don't worry, because we will find a way and in any case, there are always good people who support good things. For those who would like to make a donation to the school, we will leave a jar in the student registration area at CIDECI, with the *compas* from the University of the Earth, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. Whoever wants to donate some money can put it in the jar, no one will know who gave money or how much they gave; this way those who gave a lot won't think too much of themselves and those who gave a little won't feel sad. We will not allow gifts of money or other things to be given in the schools, *Caracoles*, or families to which you are assigned. This is to avoid an unfair situation where some people receive things and others do not. Whatever people would like to donate should be left at CIDECI, with the *compas* from the University of the Earth, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. They will collect it all and then we will divide it evenly among everyone later, that is, if there is anything. If not, it doesn't matter, what matters is you.

12. There are other ways of taking the course at the little Zapatista school. We are going to ask for support from the *compas* of the free, independent, libertarian, and autonomous media, and from those who know about this thing called videoconferencing. Because we know that many people will not be able to come because of work issues, or personal issues, or family. We also know that there are people who don't understand Spanish but do want to learn how the Zapatistas have done what they have done and



undone what they have undone. So we are going to have a special course that one can take via video camera wherever there is a group of willing students who are ready with their textbooks, and that way, over internet, they will be able to see the course and ask questions of the teachers—the Zapatista bases of support. In order to plan this, we will invite some alternative media to a special meeting in order to come to an agreement on how to do the videoconferences and also so that they can photograph and videotape the places that we will talk about in the classes, so that everyone can verify if what the professors (men and women) say is true or not.

Another form by which people can take the class is with the DVDs we will make of the course, for those who can't go anywhere and can only study in their house, so that they can also learn.

13. In order to attend the little Zapatista school, you will have to take a preparatory course where the life of the Zapatista communities and their internal rules will be explained. So that you don't commit any infractions. And also so you know what you need to bring. For example, you shouldn't bring those things called "tents" that aren't good for anything anyway; we are going to provide you accommodations with indigenous Zapatista families.

14. Once and for all we want to make it clear that the production, commercialization, exchange, and consumption of any kind of drugs or alcohol is PROHIBITED. The carrying or use of any kind of weapon, loaded or unloaded, is also prohibited. Whoever asks to join the EZLN or anything militarily related will be expelled. We are not recruiting nor promoting armed struggle, but rather organization and autonomy for liberty. Any kind of propaganda, political or religious, is also prohibited.

15. There is no age limit to attend the little school; but any minors should come with an adult who is responsible for them.

16. When you register, after having been invited, we ask you to clarify if you are a man, woman, or other, in order to accommodate you, as every one is an individual (*individuo*, *individual*, or *individuo(a)*)<sup>16</sup> and will be respected and cared for. Here we do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, sexual preference, race, creed, or nationality. Any act of discrimination will be punished with expulsion.

17. If anyone has a chronic illness, we ask you to bring your medicine and let us know about it when you register so that we can keep an eye out for you.

18. When you register, after being invited, we ask that you make clear your age and health condition so that we can accommodate you in one of the schools where you won't suffer more than necessary.

19. If you are invited and you can't attend at this first date, don't worry. Just let us know when you can attend and we will do the course for you when you can come. Also, if someone can't finish the whole course or can't come after having registered, no problem, you can finish or make it up later. Remember though you can also attend the videoconferences that will be given outside Zapatista territory.

20. In other writings I will continue explaining more things and clearing up any doubts you might have. But what I have said here are the basics.

That's all for now.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés.

Rector of the Little Zapatista School.

Mexico, March 2013.

P.S. I put SupMarcos in charge of adding some videos to this text that relate to our little school.

Translation by El Kilombo Intergaláctico

[<http://www.elkilombo.org/dates-and-other-details-for-the-little-zapatista-school/>]

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## Notes

15. Translator's note: In the lexicon of the EZLN, *Votán* is usually used in reference to the legendary *Votán – Zapata*, in which the spirit of Zapata lives as "the guardian and heart of the people." See "Closing Speech to The National Indigenous Forum," EZLN, January 9, 1996.

16. Translator's note: The EZLN often uses the suffix *-oa* (*individuo(a)*, *compañero(a)*) to provide a noun form that is not strictly feminine or masculine.

