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Zapatismo as Political and Cultural Practice
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WHY NOT SHARE A DREAM? ZAPATISMO AS POLITICAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICE[1]
SPECIAL ISSUE: *HUMBOLDT JOURNAL OF SOCIAL RELATIONS*

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Against this monster, people all over the world, and particularly ordinary working people in factories, mines, fields, and offices, are rebelling every day in ways of their own invention. Sometimes their struggles are on a small personal scale. More effectively, they are the actions of groups, formal or informal, but always unofficial, organized around their work and their place of work. Always the aim is to regain control over their own conditions of life and their relations with one another. Their strivings, their struggles, their methods have few chroniclers. They themselves are constantly attempting various forms of organization, uncertain of where the struggle is going to end. Nevertheless, they are imbued with one fundamental certainty, that they have to destroy the continuously mounting bureaucratic mass or be themselves destroyed by it.

C. L. R. James, *Facing Reality*, 1974.

What we have hoped for, and still hope for, is that civil society may achieve something somewhat more complicated and as indefinable as herself –a new world. The difference between now and then is that now we want to participate along with her in the dream that may deliver us from the nightmare. We do not seek to direct her, but neither to follow her. We want to go with her, march by her side. Are we hopelessly naïve? Maybe, but against 'realist' cynicism, naïvete may produce, for example, a January 1st, and just look at the heap of dreams brought about by on January 1st. So, we have nothing to lose: Madame civil society and the Zapatistas share the contempt the big politicians have for us, we share an indefinable face and diffuse name; why not share a dream?"

Subcomandante Marcos, 1996.

The 20 and 10 year anniversary of the Zapatista Rebellion has been an important opportunity to reflect on the significance and future struggle of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), the Zapatista base communities and the multifaceted "solidarity" network that walks with them. Over the past decade, the Zapatistas have been celebrated as armed communities able to open vital and vibrant political spaces for a collective interrogation of out-dated political practice and renewed efforts towards social justice. The political work of the EZLN is all the more profound given that it has been carried out in the face of daily repression in the form of the low intensity war conducted against the Zapatista communities in rebellion throughout Chiapas. As part of this recognition, many have insisted that the Zapatistas' most profound success has been their ability to convene and host an increasingly diverse and organized civil society in a series of strategic *encuentros*, or "encounters," confirming their commitment to "a revolution that makes revolution possible."[2] While some agree the role of the EZLN as catalysts for convergence has been critical, Subcomandante Marcos confesses that, "the EZLN has reached a point where it has been overtaken by Zapatismo."[3]

In this special issue we take up Zapatismo as a political and cultural practice. We are not so concerned with the emergence of the EZLN and their success as a guerrilla army. Nor does this volume present an analysis of the complex and often contradictory daily struggles of *campesinos* and the more localized indigenous struggle for autonomy, although we do at times allude to it. We accept as a fundamental premise that the Zapatistas are only one of a number of important struggles in Chiapas, southern Mexico more generally, and the nation as a whole. The Zapatistas were not the first to protest the negative impact of neoliberal structural adjustments nor are they unique in their claims or commitment to such political practices as consensus or radical democracy. Indeed, the Zapatistas have never claimed any special role for themselves in the "move-

ment." Thus, our task in this special issue will be to further a dialogue about the possibilities of Zapatismo outside of Chiapas, especially in sites of privilege. Although Zapatismo may be an "intuition," as Subcomandante Marcos insists, this volume explores the possibility that the Zapatistas have significantly contributed to theory regarding autonomous political practices and "revolutionary" struggle.[4] Throughout the pages that follow, the authors grapple with a Zapatismo that is ethical, creative and disciplined, by examining key dimensions of Zapatismo as "an inspiration" that is relevant in both local and global contexts.

Despite the Zapatista's profound successes they have not escaped the barbs of unsympathetic critics—confident that the EZLN no longer command sufficient moral and political authority or national and international attention to be considered an important political actor. Critics convinced the Zapatistas have overreached their political goals have been especially impatient with Zapatista strategic silences, dismissing their political vision as unrealistic and unobtainable. A recent example of the disenchantment with Subcomandante Marcos and the EZLN surfaced in the impatient and dismissive response to the heated exchange with Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzón and spokespersons for Euskadita Askatasuna (ETA).[5] Marcos' attempt to have the last word in the vitriolic exchange, reminding his readers that he "shits on all the vanguards of the world," no doubt endeared him to some, but for many only confirmed the Zapatistas' marginalization.

Unfortunately, these incomplete readings fail to register the Zapatistas' advances as part of a broader movement of autonomy that fundamentally challenges Western models of political practice and cultural representation. Few opponents or detractors have recognized, for example, the political significance of the emergence of an indigenous collective subject emerging from "profound Mexico" and commenting on long standing Western European political strife. Similarly, critics have

failed to register Zapatista silence as a strategy informed by non-Western cultural formations. María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo interprets Zapatista silence as "the clearing that makes speech possible, not because it stands in a dichotomous relation to speech, as contentless space, but precisely because it is in the fullness of silence where differences take shape: 'In silence, we were speaking.' Silence is the noise of democracy."[6]

Although in a technical sense Zapatistas are comprised of the EZLN and their supporters from the base communities, Zapatismo has been available to rebels outside of Chiapas in profound ways.[7] At critical moments, collectives and individual activists have easily claimed a Zapatista rebel identity for themselves. At mobilizations in support of the Zapatistas, as for example during the series of protests in opposition to Zedillo's intensification of the low intensity war in 1995 and the March for Indigenous Dignity in 2001, it was not unusual to hear: "We are all Indigenous!" "We are all Zapatistas!" We are all Marcos!" Not surprisingly, supporters claiming the Zapatista rebel identity have been generously embraced by the Zapatistas. "If," according to Comandante Zebedeo,

> they are suffering exploitation, if they are suffering harassment, if they are suffering intimidation, if they are not receiving a just salary, then they can be considered Zapatistas, because that is our struggle as well. This is what we want, I think many people sympathize with us, because in reality that is perhaps what the great majority of our country and the world are suffering.[8]

As some of the contributors to this issue make clear, supporters beyond Chiapas include those who limit their activity to traditional solidarity strategies as well as those who link their local struggles to an expanding global network with a renewed sense of political urgency and analytical coherence. Ultimately, the contributors to this volume all agree that the Zapatistas have

had a profound impact in what has been referred to variously as the "alter-globalization movement" that gained significant momentum with the serial protests accelerated after Seattle 1999.[9]

Indeed, most of the essays collected here celebrate the variety of rebellions against the Fourth World War in part inspired by the Zapatistas.[10] However, despite notable successes activists and intellectuals have begun to voice doubts regarding the effectiveness of serial protests driven by the meeting schedules of the WTO, World Bank, and IMF. Still others have raised an important alarm regarding the bureaucratization of the movement in the form of a well-funded Non Governmental Organization (NGO) presence opportunistically attempting to proffer a "respectable face of dissent."[11] In light of these challenges, one of the most compelling challenges to the globally networked struggle against neoliberalism will be to continue to facilitate "a space of non-militarized contestation."[12] Recently, Miguel Pickard asked how we construct that other world collectively evoked at such gatherings as the World Social Forums when we shout, "another world is possible."[13] Massimo De Angelis' essay " 'Zapatismo' and Globalisation as Social Relations," specifically takes up this issue in his examination of the Word Social Forum and satellite mobilizations.

Those likely to celebrate the Zapatistas, as the authors gathered here confirm, are weary at stating authoritative or definitive claims about Zapatismo. Careful in their choice of language, supporters avoid applying such terms as model when examining the Zapatista political project. Agreeing with Subcomandante Marcos that Zapatismo can be understood as "tendencies," we might juxtapose these "tendencies" to some of the key statements the Zapatistas have made over a ten year period, including: *Ya Basta*! Enough; *mandar obedeciendo,* lead by obeying; *caminamos preguntando*, we walk asking; *nunca jamas un mundo sin nosotros*, never again a world without us; *todo para todos y nada para nosotros*, everything for everyone nothing for our-

selves; *un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos*, a world where many worlds fit. Not surprisingly, more than a few observers have insisted that the challenge we face will be that these statements operate as more than slogans. As heuristic devices these statements articulate the political impact of the Zapatista rebellion, making it more available to emergent political formations outside of Chiapas. Without a doubt, these statements will continue to take on added meaning as the Zapatista struggle, in particular, and the alter-globalization movement, more generally, advances.

In this special issue we have sought not only to examine Zapatismo more closely but to generate additional discussion about how these "tendencies" can be generated, appropriated, and deployed especially in sites of privilege. We seek to further an already established dialogue about how we might draw upon a force that activates; a process that respects the agency, the voice, the creativity, the experience, the unique histories and the specific manner of engagement of any given community in struggle. "Perhaps," Subcomandante Marcos explains, "the new political morality is constructed in a new space that is not the taking or retention of power, but serves as the counterweight and opposition that contains it and obliges it to, for example, 'lead by obeying.'"[14] How do we listen to our *companer@s* in Zapatista rebel territory and stand with them, while at the same moment advance our own particular local struggles? How do we listen to one another in our local contexts in such a way as to recognize the diversity that defines our own spaces? How do we articulate a new mode of social relations that is not mediated by the market while respecting the dignity of those different than ourselves as Massimo De Angelis challenges us to consider? In other words, how do we construct a "politics of asking," as John Holloway poses in his contribution? As we walk and listen alongside our Zapatista *companer@s,* how do we create new and improve on old rebel territories deep within the "belly of the beast?" Specifically, how do we pursue

a politics of *preguntando caminamos* "walking at the pace of the slowest," as Gustavo Esteva provokes us to consider. More importantly, how do we represent this process to ourselves and others without reinscribing systems of oppressions that ignore subaltern strategies of knowledge production, as José Rabasa warns.

The Effort at *Encuentro*

Elsewhere I have argued that the Zapatista political imaginary has reintroduced direct action into our grammar of resistance, linked traditional solidarity activism with autonomous alternatives, and provoked a rethinking of previous struggles articulated around identity politics. In many ways, the Zapatista politics of rebellion, combines a politics of refusal, a politics of space and a politics of listening.[15] The contributors to this volume underscore this formulation; adding other critical dimensions of Zapatismo: a politics of asking, politics of dignity, politics of transformation, politics of difference, politics of emancipation, and a politics of hope.[16] As a link between traditional solidarity strategies and more radical alternatives, the Zapatistas invite us to consider the possibilities of an unarmed guerrilla operating in sites of privilege, a resistance that makes direct action a central element of political practice without abandoning a commitment to the political necessity of dialogue and collective decisions.

All the contributors to this volume explore probably the most critical aspect of Zapatismo, namely the Zapatista success at convening an open space of encounter, inviting a diversity of proposals and positions to promote a growing network of rebellion and resistance. The politics of space is that "effort at *encuentro*" and the political possibilities of different political practices slowly taking root.[17] "The audacity of the Zapatistas," according to the Midnight Notes Collective, "was to open a clearing in the forest heavily patrolled by the Mexican Army and to allow others to come to speak to each other about capi-

talism and revolution."[18] It is fundamentally a space that allows for the possibility of individual and collective transformation into a community with purpose –the "one no, many yeses!" battle cry that many of the contributors to this volume take up.[19] It provides a new language of political struggle that embodies a certain Mayan "ethical character."[20] Rebels seeking alternative "statements" to the dogmas of the left encountered an art that many had taken for granted: dialogue. Civil society increasingly engaged in an emerging dialogue with itself.

The Zapatista model of *encuentro* does not rely on ideology, organizational affiliation, or even identity. *Encuentro* as a political strategy and space should not be confused with a political rally, radical academic conference, or activist forum. An *encuentro* is not a space to impose an already established political program in order to "conscientize" a community to a specific issue. It is not a chic approach to capture activist market share. Rather, *encuentros* are spaces for a collective analysis and vision to emerge.

> It is not an attempt to establish political and programmatic agreements, nor to attempt a new version of the International. Nor does it have to do with unifying theoretical concepts or standardizing conceptions, but with finding, and or building, common points of discussion. Something like constructing theoretical and practical images which are seen and experienced from different places.[21]

The effort at *encuentro* affirms local struggles while being animated by larger networks of opposition against neoliberalism that "circulate struggle." It connects the "first world" and "third world" without implying either a liberal or even a radical tutelage. Zapatismo challenges "the movement" to collectively nurture the space of encounter as "a commons of wealth not yet lost."[22]

Beyond their own community the Zapatistas have not exactly organized, but rather have convened, hosting a wide array of visitors.[23] More recently, the Zapatistas have dismantled the Aguascalientes and introduced the Caracoles, a dramatic innovation in their political strategy of convening and hosting political spaces.[24] Concerned with the growing tensions produced by solidarity work on behalf of the Zapatistas and equally motivated to further support the autonomy of the Zapatista *municipios*, the Zapatistas have inaugurated eight centers in which the EZLN and the base communities can engage civil society. The earlier success of the Aguascalientes and the more recent promise of the Caracoles has meant a persistent flow of visitors, delegations and "Zapatours"—groups who travel to Chiapas to serve as human rights activists, live in the communities as peace observers, work in collective projects, dialogue with the Zapatistas and generally offer support. The combined efforts ensure increased visibility for the EZLN and the base communities. In addition, these "visits" also serve as opportunities to witness Zapatismo on the ground. Over the years, activists and intellectuals have been able to observe first-hand the struggle of rebel autonomous communities resisting a military siege and low intensity war through dialogue, consensus, and direct action. Most travelers return to their own communities profoundly inspired and ready to intensify their solidarity efforts while at the same moment committed to explore "new" strategies for their local struggles—strategies that emphasize a politics of listening.

A space for "encounter," convened for dialogue, analysis, reflection, and action, transcends a multicultural framework that promotes a liberal pluralist strategy of diversity. The politics of encounter suggested here is polycultural, where each participant is recognized as living in a pluriverse that respects difference, i.e., different political proposals and cultural practices that emerge from a variety of subject positions, histories and political commitments within specific contexts of struggle.[25]

A situated politics of difference resists the homogenization imposed by, as Subcomandante Marcos suggests, the competing hegemonies of the twentieth century.[26] The model of *encuentro* —as space, gathering, and strategy—depends on the mutual recognition of the dignity of the participants in order to imagine new horizons collectively.

> But the 'other' and 'different' are not looking for everyone to be like they are. As if each one is saying that everyone has his own way or his own thing (I don't know how that's said now) and, in order for this to be possible, it is not enough to just be, you must also always respect the other. The 'everyone doing his own thing' is double: it is affirmation of difference, and it is respect for the other difference. When we say we are fighting for respect for our 'different' and 'other' selves, that includes fighting for respect for those who are also 'other' and 'different,' who are not like ourselves. And it is here where this entire resistance movement –called 'underground' or 'subterranean,' because it takes place among those below and underneath institutional movements –meets Zapatismo.[27]

The Zapatismo we explore here implies the incompleteness of identity always present in the possibilities of negotiation and transformation.[28] Zapatismo exposes the violence of political and cultural homogenization, embracing distinct communities of youth, women, and communities of color, as constituencies who craft complex, often seemingly less obvious strategies of resistance.

As the contributors to this volume remind us, processes of exclusions could also be exerted in revolutionary movements, a history the Zapatistas have struggled not to repeat. Subcomandante Marcos argues that Latin American "revolutionary Left" failed to address two critical elements: "one of

them was the indigenous peoples, from whose ranks we come, and the other was the supposed minorities."[29] The Zapatistas' commitment to difference rather than identity, dialogue more than command, and autonomy in opposition to state or market domination articulates a praxis that does not subordinate local struggles (issues in particular contexts), a variety of actions (strategies of resistance), or alternative practices (strategies for living outside of state and market forces) to any specific political formation, program, or ideology.

Going Beyond Solidarity

While we should not abandon the responsibilities and challenges of sincere solidarity work, taking our cues from the EZLN, we might suggest that Zapatismo invites people to become part of "the struggle" in their own manner, at their own pace, and without being measured by any specific model of "conscientization" or a political program specified by "the organization." However, the effort at *encuentro* challenges us to interrogate the limitations and contradictions of more traditional solidarity activism. Zapatismo reveals the political tensions of building a movement based only on single issue campaigns, on behalf of a specific constituency, and relying on short-lived fragile coalitions often over-determined by the most immediate crisis. In many cases those solidarity efforts that fail to escape a liberal mold can unwittingly promote possessive individualism, celebrating a single leader, often considered the best and the brightest of the group, who is expected to state the group's issues, history, strategies and goals. The result is a single model, plan, or program dominated by an elite. Consequently, a narrowly defined solidarity effort can easily reproduce paternalism and hierarchy within the organization and between the organization and the constituency being "served."

Echoing Holloway's warning in this volume, traditional solidarity projects fall into the trap of defining, representing, and speaking for the struggle(s) of others, while at the same

moment insisting on "the progress" of those being aided, making solidarity efforts resistant to modifications and slow to adapt to shifting contexts. Solidarity projects that represent, define and speak for the struggle(s) of others presuppose the progress of those being aided and not the transformation of those providing the aid. Moreover, aide workers operating in a narrow solidarity mode are less likely to acknowledge or celebrate the transformations that have already taken place in "targeted" communities, inadvertently facilitating an insidious imperialism. Professional well-funded NGOs, for example, "can become shadow bureaucracies parallel to Southern nation state administrations."[30] Ultimately, a bureaucratic model of social change will not be able to prioritize and promote the transformation of those providing the aid.

Although there may be valid concerns we must interrogate regarding the challenges of "solidarity," the political practice examined here does not seek to impose a rigidly defined alternative practice. The Zapatistas have been consistent in keeping with what they have argued is the task of an armed movement: to "present the problem, and then step aside."[31] As critical catalysts in posing problems they have deliberately not imposed solutions on other groups or spaces. "But it is already known that our specialty is not in solving problems, but in creating them. 'Creating them?' No, that is too presumptuous, rather in proposing. Yes, our specialty is proposing problems."[32]

The Zapatista provocation insists that rights emerge from collective identities and communal needs expressing collectively articulated obligations and not the competing interests of individual need.[33] Rather than emphasize networks as our only organizing objective, we might also imagine the movement in solidarity with the Zapatistas as an imagined community, a collective effort to define obligations that are rooted in a locally placed culture generating knowledge about what works across generations. The very act of provocation undertaken has been a bridge manifest in a new international, not an international

based on rigid party doctrines or dogmas of competing organizations but "an international of hope." The new international is defined by dignity, "that nation without nationality, that rainbow that is also a bridge, that murmur of the heart no matter what blood lives it, that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, customs and wars."[34] "Instead of a new bureaucratic apparatus, for the world coordination of a political movement expressing universal ideals and proposals," Esteva explains, "the International of Hope was created: a web constituted by innumerable differentiated autonomies, without a center or hierarchies, within which the most varied coalitions of discontents can express themselves, to dismantle forces and regimes oppressing all of them."[35]

The process of creating political space for dialogue between a diverse number of constituencies occupying a particular space suggests that community is neither homogenous nor static. Rather than speak of "the community," Zapatismo strives for a notion of community embodying a multiplicity of histories, experiences, resources, and obligations. The pursuit of new political relationships underscores the need to re-discover strategies to collectively define obligations of and within a community through dialogue based on respect. Political projects and proposals need to emerge organically—not imposed either by an individual (*caciquismo*) or a cabal (*protagonismo*). As the Frente Zapatista de Liberacion Naciónal (FZLN) have warned, people organizing themselves must begin "with the situation in which they find themselves, not in the one which we might desire to be found."[36] In new political spaces all voices, all proposals must be responded to with respect. Democracy, as Marcos suggests, is a gesture "to decide upon the dominant social proposal." Liberty implies the freedom necessary to pursue one action over another, the expression of desire for the fulfillment of hope and dignity. Free from oppression, fear or persecution liberty sustains diversity and the choice, "to subscribe to one or another proposal."[37] "It is," writes Marcos, "the same desire: de-

mocracy, liberty, and justice. In the heroic delirium of the Mexican southeast, hope implies a name: *Tachicam*, the unity of longing for a better future."[38]

In this special issue we have chosen to organize the essays beginning with those that examine the concrete aspects of Zapatismo followed by contributions that explore more theoretical and analytical dimensions of Zapatismo as a critical political and cultural practice. John Ross' essay, "Celebrating the Caracoles: Step by Step, the Zapatistas Advance on the Horizon," provides an in depth ethnographic view of some of the practical mechanics of Zapatismo, documenting the most recent if not the most profound advance of Zapatismo. Ross takes advantage of the one year anniversary of the Caracoles to examine the actual workings of the Juntas de Buen Gobeirno (JBG) in particular and the Caracoles as a whole.[39] As Ross explains these new spaces of encounter are "open to the outside world and through which the outside world can know the Zapatistas."

The Caracoles, literally snail or conch shell, have long been a powerful symbol "traditionally utilized by Mexico's indigenous peoples to summon the community together, precisely the function of these political/cultural centers." The Caracoles house the JBGs as part of "a dramatic restructuring of civil Zapatismo," establishing both municipal and regional autonomy. According to Ross, the JBGs advance regional autonomy by creating a place to

> resolve disputes between autonomous municipalities, and insure an equitable distribution of resources between Zapatista populations such as Oventic, which are adjacent to the road, and those in the outback. Additionally, the JBGs oversee the work of health, educa-

tion, housing, agricultural and justice commissions that serve the region.

The political advances of the Caracoles and JBGs also include the building of schools, teacher training centers, clinics, and bicycle repair shops. The Caracoles as a whole have been so successful that even communities that have been traditionally allied with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) or the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) have availed themselves of the collective wisdom and strategies of autonomous governance executed by the JBGs. The impact of the Caracoles and the JBGs on a regional level affirms Moises understated insight that "we are learning how to govern ourselves."

The practical challenges of Zapatismo on the ground and as part of broader political project of indigenous autonomy is further uncovered in the critical examination of the Red de Defensores Comunitarios [Community Human Rights Defender's Network] provided here by Shannon Speed and Alvaro Reyes in "Rights, Resistance, and Radical Alternatives: The Red de Defensores Communitarios and Zapatismo in Chiapas." Speed and Reyes situate the human rights work of the Red de Defensores at the community level explaining how *promotores*, or organizers, are selected and trained to carry out the human rights work of the autonomous Zapatista communities. Speed and Reyes argue that the self-organization of the Red significantly advances Zapatismo by articulating a complex local project that exposes the most violent excesses of neoliberalism while at the same moment disrupts the oppressive discourses of Western human rights and state sovereignty. Thus, the Red embodies a Zapatismo that "demands autonomy and self-determination, expressed not only at the capacity to build another State under a new sovereign, but as the capacity to function unimpeded so as to affect the daily lives and future of its members."

The Red transcends natural and positivistic legal traditions of human rights and their potentially negative application to indigenous contexts typical of most human rights organization based on standard Western, NGO models. Primarily, the Red defends against and informs about the human rights violations that result from the Mexican government's low-intensity war directed at the Zapatista base communities. It has been the Zapatistas adherence to the San Andrés Accords that has given them the moral high ground to advance their claim for recognition as "human beings with the right to equal treatment" and the right to a "parallel power structure (internal indigenous political and judicial mechanisms) in order to allow the indigenous peoples themselves to decide who they are and who they want to become." Unlike other human rights projects, the work of the Red "is directed by, and is answerable to, the communities themselves, and the authorities of the Zapatista autonomous regions to which they pertain." The Red's self-organization as part of a larger Zapatista strategy makes explicit "their source of strength in a larger social architecture of power and its ultimate political difference with the 'law,' a difference which lies in their self-organization." This deliberate effort at "civil resistance," explains Speed and Alvarez , enables "the *defensores* to make available the political nature of law and the political motivations for the abuses directed against their communities."

Thomas Olesen's essay, "Mixing Scales: Neoliberalism and the Transnational Zapatista Solidarity Network," tackles the transnational dimension of an emergent and complex Zapatista "solidarity" network. Olesen argues that the Zapatista struggle coincides with some general developments currently defining transnational social movements. Specifically, Olesen points to the "imbrication of local, national, and transitional solutions to neoliberalism" and the recent discomfort with the "analytical tendencies" that privilege a "unified global civil society standing up against the global corporate and political establishment." The Zapatistas successful use of the concept of neoliberalism

has allowed them to link their local, and somewhat national struggle, with other activists who are also resisting on both a local and a global scale. The result, according to Olesen, has been a transnational network that articulates all three components of an "injustice frame": recognition, action, and solution. The emergent transnatioal network Olesen examines here is comprised of two networks. The first network has been motivated by more traditional solidarity objectives especially active during the increase in the low-intensity war of 1995 and the massacre at Acteal in December 1997. The second network entails the more complex anti-neoliberal "networked" struggle in which key actors, such as the PGA and the White Overalls, emerged.

Olesen rightfully points out, as do the other contributors to this volume, that the Zapatista hosting of the Continental and Intercontinental Encounters were decisive moments in the unfolding of a complex, networked, global opposition to neoliberalism. In the *Encuentros* the Zapatistas become more than "an object of solidarity in the eyes of transnational activists," transforming themselves into "an important node in a critique of neoliberalism that extends beyond the borders of Mexico." Unfortunately, highlighting the Continental and Intercontinental Encuentros has often meant glossing over earlier efforts such as the Democratic Convention of August 1994. However, Olesen makes clear that the initial phase of the rebellion, especially the political maneuvering since the cease-fire in early January of 1994, established the recognition and action components of the injustice frame. Beyond January 12, 1994 the Zapatistas' careful refusal not to offer definitive solutions for confronting neoliberalism has made it possible for other rebels to claim the Zapatistas as an inspiration while articulating their own specific opposition on a variety of levels and sites.

In "Zapatismo Urbano" John Holloway further interrogates the differences between two general responses to the Zapatistas, namely a traditional solidarity strategy and an ap-

proach that challenges supporters to go beyond solidarity. Conceding the importance of efforts to provide material support and keep people informed about the course of the low intensity war and other development projects that threaten Zapatista communities, Holloway complicates attitudes that limit the indigenous of Chiapas to a "them" who need "our" "help." As an alternative, Holloway examines "urban Zapatismo."

Holloway's distinction between traditional solidarity and urban Zapatismo celebrates "the revival of councilism," as an expressive form of revolt and rebellion. As an alternative to the formal instrumental party strategy, Zapatismo is about finding a path, a "way forward" encourages the horizontal collective consensus driven by council. Zapatista poetics, concludes Holloway, is not about the "centrality of organization" but rather "the call of a world that does not yet exist." Holloway cautions us that despite the enormous resonance of the Zapatista uprising in the cities there are indeed important differences between the Zapatista reality and that of an urban Zapatismo. We have not organized ourselves into an army, we have little enthusiasm for nationalist symbols and rhetoric, and have not been able to draw on a coherent locally rooted rural community culturally rich in social and political networks. In addition, on a more practical level, the strategic use of violence by the Zapatistas has had a limited draw outside of Chiapas that establishes a space where we come to a closer "understanding that the Zapatistas and we are part of the same struggle." Holloway argues that Zapatistas impact on an emergent globalized resistance is not as a vanguard who has led the way but as a "resonance and inspiration" that provides us a "particular clarity (not just in the communiqués but in their actions) directions and themes that were already present in the struggles of the cities." Holloway interprets the Zapatistas from a point of view that insists "we" were already organized in urban areas. The Zapatistas were able to tap into established struggles already resisting the imposition of market logics. The analysis reminds

us that a community possesses the resources for its own transformation and has the collective genius to marshal those resources for political action.

Holloway picks up a theme he has explored elsewhere, namely the political possibilities of the refusal of confronting capital in worn-out predictable ways and exploring an alternative effort towards "the construction of our own world." "The problem then is not to conceptualize our own action in terms of the challenge to property, but to focus on our own construction of an alternative world and think how to avoid the capitalist appropriation of the products of our own doing."[40] In an earlier, now well-known study, Holloway argues the Zapatista rebellion has abandoned the limited language of "class" and "class struggle" for a new language: dignity. Dignity, as a class concept, implies the "struggle against subordination," referring to the social antagonism that constitutes how "human social practice is organized" in a capitalist context.[41]

Against critics quick to write the Zapatistas' epitaph, Gustavo Esteva's contribution, "Celebration of Zapatismo," reviews the myriad of Zapatista successes and theoretical contributions towards "liberating hope." Zapatismo, for Esteva, is nothing less than "the revolution of the new commons." The Zapatistas, according to Esteva, successfully "opened themselves to wide coalitions of the disconcerted" in such a way to make possible "a net of plural paths" that "herald a new social order." Esteva posits a Zapatismo that supersedes the conceits of representative democracy, including investing authority in elected officials (as well as the corporate interests they serve), relying on the beneficence of the State, or subverting political demands to those of the market place. Esteva argues persuasively that the political space opened by the Zapatistas activates a political project of "peoples' power" or radical democracy as an alternative to representative democracy.[42] "The Zapatistas," explains Esteva, "gave legitimacy to a struggle for democracy that neither surrenders itself to its illusions nor aspired to a transitory

or permanent despotic substitute; a struggle that does not aim to conquer 'democratic power' but to widen, strengthen and deepen the space where people can exert their own power."[43] The radical democracy pursued by the Zapatistas embodies "a commitment to the common good, as expressed in common sense, the sense held in the community." Esteva's assessment of the Zapatistas' political project anticipates some of the challenges of implementing a radical democratic vision, including the challenges of working through consensus.

Throughout, Esteva points to the critical element of transformation. The Zapatistas have themselves undergone a series of transformations –a narrative that is by now well known. The small *foco* of urban revolutionaries who traveled to Chiapas as a revolutionary vanguard abandoned "Revolution" once they were "contaminated by and subordinated to the communities."[44] In another move of transformation, the emergent Zapatista community armed itself.[45] Throughout the EZLN's transformation, from a guerrilla *foco* to a community in arms, the Zapatistas negotiate a number of identities and political positions. The Zapatistas successful management of the politics of transformation reflects, as Esteva informs us, "one of the best traditions of these indigenous communities and peoples… the tradition to change the tradition in a traditional way."

One of the most notable symbols of transformation has been Subcomandante Marcos, who, Esteva insists, is not the core of Zapatismo. For Esteva, Marcos is "a cultural bridge" that facilitates the dialogue with civil society. Marcos, Esteva argues, was born on January 1, 1994, and "will soon vanish" once his service is no longer needed –in this way he is not ideologically essential to Zapatismo.[46] Marcos' identity, cultural and intellectual resources, and organizational commitment are entirely in service of the communities that collectively command, underscoring the "lead by obeying" all of the authors gathered here agree is a fundamental dimension of Zapatismo. Some critics have chosen to define Marcos' relationship to the indig-

enous communities as that of translator. However, the gesture to define, and ultimately contain, Marcos as translator limits Zapatismo to a rigid program and set of prescriptions denying its open, fluid and provocative character as "an intuition." In a number of communiqués Marcos makes extensive use of the metaphor of the *corrida* while conducting a very powerful and imaginative critique of key dogmas. In one sense, Marcos has been able to *torrear* with a number of notable public intellectuals and leaders and the dominant ideologies they espouse, exposing the competing hegemonies of previous eras.[47]

In "'Zapatismo' and Globalisation as Social Relations," Massimo De Angelis provides a detailed study of how Zapatismo supersedes the "traditional discourses grounding politics on 'ideologies' and 'lines.'" De Angelis critiques the deficiencies of earlier "managerial" approaches typical of the left that refuse to abandon "event focused, culturally closed to democratic participation" strategies. Ultimately, De Angelis confirms that the Zapatistas offer "fresh and insightful coordinates" that make available "a general framework" that empowers communities. De Angelis' Zapatismo directly confronts the intensely oppressive social norms of doing articulated by an abstract disciplinary market that produces isolation, alienation, competition and scarcity, a process made worse by the more recent consolidation of interdependence characteristic of globalization. "It is the abstract process of disciplinary markets," explains De Angelis, "that articulates the social body in such a way as to constitute social norms of production rather than individual social actors negotiating among themselves the norms of their free cooperation." Zapatismo, according to De Angelis, challenges capitalist strategies of enclosure and disciplinary integration through a

> horizontal building of bridges, of establishing links, learning from mistakes, de-fetishising our relations to the others, reaching out and being reached, sharing re-

sources and creating commons, reinventing local and translocal communities, articulating flows from movement to society and vice-versa. In other words, within this framework politics is redefined in terms of the constitution of a social force that learns to articulate many yeses, that takes responsibility for the production of new social relations.

De Angelis' critical effort brings to the forefront the Zapatistas' political intervention in capitalist social relations, creating the political space necessary for communities "to invent their own politics and construct alternative social relations."Significantly, De Angelis's investigation of Zapatismo poses the question: "how do we *live* a new set of social relations?" The proposition here underscores Zapatismo as "a question rather than an answer," echoing some of the other contributors to this volume. The Zapatistas successfully opened up a space so "we can coordinate social action in a different way." De Angelis concludes that "when we ground politics of emancipation on this field of social relations, 'lines,' 'norms,' and 'programmes,' (i.e. simply stated all those strategic devices to inform us what to do next) become *emergent properties* of communicational processes rather than the way around." Here, much like the other contributors to this volume, De Angelis redirects our attention to the "effort at *encuentro*."

José Rabasa's essay, "On the History of the History of Peoples *Without* History," draws our attention to the critical intersection of the political and cultural dimensions of Zapatismo. Exploring the tensions regarding representation, Rabasa cautions against ideological constraints that force the Zapatistas into familiar and dominant Western narratives of social change. Rabasa's warning against how the Zapatistas might be represented underscores the challenges of acknowledging how complex and multilayered "movements" represent themselves. Most importantly, Rabasa notes that analysts can misrepresent or gloss

over the complexity of subaltern rebellion as part of an effort to legitimize the struggle as having history. "The world of sub-altern insurrections," counters Rabasa, "is a world ruled by the imagination, marvel, civil society, and poetics, which the prose of counter-insurgency, i.e., history, has sought to neutralize in its pursuit of the causes and effects of rebellions."[48] Rabasa's quarrel with state or elite uses of history directly points to the critical role of the politics of knowledge production—as an essential dimension of subaltern insurgency, generally, and Zapatismo, in particular. Rabasa insistence that "this guerrilla will create space for knowledge production that invent prac-tices for confronting the State and furthering the *without* his-tory" affirms the important intersection of the political and cultural practice of Zapatismo.

Rabasa is vigilant of any gesture that exercises "epistemic violence" that subsumes subaltern insurrection, in this case Zapatismo, into western discourses –even discourses of resistance that seek to challenge post-fordist or neoliberal hegemony. "Our writings as intellectuals," Rabasa warns, "should remain vigilant of the epistemic violence we inflict with our slogans, generalizations, and desires to constitute a master model for interpreting the globalization that haunts us all but with dif-ferent degrees of virulence." Rabasa's engagement with the re-cent work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri illuminates the analytical dilemmas of celebrating and representing the revolu-tionary subject without accounting for the uniquely situated collective subject of the Zapatistas articulated through the San Andrés Accords. "In the context of indigenous struggles," ex-plains Rabasa, "the primacy of post-Fordism hardly qualifies as a form of consent, as hegemonic, rather as a violent coercion into submission when not a war for the extermination of all those other, that are considered an error of humanity."

Ultimately, Rabasa takes up a concern shared by many of the contributors of this volume, namely the danger of con-structing Zapatismo as a model of revolution. In an early ex-

amination of Zapatista political practice, Rabasa points out that the task of a subaltern studies political approach would be to acknowledge oppositional epistemologies that re-write the documenting of resistance or the counter-insurgency made possible in the representation of resistance as deviance.[49] Regarding the political dilemmas of self-representation, Rabasa points to the necessity of confronting a well established "representational machine" that wants to force the Zapatistas into either a "peasant" rebellion or intransigent Indian framework.[50]

The Zapatistas shared their collective analysis of the conjuncture, and, at times, made their multifaceted strategy available through the communiqué and the figure of Subcomandante Marcos. As a cultural practice Zapatismo has been made available through a complex autoethnographic project for which it has become increasingly well known.

> But what is surprising is not this gigantic war machine destroying, assassinating and persecuting more than a million indigenous. No, what is really extraordinary and marvelous is that it is, and it will be, in vain. Despite of it, the Zapatistas not do not surrender nor are defeated, they even grow and become stronger. As they say in these mountains, the Zapatistas have a very powerful and indestructible weapon: the word.[51]

The Zapatista autoethnographic project has, as autoethnography implies, combined Western and non-Western tools, idioms and strategies for self representation that have come to define Zapatista political and cultural practices manifest in the sharing of their word.[52] Their word, has been offered in solidarity, and as an invitation to struggle on a variety of fronts. The Zapatista word, the word spoken in resistance, is fundamentally a provocation to participate in a new political space (*encuentro*), develop new political relationships or strategies of doing politics (dialogue), and collectively articulate a new political project

(autonomy). "Our blood and our word," the Zapatistas declared, "have lit a small fire in the mountain and we walk a path against the house of money and the powerful. Brothers and sisters of other races and languages, of other colors, but with the same heart now protect our light and in it they drink of the same fire."[53]

The autoethnographic requires that the Zapatista historiography and political treatise be conveyed through a process entirely of their own making and completely on their own terms despite the opprobrium they might receive not conducting themselves in a predictable or acceptable "leftist" manner. This extraordinary dimension of Zapatista political and cultural practice has taken shape through a strategic engagement with the media, political leaders and the parties, and an increasingly organized civil society. Without a doubt they have been exceptional in the management of their own image, especially given that they did not anticipate, nor could they have imagined, how they would eventually be embraced by civil society. Most importantly, the Zapatistas sharing of their word requires a response from the international Zapatista solidarity community to maintain support for the Zapatistas/EZLN and to struggle locally without necessarily waiting for initiatives by the EZLN.

The history of conquest and colonization has only allowed subjugated peoples the options of "good" or "bad" subjects, ignoring the option of the non-subject.[54] In keeping with the imperatives of a critical cultural practice, the Zapatistas have claimed the position of "non-subject." The Zapatistas have consistently insisted that the marginalized, the forgotten and faceless, are also agents of history, and that they cannot be included simply by adding them to a liberal framework of individual rights. The Zapatistas have reclaimed their particular history, proclaimed their cultural singularity, and argued for their autonomy as essential elements to their political participation, cultural survival and well-being, demonstrating the necessity of

reclaiming our histories and cultures as we reclaim our commons. Not only does the Zapatistas' political project of "not forgetting" re-insert them in Mexican national and "revolutionary" narratives, it also sustains a the political project of pursuing a radically different political imaginary.

> No we Indian peoples have come in order to wind the clock and to thus ensure that the inclusive, tolerant, and plural tomorrow which is, incidentally, the only tomorrow possible will arrive. In order to do that, in order for our march to make the clock of humanity march, we Indian peoples have resorted to the art of reading what has not yet been written. Because that is the dream which animates us as indigenous, as Mexicans and, above all, as human beings. With our struggle, we are reading the future which has already been sown yesterday, which is being cultivated today, and which can only be reaped if one fights, if, that is, one dreams.[55]

The Zapatistas have been astute and adept at nurturing "situated knowledges" that narrate their own struggle and make available their political project on their own terms.

The Zapatistas' effort at *encuentro* and effort to go beyond solidarity may appear as though they have only pursued a "model of peace," however they have not abandoned the "model of war" altogether.[56] They have held it in abeyance, the two possibilities working in conjunction to expand their political project for Mexico and beyond. Although they have refused to give up their arms, they have embraced a strategy that has creatively engaged the political process on their own terms. As Esteva explains in his essay for this volume, the Zapatistas have embraced violence strategically. They have been careful not to use violence as a means to dominate, or even convince others of the virtues of a Zapatista vision or program. "Zapatismo," explains Sergio Rodríquez Lascano, "reminds us that power is a

social relation, not a thing or a palace that can be taken, won electorally or assaulted."[57] Concludes Marcos, "We define our goal by the way we choose the means of struggling for it. In that sense, the value we give to our word, to honesty and sincerity, is great, although we occasionally sin of naïveté."[58]

Endnotes

[1] The author would like to thank Sam Oliner, Jordan Camp, and Squiggy Elvira Rubio-Hale for making this issue possible. In addition, special thanks go to Jordan Camp, Vik Bahl, and Toyin Falola for reading earlier versions of this essay. I would also like to acknowledge Acción Zapatista de Humboldt and Acción Zapatista Austin for helping me to remain inspired by Zapatismo.

[2] Subcomandante Marcos, "Durito IV Neoliberalism and the Party State," in Acción Zapatista Editorial Collective, *Conversations With Durito: The Story of the Defeat of Neo-Liberalism* (New York: Autonomedia, forthcoming).

[3] Subcomandante Marcos, "The Punch Card and the Hour Glass," *New Left Review* 9 (May-June 2001): 70.

[4] Paraphrasing Harry Cleaver and evoking the uses he suggested for Marx's *Capital* as a political document, we might suggest Zapatismo operates as a weapon in the hands of rebels. See Harry Cleaver, *Reading Capital Politically* (New York: AK Press, 2000): 23.

[5] This text appeared in *La Jornada*, November 25, 2002. Originally translated by Leslie López for *CounterPunch* (January 11, 2003), http://counterpunch.org/zaps01112003.html.

[6] María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "The Politics of Silence: Development and Difference in Zapatismo," in *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003): 235.

[7] For an excellent early description of the relation between the EZLN and the many dimensions of the "new Zapatista movement," see Xochitil Leyva Solano, "The New Zapatista Movement: Political Levels, Actors and Political Discourse in Contemporary Mexico," in Valentina Napolitano and Xochitl Leyva Solano, eds., *Encuentros Antropológicos: Power, Identity, and Mobility in Mexican Society* (London: Institute for Latin American Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 1998): 35-55.

[8] Big Noise, *Zapatista*, 1998.

[9] There are a number of terms used to describe the increasingly globalized networked resistance to neoliberalism, including alter-globalization, antiglobalization movement, movement of movements, and the global anti-capitalist movement, to name just a few.

[10] Subcomanadante Marcos has argued that this phase of savage capitalism is best understood as the Fourth World War, making the Cold War the third in a series of global conflicts. See Subcomandante Marcos, "Chiapas the War," *La Jornada*, November 20, 1999. Originally translated by irlandesa.

[11] Jim Davis, "This Is What Bureaucracy Looks Like" in Eddie Yuen, Daniel Burton-Rose, George Katsiaficas, eds., *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2001): 176.

[12] Eddie Yuen, "Introduction" in Eddie Yuen, Daniel Burton-Rose, George Katsiaficas, eds., *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2001): 7.

[13] Miguel Pickard, February 11, 2005, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA.

[14] Subcomandante Marcos, "De árboles, transgresores, y odontogía," in EZLN, *Documentos y comunicados 3* (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1997): 121.

[15] Manuel Callahan, "Zapatismo Beyond Chiapas," in David Solnit, *Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Change the World* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004): 217-228.

[16] Indeed, over the decade I have benefited from the work of all the authors gathered in this special issue.

[17] Subcomandante Marcos, "El Mundo: Siete Pensamientos en Mayo de 2003." Originally published in Spanish by *Rebeldía,* May 2003. http://www.revistarebeldia.org.

[18] Midnight Notes Collective, "The Hammer and… or the Sickle? From the Zapatista Uprising to the Battle of Seattle," in *Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local and Global Struggles of the Fourth World War* (New York: Autonomedia, 2001): 10.

[19] For an insightful analysis of global resistance making use of the phrase, see "One No, Many Yeses," *Midnight Notes* 12 (December 1997).

[20] According to Enrique Dussel the EZLN's strategic use of a distinctly Mayan idiom reclaims "the *dignity of the negated historical subject.*" It presents an example of community that is "institutionalized through social means conducive to consensus, agreement, and decision making." The Maya democracy of the EZLN's political project disrupts the very legitimacy of the nation state, exposing it as a historical development brutally imposed on indigenous peoples. See Dussel, "Ethical Sense of the 1994 Maya Rebellion in Chiapas," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 2:3 (February 1995): 42, 47.

[21] Subcomandante Marcos, "El Mundo: Siete Pensamientos en Mayo."

[22] "The Hammer and… or the Sickle?"*,* p. 9.

[23] This overview by no means represents fully the framework, contradictions and successes of the spaces they have convened, omitting, for example, the number of organizational and institutional links that sustain the

encounter. Here we would note, for example, the EZLN's strategic use of advisors as well as the development of such political formations as the Frente Zapatista Liberación Nacional and Enlace Civil.

[24] I am indebted to Gustavo Esteva for informing my thinking regarding the politics of hosting.

[25] Vijay Prashad has recently argued for a polycultural approach to political work in general and anti-racist work in particular. Polyculturalism introduces "a broad antiracist platform that would not (like liberal multiculturalism) invest itself in the management of difference, but it would (like a socialist polyculturalism) struggle to dismantle and redistribute unequal resources and racist structures." Prashad elaborates that "polyculturalism, as a political philosophy, does not see difference 'as evidence of some cognitive confusion or as a moral anamoly' (as liberal multiculturalism is wont to do), but it sees those features of difference with which it disagrees as 'the expression of a morality you despise, that is, as what your enemy (not the universal enemy) says." Significantly, Prashad notes that this type of analytical approach stresses "an ethico-political agenda forged in struggle (not as some unviversal, ahistorical verities)." Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001): 69.

[26] Subcomandante Marcos, "La entrevista insólita," interview by Julio Scherer García, *Proceso* 1271 (11 Marzo 2001): 12-13.

[27] Subcomandante Marcos, "De la cultura subterránea a la cultura de la resistencia," *La Jornada* (October 27, 1999).

[28] Stuart Hall has argued that identity is much like a bus, "not because it takes you to a fixed destination, but because you can only get somewhere – anywhere- by climbing aboard. The whole of you can never be represented by the ticket you carry, but you still have to buy a ticket to get from here to there." For Hall identities are "points of suture," temporary sites where one negotiates who one is and who one is to become. Moreover, Hall suggests that identity is always a narrative, a fiction -"the story we tell ourselves about ourselves." Hall addresses the issue of politics within this framework of identity by concluding that political collectivities necessarily are imagined communities. "It is because they are imagined," emphasizes Hall, "because they are constructed between the real and desire—that such communities can act as mobilising political force." Stuart Hall, "Fantasy, Identity, Politics" in Erica Carter, ed., *Cultural Remix: Theories of Politics and the Popular* (London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1995): 65-66.

[29] Marcos, "The Punch Card and the Hour Glass," p. 71.

[30] Davis, "This Is What Bureaucracy Looks Like."

[31] Subcomandante Marcos, "La entrevista insólita," p. 15.

[32] Subcomandante Marcos, "Oxymoron" *La Jornada*, "Ojarasca" 37, (May 9, 2000).

[33] Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash, *Grassroots Post-modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures* (New York: Zed Books, 1998); Wendell Barry, *Sex, Economy, and Community* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992).

[34] "Primera declaración de la Realidad contra el neoliberalismo y por la humanidad," in EZLN, *Documentos y comunicados 3* (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1997): 126.

[35] Gustavo Esteva, "The Zapatistas and People's Power," *Capital and Class* 68 (Summer 1999): 154.

[36] *FZLN Basic Documents* (approved during the founding congress held in Mexico City, September 1997).

[37] Subcomandante Marcos, "Durito IV Neoliberalism and the Party State."

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ross' contribution should be read along side "Chiapas: The Thirteenth Steele" the series of communiqués penned by Subcomandante Marcos in which he announces the transformation of the Aguascalientes into the Carcoles. See Subcomandante Marcos, "Chiapas: The Thirteenth Steele," originally published in *La Jornada,* (July 1997). English version available in Chiapas 95, http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/chiapas95.html.

[40] John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

[41] John Holloway, "Dignity's Revolt," in John Holloway and Eloína Peláez, eds. *Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico* (London: Pluto Press, 1998): 159-198.

[42] Esteva, "People's Power," p. 154.

[43] Esteva, "People's Power," p. 154.

[44] Yvon Le Bot, *Subcomandante Marcos, El Sueño Zapatista* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1997): 148-9.

[45] A compelling analysis of this transformation can be found in Luis Lorenzano, "Zapatismo: Recomposition of Labour, Radical Democracy and Revolutionary Project," in Holloway and Peláez, *Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico*: 126-158.

[46] Esteva and Madhu Prakash's concept of the "incarnate intellectual" might be useful here. The conceptual framework of the incarnate intellectual abandons previous approaches towards intellectuals, such as Gramsci's organic intellectual, that celebrate the intellectual as one who directs and conscientizes through cultural leadership. According to Esteva and Prakash Marcos embodies the very characteristics of the incarnate intellectual: 1) celebrates personal autonomy and social capacities that thrive on the margins; 2) shares professional knowledge with "clients," "consumers," sup-

posedly being served in such a way that is not "shadow work;" 3) distances oneself from the language and categories which define the profession; 4) specific competences that articulate new ways for a shared communal wisdom. The incarnate intellectual reflects a movement that is "outside the political economy of education and development" in pursuit of "placed knowledge" that claims solidarity with the people rather than "educating" or "developing" them to processes of "underdevelopment." Madhu Suri Prakash and Gustavo Esteva, *Escaping Education: Living as Learning within Grassroots Cultures* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998): 117-121.

[47] For English dominant audiences prone to translate the *corrida de toros* as simply a "bullfight" the fullness of the metaphor may be lost. A *matador* in a *corrida de toros* does not simply fight and ultimately kill a bull. Rather, as Garry Marvin aptly points out, the *corrida* consists of an intermingled processes of *lidiar* and *torerar* as part of a craftsmanship to bring out the best in the bull. Garry Marvin, *Bullfight* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994): 205-206.

[48] Rabasa's reference to the prose of counter insurgency is especially poignant given some of the key theoretical insights Ranajit Guha provides regarding the peasant as "the subject of his own history." "For once a peasant rebellion has been assimilated to the career of the Raj, the Nation, or the People," argues Guha, "it becomes easy for the historian to abdicate the responsibility he has of exploring and describing the consciousness specific to that rebellion and be content to ascribe it to a transcendental consciousness. In operative terms, this means denying a will to the mass of the rebels themselves and representing them merely as instruments of some other will." Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," in Nicholas Dirks, et. al., *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994): 364.

[49] See José Rabasa, "Of Zapatismo: Folkloric and the Impossible in a Subaltern Insurrection," in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997): 399-341.

[51] Subcomandante Marcos, "La máquina del etnocidio," *La Jornada*, (November 27, 1999).

[52] See Mary Louise Pratt, "The Art of the Contact Zone," in David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, eds., *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1993): 445-446.

[53] "Cuarta declaración de la Selva Lacandona," in EZLN, *Documentos y comunicados 3* (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1997): 80-1.

[54] Through various technologies and strategies of circulation representational machines "translate an undifferentiated succession of local, individual, concrete events of encounter into larger, more meaningful narratives –

narratives that convey meaning to formulations of nation, empire, race, or masculinity—each culture must work with and through certain representational technologies." Ricardo Salvatore, "Representational Machines of Empire," in Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. Legrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of US-Latin American Relations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998): 71-73

[55] G. Esteva and M.S. Prakash, *Grassroots Postmodernism,* p. 45.

[53] Subcomandante Marcos, speech given at the "Paths of Dignity: Indigenous Rights, Memory and Cultural Heritage" intercultural meeting, Mexico City, March 12 2001.

[56] The "model of war," Foucault suggests, "is not only ridiculous but, more importantly, dangerous as well." "Because," Foucault explains, "by virtue of saying or thinking 'I'm fighting against the enemy,' if one day you found yourself in a position of strength, and in a situation of real war, in front of this blasted 'enemy,' wouldn't you actually treat him as one? Taking that route leads to oppression, no matter who takes it: that's the real danger." In this case, Foucault specifically chastises intellectuals who elevate ideological disputes to "a grand theme of ideological struggle," constructing enemies and insisting the stakes have "greater political weight" than they actually might have. "Wouldn't it be much better instead," Foucault concludes, "to think that those with whom you disagree are perhaps mistaken; or perhaps that you haven't understood what they intended to say." Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991): 180-81

[57] Sergio Rodríguez Lascano, "Zapatismo: A Bridge to Hope," *Rebeldía* 1 (November 2002).

[58] Subcomandante Marcos, "The Punch Card and the Hourglass," p. 76.

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CELEBRATING THE CARACOLES: STEP BY STEP, THE ZAPATISTAS ADVANCE ON THE HORIZON

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OVENTIC CHIAPAS (Aug. 27th) - On the first birthday of the "Caracol," whose Mayan name means, "The Central Heart of the Zapatistas Before The World," Tzotzil Indian musicians in beribboned ceremonial *sombreros* strummed harps and guitars in front of the small wooden house with a vivid mural glowing on its façade depicting a giant ear of corn on which all the kernels were ski-masked Zapatistas.

Some four hundred such murals now illuminate the Zapatista geography in the highlands and jungle of southeastern Chiapas state where 1100 base communities grouped into twenty-nine autonomous municipalities and five "*Caracoles*" have taken firm root.

"*Caracoles*" are literally "snails" or conch shells, traditionally utilized by Mexico's indigenous peoples to summon the community together, precisely the function of these political/cultural centers. But "*caracol"* also means spiral and the rebels' quixotic spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos, who rebaptized these centers (previously known as "Aguascalientes") last year, conceives of them as spirals that open to the outside world and through which the outside world can know the Zapatistas.

The Caracoles also serve a more prosaic purpose. One year ago, on August 8th 2003, the birthday of Zapatista namesake and revolutionary martyr Emiliano Zapata, "Juntas de Buen Gobierno" (JBGs or "Good Government Committees"), consisting of two representatives from each of the autonomous municipalities in the region, were installed at the five caracoles. The establishment of the JBGs initiated a dramatic restructuring of civil Zapatismo as a building block to regional as well as

municipal autonomy.

A trio of ski-masked representatives of the fourteen-member JBG based in Oventic above San Cristobal in the Tzotzil-speaking highlands and the most public Zapatista out-post, are squeezed together behind a tiny desk inside the Junta house. Above them, a hand-painted portrait of Sub Marcos in which he looks oddly cross-eyed, surveys the visitors. Black and white photographs of significant Zapatista events line the walls, as does an enormous anti-globalization poster. Balloons and glistening tinsel dangle from the roof beams to mark the first anniversary of the Oventic Junta De Buen Gobierno.

The JBGs advertise that they are open for business twenty-four hours a day. "We are always ready to receive the *compas*" confirms *junta* member Moises, "you can come here at any hour." The JBGs were established to coordinate regional autonomy, resolve disputes between autonomous municipalities, and insure an equitable distribution of resource between Zapatista populations such as Oventic, which are adjacent to the road, and those in the outback. Additionally, the JBGs oversee the work of health, education, housing, agricultural, and justice commissions that serve the region. "We are not like the federal government. We rescue the traditions, the culture, the old ways of governing. We serve only at the will of the people (the principle of '*mandar obedeciendo*' or 'governing by obeying the will of the people')," explains Moises.

The JBGs also pass on all proposals from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to assure that they serve the rebel development agenda, and seek to spread the resource around by assigning a part of the seed money to more threadbare "*autonomias*." In a year-end accounting, Subcomandante Marcos records that the JBGs received delegations from forty-three nations and every state in the Mexican union last year, offering material aid projects.

Today, a delegation from Minnesota has come to ask the JBG's permission for a visit by a dozen Midwestern fair

traders dealing Zapatista coffee in El Norte who want to meet with growers in two coops that fall under Oventic's jurisdiction. Organic coffee sales play an increasingly pivotal role in Zapatista fortunes. In 2003, the Muk Vitz cooperative, which incorporates parts of six autonomous municipalities and twenty-nine Zapatista communities, sold twenty huge containers on the European and U.S. fair trade market and this year, the Y'achil coop will certify nearly a thousand Zapatista farmers as organic producers.

The "aromatic" brings with it the Zapatista message of resistance. Much of the coffee gets distributed through an informal network of U.S.-, Mexico-, and European-based cafés —Philadelphia's White Dog, the Human Bean Company in Denver, Rincon Zapatista in Mexico City, Caracol Maya in Barcelona are just a few—which also serve as sounding boards for the rebels' perspectives and promote solidarity and material aid. Meanwhile, the return from organic coffee sales is financing Zapatista infrastructure in the highlands and the jungle. Fifty new schools have been built in recent years noted Subcomandante Marcos in a year-end evaluation.

After due consideration, the three members of the Oventic JBG granted the fair traders permission for the visit. "You are welcome here. You may stay as long as you need to and take as many pictures as you like," beamed Moises. The ski-masked trio affirmed its decision by obligingly posing for a visiting photographer in front of the cross-eyed Marcos portrait.

The first year anniversary of the Caracoles was a time for the JBGs to appraise their work. "We are learning here how to govern ourselves, to walk alone without help from the federal government," Moises later explains to a handful of reporters, his soft voice melding with the serenade of the Mayan harps outside. Now even communities with traditional allegiances to the once-ruling PRI party, and the Zapatistas' persecutors through all the long years they held power, have come to the JBGs for help in solving their problems. "The '*mal gobierno*'

(bad government) doesn't listen to them anymore than it listens to us and does not help them to resolve their difficulties. We are happy that we can help," the Tzotzil farmer explains.

In a series of verbal "videos" distributed to the national press, Subcomandante Marcos critiqued the JBGs for being slow to take decisions and for a decided lack of women on their rosters.[1] The JBGs have also been painted as ineffective because the representatives from the autonomous municipalities rotate in and out every few weeks—the "Sup" argues that in establishing the JBGs, the EZLN is also building "a school of government" and asked patience. Marcos also compared the JBG's skeletal budgets to gargantuan stipends doled out to public officials. "The representatives bring their own pozol and tostadas. We make tea from the weeds. Our only expense is for the *combi* (public transport) and sometimes we walk."

The Oventic JBG's work has not been free of difficulty in its first year on the job. Road signs demarcating Oventic as Zapatista territory have been repeatedly shot at. Last April 10th, the annual commemoration of the assassination of the quasi-deity they call Votan-Zapata, when 4000 rebels gathered in a nearby hamlet to protest a water cut-off to outlying Zapatista villages by the Zinacantan municipal government (now governed by the purportedly left-center PRD party), they were beaten and shot by PRD goons—twenty nine were hospitalized, four with gunshot wounds.

The violence in Zinacantan was the most serious outbreak in the highlands since military and police invaded the autonomous municipality of San Juan de la Libertad in June 1998. Only the absence of big caliber firepower averted a massacre such as occurred at Christmas 1997 when forty-six Tzotzil Zapatista supporters were slain at Acteal, just over the mountain from Oventic. As at Acteal, the state government offered an "anthropological" explanation for the Zinacantan attack, attributing it to differing interpretations of traditional "uses and customs," i.e. when Zapatista communities refused to contrib-

ute large sums of money so traditional leaders could buy "*posh*" (sugar cane alcohol) for religious celebrations, their water was cut off and they were brutally assaulted.

Despite the bruises, Moises is optimistic: "we are new and make many mistakes but I am proud of the work that we have done."

Outside the JBG's hobbit-like headquarters, the Oventic Caracol was in full *fiesta* mode, celebrating not only the Junta's first birthday but also the inauguration of a new primary school to accommodate the swelling number of children born during these past ten years of Zapatista resistance. The new primary school abuts the "January 1st Insurgent" middle school, built by U.S. volunteer brigades and the Oventic community, the cornerstone of the Zapatistas' burgeoning educational system.

With its newly paved main (and only) street lined with food and weaving stalls, and the Oventic general store crammed to the rafters with international well-wishers gobbling up CDs of popular local *Comandante* David warbling revolutionary *corridos* (ballads), the first anniversary party was a showcase for the rebels' survival skills.

Neighboring villages set up camps on the green hillsides under brilliant swatches of plastic to ward off the August rains and down on the basketball court, fifty teams with names like "The Anarchy of Chenalho" whizzed up and down the *cancha*, an island of concrete in a sea of mud, and battled for rebounds under backboards decorated with red stars. Like the rebellion itself, the quality of rebel basketball has matured in the past decade with players exhibiting finesse in place of wild shots and even playing a little defense without deliberately fouling an opponent. To keep the players moving, a six-keyboard Zapatista band pumped out *cumbias* from the crowded stage but their performance was rudely cut short by a mysterious power failure. "*Pinche* government!" the *musicos* yelped, rolling out large, acoustic marimbas to sustain the musical momentum.

In sharp contrast to the party atmosphere that reigned over Oventic, a dozen miles down the road the Chamulas, Tzotziles who share this rock-studded terrain with the Zapatistas, were on the warpath. Disgruntled at their mayor for having failed to deliver promised public works, they locked him and his city council inside the San Juan Chamula jail, threatening to set fire to the building and roast the officials alive—one city council member's home was torched. For two days, the ugly mob surrounded the jail and the *posh* flowed like water. It is an election year in Chiapas and the politicians soak the highland villages with posh to insure a favorable vote.

The distinction between the "celebrations" is instructive. While Chamula culture is saturated with *posh*, the Zapatistas simply do not drink. Prohibitions against alcohol consumption, writes Hermann Bellinghausen, the most knowledgeable of Zapatista chroniclers, probably averted a bloodbath after the January 1st 1994 uprising.

Without a drop of the *trago* (strong drink), gala celebrations of the first year anniversary of the Caracoles and their Juntas de Buen Gobierno were mounted at all five rebel political/cultural centers in southeastern Chiapas this August. No *comandantes* were present at the events (last year, they were the featured orators), suggesting that civil Zapatismo has a firm hand on the rudder of the rebellion.

One of the most spectral shindigs was thrown at La Culebra ("the Snake") out on the edges of the Montes Azules biosphere sanctuary, the last remnants of Lacandon jungle wilderness, where the Zapatistas were celebrating completion of the "Compañero Manuel" teacher-training center. Built as quietly as a rumor with Danish seed money by Greek civil society volunteers, the new center is described by Bellinghausen as being in the Hellenic-Tzeltal architectural tradition, and is topped by an enormous "beehive" structure which houses, classrooms, and dormitories.

The Compañero Manuel center has already graduated

over a hundred education *promotores* in that remote region, all of them young people (15 to 25) who grew up with the Zapatista rebellion. "Our education has not just been to teach reading and writing but also so our struggle will be dignified by righteousness and that we may all speak with one heart," enthused Hortencia, a teen-age education promoter, to the writer Gloria Muñoz.

Globalization from the bottom was the theme in La Culebra with Greeks and Danes, Catalans who run a clinic at the nearby Caracol of Roberto Barrios, and U.S. bike enthusiasts from Ithaca New York who have installed a bicycle repair shop in Francisco Gomez (another *caracol*) partying down with the Tzeltal *campesinos* on the edge of the jungle. Also on hand for what the Greeks termed "a Zapatista Anti-Olympics" were representatives of Indian and popular movements from Argentina and Ecuador, and Zapatista solidarity groups from Italy and all over Mexico. The champion Milan football team, Liber, underwrites JBG expenses.

On the Zapatista map, La Culebra forms one part of the *autonomia* named for the old anarchist Ricardo Flores Magon that has been carved out of the Taniperlas *ejido*. In May 1998, federal troops and Chiapas state police were sent into Taniperlas to dismantle the autonomous municipality, destroying offices, hauling dozens of defenders off to jail, and deporting twelve non-Mexican solidarity workers. In their rampage, the marauders destroyed a bucolic mural, "The Dream of the Perlas River Valleys," whose creation had been coordinated by Mexico City painter Sergio "El Checo" Valdez—Valdez was imprisoned for almost a year for this seditious act.

In early August, El Checo was back in Chiapas to celebrate the first anniversary of the Caracoles with a more "cubistic" (Bellinghausen) version of the destroyed mural which has now been reproduced by rebel artists on walls all over the world – none perhaps more poetically than on Jack Kerouac alley in San Francisco's North Beach district.

"Never again a Mexico without us (sic)," shouted President Vicente Fox, stealing a line from the Zapatista Army of National Liberation as he welcomed a few hundred bussed-in Indian artisans to Los Pinos, the Mexican White House this past International Day of the *Indígena* (August 9th). Abandoned by Fox after he pledged to fix Chiapas in "fifteen minutes" and then gave up after trying for about that long a period, and enraged at the Mexican Congress for having mutilated a long-fought-for Indian rights law (the San Andrés Accords) that would have guaranteed limited autonomy, the Zapatistas have taken advantage of the government's cold shoulder to make the Accords a reality in their own territory. "We don't need the government's permission to build our own autonomy," the *comandantes* insisted last August in announcing the creation of the Caracoles, and their success was on display a full year later.

While darkness reigns in the political realm north and south of rebel territory, the Zapatistas, as their old revolutionary hymn proclaims, keep advancing on the horizon.

Endnotes

1 Subcomandante Marcos. 2004. "Leer un video. Segunda parte: Dos fallas," en *La Jornada*, 21 de agosto, 2004, p. 9; "Leer un video. Tercera parte: Tres hombros," *La Jornada*, 22 de agosto, 2004 pp. 8-9; "Leer un video. Cuarta parte: Cuatro falacias," *La Jornada*, 23 de agosto, 2004, pp. 7-9; "Leer un video. Quinta parte: Cinco decisiones de buen gobierno," en *La Jornada*, 24 de agosto, 2004, pp. 11-13; "Leer un video. Sexta parte: Seis avances," en *La Jornada*, 25 de agosto, 2004, pp. 19-17; "Leer un video. Séptima parte: Siete días en territorio zapatista," en *La Jornada*, 27 de agosto, 2004, pp. 9 y 18.

RIGHTS, RESISTANCE, AND RADICAL ALTERNATIVES: THE RED DE DEFENSORES COMUNITARIOS AND ZAPATISMO IN CHIAPAS

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> Rights save neither men nor a philosophy that is reterritorialized on the democratic State. Human rights will not make us bless capitalism.
>
> Deleuze and Guattari[1]

> Positive law is not our law, in our communities we have a different way. But it is very useful for us to understand it, in order to defend ourselves from the government.
>
> Community *Defensor*[2]

Some analysts have suggested that we must pay attention to the "social life" of rights, meaning the ways they are "materialized, appropriated, resisted and transformed" in particular contexts (Wilson 1997:23). In the Mexican context, it is perhaps more appropriate to call this their "political life." That is, the exercise and enforcement of human rights, as enshrined in national and international laws and mobilized by various social actors, are highly political matters (Speed and Collier 2000). In Mexico, as in most States, laws regarding the rights of citizens are selectively applied or enforced based on a gamut of political exigencies of maintaining power. Many Mexicans are precluded from

exercising their rights and from access to the justice system. It is therefore interesting and somewhat paradoxical that the very groups most disenfranchised and alienated from the legal system—including the indigenous people of Chiapas involved in the Zapatista movement—have increasingly over the last two decades framed their struggles in terms of "rights." Some theorists, looking at the potential positive aspects of such processes have argued that the appropriation of the concepts and structures of law convert national legal systems and law itself into "site[s] of contestation" (Hernandez 2002) or a "space[s] of resistance" (Merry 1997). Yet, as Merry and others have pointed out, such forms of contestation and resistance also serve to "reinforce the centrality of law as a mode of protest" (Merry 1997), and risk reinscribing the very forms and logics of power and domination they are struggling against (Gledhill 1997).

In this essay, we are particularly interested in considering the possibilities for forms of resistance that, while rights-based and tied to legal practice, have the potential to do more than simply convert the law into a site of resistance, with the inherent dangers of reinforcing oppressive power relations. Taking as a case in point the experience of the Chiapas Community Human Rights Defenders Network we will argue that some appropriations of law and legal discourse represent radical reformulations that challenge rather than reinscribe existing power relations. This organization, because of its particular structure and relationship to the Zapatista autonomous communities it serves, is in fact inherently subversive to the forms of sovereign power and rule that "the law" serves to uphold.

Law, the Contract, and the State

To understand both the complicity and the effectiveness of rights-based claims in our era, it is first necessary to define law, to locate its position in the architecture of power, and to establish its relationship to "rights." In order to come to these understandings, it is not enough to examine law as a semiotic or

aesthetic system, or even as a cultural artifact. While certainly such analysis could be applied to law, no such analysis would truly map the essence of the law, that is, none would adequately analyze the law as a particular form and structure for the exercise and circulation of power.

Throughout the history of modern western juridical thought, from Hobbes to Hegel, law has meant the exercise of a sovereign power-the enforcement of a command-obedience relationship between ruler and ruled. (This, despite the fact that the site for the exercise of sovereignty has shifted from "The Monarch," to "The Nation," and in its more radical forms to "The People"). This is not meant to imply, however, that law is the naked use of force, but rather, as Merry writes, "a form of violence endowed with the legitimacy of formally constituted authority" (Merry 1992, as cited in Wilson 1997). It is an "authority" that throughout the history of jurisprudence has been most effectively justified through the philosophical fiction of the "contract." This fiction posits that due to the fear of others, individuals in the state of nature give up their unlimited "rights" to a sovereign. This sovereign, through the collection of these rights, holds absolute power within a society and is in turn charged with the task of mediating among competing individual interests with the goal of creating social unity and peace.[3]

Within this "contractarian" philosophy, the "rights" that we exercise as subjects of a sovereign are the absolute limits beyond which the sovereign is not allowed to act upon his subjects. But how is it possible to limit the actions of a sovereign if, as Hobbes posited, any force that is to limit the sovereign must be greater than the sovereign, and if there is a force greater than the sovereign then the sovereign by definition ceases to exist? This paradox has vexed both natural and positivist legal philosophers, the great majority of whom have been unable to escape the philosophical dominance of the contractarian theses within legal thought. The natural law solution to this puzzle has been to appeal for "rights" from a sovereign above and

beyond that of the state (i.e., God), whereas the positivist legal solution has been to ask the sovereign itself to create a system of checks and balances on its own power through the recognition and pronouncement of the "rights" of its subjects and stabilization of the actual processual functions of state bodies (i.e. courts, legislatures, and the executive). Despite the disparities of these viewpoints both natural and positivist legal philosophies accept in whole the theses that all power within a state society necessarily emanates from, and is circulated by, the sovereign.[4]

Thus, the power of the "law" is, in thought and in action, the power to produce and reproduce daily practices and subjectivities within society that continually reinforce the founding myth of sovereign power, that is, the power to create subjects that act as if all power emanates from the sovereign. This mystifying, or "normalizing," power of the law, and the unparalleled legitimacy it gives the sovereign and the command-obedience relationship it maintains with its citizens, becomes particularly dangerous given our current global juncture.

On the Local Terrain: Three Conceptual Trajectories of Human Rights in Chiapas

The Catholic Church and the Natural Law Tradition
The concept of human rights has three trajectories in Chiapas: one with a religious orientation disseminated through the Catholic Church, another with a positivist legal orientation propagated by the agencies of the State and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and a third centered around the discourse of "indigenous rights," promoted most prominently in Mexico by the National Indigenous Congress and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN).

Although there is a good deal of blurring and overlap in the practice of human rights defense, the first two lines of legal thought correspond to two distinct conceptual frameworks

and justifications for the existence of "human rights": one which emphasizes the "human" and views rights as innate, natural, and prior to any judicial normativity; and a second which emphasizes "rights" and posits that rights, human or otherwise, do not exist previous to their establishment in law.

In Chiapas, the interweaving of strands of natural and positive law is largely a result of the fundamental role the Catholic Church has played in the development of human rights discourse and practice. The Church began its defense of the indigenous peoples of Chiapas as early as the 16th Century with Bartolomé de Las Casas' famous theses on the "humanity" of the indigenous subjects of the Spanish Crown. However, activists and academics working in Chiapas over the last several decades all seem to agree that the modern discourse and practice of human rights did not appear in contemporary Chiapas until the mid-1980s, and that it was first introduced in Chiapas through the Catholic Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, under the leadership of Bishop Ruiz.[5]

Samuel Ruiz Garcia became the Bishop of the Diocese of San Cristóbal in 1960.[6] After a process of his own "conversion" from his former conservative views, by the early 1970s Bishop Ruiz was training catechists and giving masses with a strong Liberation Theology bent. But because the indigenous people of Chiapas were clearly "the poorest of the poor," the "option for the poor" soon became the "option for the indigenous" and thus evolved into a *Teología India* (Indian Theology) (Ruiz García 1999:61). Indian Theology is based on a strong valorization of indigenous culture and the understanding that human beings of all cultures are equal before God (Meyer 2000; Ruiz García 1999).

Throughout the centuries the dissemination of the discourse of "human rights" through the Catholic Church has varied little in its affinity with natural law. The discourse that is currently predominant in the Catholic Church in Chiapas was first formulated by Bartolomé de Las Casas in the first half of

the 16th Century when he reformulated Neo-Thomism dominant within the Dominican order into a defense of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas that can be summarized with his famous statement: "The nature of men is the same and all are called by Christ in the same way."[7] All men who accept Christ are equal in the eyes of God. By situating God as the highest authority, rather than the State, it follows that the rights of human beings always already exist, regardless of their establishment in the legal regimes of any particular State. In recent years Bishop Ruiz has reaffirmed this longstanding position on the nature of human rights by citing Pope John Paul II, "the rights of your peoples are prior to any right established in human laws" (Discourse in Latacunga II, as cited in Ruiz García 1999:69).

At the same time, the Catholic Church was responsible for the establishment of the earliest human rights organizations in Chiapas, which were formed in the early 1980s in the context of the arrival of thousands of Guatemalan refugees fleeing their country's scorched earth campaign. In 1988, the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Human Rights Center (CDHFBC) was founded. The first organization specifically dedicated to human rights work, the Fray Bartolomé Center was a project of the Diocese of San Cristóbal and Bishop Ruiz was its President (Garcia 1998).[8] This organization, and the other church-based human rights organizations that followed it,[9] had a clear mandate to pursue human rights cases through the legal norms established in national and international law. Thus, as is the case with most organizations that found their conceptions of "rights" on the authority of God, the Catholic Church in Chiapas has had little choice but to seek the recognition of those rights through the positivist practice of attorneys, courts, and legislatures.

Human Rights NGOs: Positive Law and the Global Order

In the 1990s, human rights organizations flourished in Chiapas. Particularly after the Zapatista uprising began in 1994, the number of NGOs increased dramatically, as national and international organizations also began to have a presence in the region. By the late 1990s, there were ten independent human rights NGOs (García 1998)[,10] four national human rights NGOs,[11] and at least nine international human rights organizations[12] with a permanent or periodic presence in Chiapas. The state and federal governments had also established their own human rights agencies in the region.[13]

Several simultaneous and related processes—global, national, and local—contributed to this flourishing of human rights organizations (and NGOs more generally). At the global level, a number of analysts have argued convincingly that the growth of NGO networks are closely tied to the emergence of a new global order (e.g., Keck and Sikkink 1998). Without a doubt, the downfall of the socialist bloc and the subsequent emergence of neo-liberal capitalism as the discourse and practice of the new global order have contributed strongly to this dynamic, by effectively eliminating political discourses that posit alternative forms of social organization and replacing them with discourses more compatible with neo-liberal capitalism itself, notably "rights" discourses (see Brown 1995; Gledhill 1997). The emergence of this neo-liberal global order also signaled a shift in the ways many States related to their populations: eliminating their commitment to "oversee processes of redistribution that would bring about greater social justice and equity through reallocation of resources" (Frankovits 2001), which in turn gave rise to a need for the disenfranchised to pursue new forms of social solidarity to seek redress for inequalities.

We can observe how this process played out at the national level in Mexico. Long characterized by a corporatist State

that managed internal dissent through co-optation (turning to coercion and repression when co-optation failed), the Mexican State found itself increasingly limited in its capacity to finance hegemonic social pacting after the debt crisis of the mid-1980s (Collier 2000). The neo-liberal restructuring begun during the regime of Carlos Salinas de Gortari in the wake of the economic crisis brought Mexico into the emergent global order and ended decades of corporatist rule. This meant, for many, the end of any hope of balancing out social inequalities through direct petitioning of the State (for land reform, etc.). Thus, the relations between the State and civil society have been fundamentally altered, opening up a space for the flourishing of civil society's activism and organization. Many of these organizations grew up around the issues of specific groups, which tended to be focused on, or composed of, a particular unifying identity, and whose claims were strongly rights-based. In other words, as globalization has created the conditions in Mexico in which rights-based discourses seem to have the most social salience, it has simultaneously eroded the ability of the State—through neoliberal economic restructuring that has put an end to redistributive practices and eroded the powers of formal democratic institutions—to respond to these claims, making the creation of intermediary private bodies (i.e., private international foundations and NGOs) increasingly necessary.

However, many of the resulting non-State organizations tend to depoliticize the problems that they seek to solve by side-stepping the difficult issue of implementing a holistic and coherent political project within the neoliberal State, and they instead settle for managing a series of immediate and seemingly unending crises (Guehenno 1995; Hardt and Negri 2000). Thus, as Gilles Deleuze (1994) posited, the end of corporatist rule does not mean the end of State or sovereign-like mediation of social conflict. Rather, the State and its mediating function has now escaped the confines of formal public institutions to permeate society as a whole (see also Hardt 1998).

This interpretation has significant implications for the possibilities and pitfalls of NGOs, because it suggests that these sites for action and social struggle can easily reproduce the logic of neo-liberal sovereign rule in a fashion that effectively outdoes the normative power of the State by involving the entire social body in the circulation and maintenance of the current state of affairs. This point is important to our argument; we will return to it again below.

Whether one interprets the proliferation of NGOs in a relatively positive light (Keck and Sikkink 1998), or in a relatively critical one (Garcia 1998), the fact of their proliferation indicates that they fill a necessary mediating role between States and their populations. However, the marginalized and disenfranchised remain in a vulnerable position, at the mercy of the whims of funding institutions and the internal politics and power moves of the NGOs themselves. That is, indigenous communities in Chiapas may eventually gain access to the judicial system by way of NGOs, but they are then subject to an unequal power imbalance with the NGOs themselves, a power imbalance that is particularly dangerous if we take into consideration that NGOs are playing an active role in the diffusion of the logic of neoliberal sovereign rule throughout society. Thus, for groups pursuing autonomy and self-determination, a more direct confrontation with the logic of the State, and a clearer consideration of, and disentanglement from, the law as a function of the State, is not only desirable but also absolutely necessary.

The Emergence of Indigenouus Rights and Autonomy in Chiapas

Parallel to the Catholic Church's natural law defense and the NGOs' positive law defense of indigenous people, there has been an ongoing evolution in the thought and practice of "rights" within the indigenous communities of Chiapas themselves. One important expression of this evolution, though not the only one, was the 1994 uprising of the EZLN, which began

its first public communiqué by highlighting its indigenous composition and the centuries-long series of abuses against the indigenous people of Mexico with statements like, "We are the product of 500 years of struggle."[14]

Twelve days after the EZLN declared war on the Mexican Government, and under much national and international pressure, then-President Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) decided to declare a unilateral cease-fire that effectively ended open hostilities in Chiapas and began a series of negotiations with the EZLN that have spanned some eight years and three presidencies. The high-water mark of the negotiations was the signing of the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture by the EZLN and the government of President Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000). However, it quickly became apparent that the federal government had little intention of honoring the agreements, as evidenced by its refusal to accept proposed legislation for constitutional amendments on indigenous rights, an important aspect of the Accords.

The Mexican government's failure to comply with the San Andrés Accords—especially its failure to fulfill the commitment to promote constitutional reform recognizing indigenous rights and autonomy—signaled its unwillingness to address the indigenous population on the terrain of rights. But governmental inaction had the effect of strongly impelling the Zapatista movement toward precisely that terrain, and the Zapatistas increasingly defined their movement as one for indigenous rights and autonomy. This shift took place for several reasons: first, the governmental withdrawal from the San Andrés Accords gave the Zapatistas the moral high ground; they had negotiated in good faith, and the Mexican government had failed to honor its own agreement. Not surprisingly, this increasingly got put forth in their public discourse. Also, the national indigenous movement, which had begun to coalesce out of diverse and previously unrelated organizations and autonomy projects after the Zapatista uprising and particularly after the negotia-

tions at San Andrés, provided a strong national base of support for the EZLN (see Hernández Navarro 1998). But, perhaps most importantly, by closing the door on the possibility of pursuing indigenous self-determination through negotiations and legal reform, the government forced Zapatista base communities to pursue autonomy unilaterally.[15] Although the Zapatistas established 38 "municipalities in rebellion" in 1994, it was from 1997 onward—after the failure of the San Andrés Accords—that these municipalities emerged as a principal space for the organization of resistance and a strategy for indigenous political participation (Gonzalez and Quintanar 1999). Educational initiatives and health projects began, and regional cooperative structures formed. Thus, the San Andrés Accords, and the Mexican government's failure to implement them, contributed to important shifts in Zapatista discourse and practice. The movement for "national liberation" became a movement for indigenous rights and autonomy.

Four years later, when Vicente Fox was elected president and the COCOPA initiative finally went before the Mexican Congress, the autonomous municipalities were already well established. When the law passed in a form that was so emptied of content that it was considered a step backward in terms of indigenous rights (and was unanimously rejected by indigenous peoples throughout the country), it reaffirmed the Zapatistas' distrust of the legal terrain as the most effective one for establishing their autonomy. While they certainly fought for constitutional recognition as one aspect of their autonomy project, they were always prepared to move forward without it.

Two years after the passage of the law, a significant step in the autonomy process was taken. In August 2003, the Zapatistas celebrated the evolution of the five regional "Aguascalientes" (points of contact between the EZLN and civil society) into the "Caracoles" (regional administrative seats). An important aspect of this shift was that it formalized the transfer of power from the EZLN to the autonomous commu-

nities themselves—from military to civilian authorities. The administrative bodies seated in the Caracoles, the Juntas de Buen Gobierno (Good Governance Councils), are a form of self-organization and administration of the Zapatista communities, based on their local customs and practices. The Juntas operate under the Zapatista logic of "*mandar obedeciendo*" (rule by obeying) a form of governance they envision as distinct from that of the State, which they have defined for a number of years as "*mal gobierno*" (bad government). While it remains to be seen how effectively the Juntas de Buen Gobierno will be able to put the concept of *mandar obedeciendo* into practice, by virtue of their assertion of their right to try in practice—not in state recognition—their political force is felt.

The autonomous regions do not seek recognition by or representation before the State, but rather are the expression or *exercise* of the right to self-determination. The idea that rights exist in their exercise, rather than in their wresting from the state, is central to the EZLN's perspective of their struggle. It is reflected in the statement of spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos when he writes, "We the Zapatistas want to *exercise power*, not take it."[16] The words of Comandanta Ester at the birth of the Zapatista Caracoles and the inauguration of the Juntas de Buen Gobierno in August 2003 in Oventic, Chiapas, conveyed the weight of this argument:

> The political parties conspired to deny us our rights, because they passed [the law on indigenous rights and culture]… Now, we have to exercise our rights ourselves… Forming our own autonomous municipalities, that's what we are doing in practice and we don't ask anyone's permission.[17]

Comandanta Ester's speech asserts that indigenous autonomy exists prior to and irrespective of its establishment in law. She signals the betrayal of the Law on Indigenous Rights and Culture

as the end of the possibility of state recognition as a significant factor in Zapatista autonomy. Indigenous autonomy—self governance—will be exercised irrespective of the state's position.

However, there is more to the current mode of Zapatista autonomy than simply a response to the intransigence of the government. There is a distinct conceptualization of those rights which functionally eliminates the legal regimes of the State as the external referent for the existence of rights. Bearing some resemblance to a natural law conceptualization of rights as prior to and irrespective of the laws of States, the Zapatista interpretation also eliminates the notion of a Supreme Being as the source of those rights. The source of rights in this conceptualization is the actors themselves, who are collectively exercising them. This does not mean that the State is irrelevant —Zapatista autonomy, even when completely disengaged from interaction with the State, is still forged in mute dialogue with the State. State actions can and do affect the Zapatista regions, and Zapatista actions do affect the State. However, by refusing to grant the State the power to designate who are rights-bearers and what rights they may enjoy, the Zapatistas suggest a radically distinct discourse of rights. There is no need to overly romanticize Zapatismo. The positing of alternative logics of governance and a distinct framework of rights is a tall order, and on the ground their application and their results are uneven. The inverted power relations of *mandar obedeciendo* lead to complicated decision making processes, and the inclusiveness implied in "*un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos*" (a world in which many worlds fit) is in many cases more of an ideal concept than an unfailing practice in these ethnically and politically diverse regions. Nevertheless, by positing these concepts as part of their autonomy project, Zapatistas do offer an alternative philosophy of social organization and rule.

These retooled conceptualizations make indigenous autonomy in the form elaborated by Zapatistas and their

supporters challenging to the neoliberal state—not because of the much-debated risk of "separatism," but rather by providing both symbolic and material alternatives to neoliberal rule. First, they assert the right to maintain an alternative structure of power, the right to which exists in its exercise and outside state recognition. Second, they offer an alternative structure of power that is based on alternative logics of rule, not in the sense of their indigenous cosmovision, but rather in collective and consensus decision-making, the concept of *mandar obedeciendo* and the assertion of pluriculturality or diversity within the collective.[18] But in pursuing autonomy unilaterally, outside state recognition, the Zapatistas can assert their own logic of rule, "good governance" as posited against the "bad government" of the State, and do so without risking the limiting structures and discourses of the State and its legal regimes.

Autonomy and the Innovations of an Indigenous Rights Practice in Chiapas

In international law, it is commonly accepted that "indigenous rights" have developed as a derivative discourse of the more general human rights movement institutionalized by the United Nations and through its "Universal Declaration." That is, soon after the initiatives within the United Nations to decolonize Africa and Asia were recognized, indigenous peoples around the world began to demand that international legal bodies recognize their right to varying forms of autonomy and self-determination. The concrete results of these demands have been several: 1) the adoption of two International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions, Nos. 107 and 169, the latter of which implicitly recognizes the aim of promoting indigenous autonomy and self-determination and is considered the most complete "in force" summary of indigenous rights in international law; 2) the establishment of a Permanent Indigenous Working Group within the United Nations, which has drawn up the Draft United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Rights, and; 3) the comple-

tion of a Draft American Declaration of Indigenous Rights, as well as a growing body of pertinent jurisprudence within the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights and Interamerican Court of Human Rights (Anaya 1998).

Just as with natural law claims, with which it shares the demand for human equality, the global indigenous movement has had to concede to the positivist practice of existing legal institutions for the recognition and promotion of its "rights." But, despite the similarities that "indigenous rights" shares with the natural and positivist legal traditions, it also contains normative elements that do not belong to, and that cannot be assimilated into, either of these traditions. As Paul Patton (2000) argues, "Indigenous Rights" is a bridge concept that attempts to unite the Western legal tradition with the customary normative practices of indigenous peoples that have until recently been unrecognizable as juridical institutions within Western law. Since the colonization of the Americas, courts around the world, with only a few exceptions (notably the Supreme Court of the United States), have refused to recognize that the internal decision-making structures of indigenous communities rise to the level of normative institutions and as such should be respected. This perspective, and its expression in courts and legislatures around the world, is inextricably tied to the view of indigenous people as "primitives" and "barbarians" incapable of reasoned thought and thus "law." Yet, not only does the recognition of indigenous juridical structures within western law signal the beginning of the end for the use of law as an instrument of openly racist colonization, it also marks a radical difference between indigenous rights claims made in Chiapas and other identity-based claims made against the State. The Zapatista movement, and the indigenous rights movement in Mexico more broadly, demands autonomy and self-determination, expressed not as the capacity to build another State under a new sovereign, but as the capacity to function unimpeded so as to affect the daily lives and future of its members.[19] The San Andrés Accords at-

tempted to reformulate the relationship between the State and indigenous peoples in several important ways: one was the right of indigenous peoples to choose their authorities through their internal selection mechanisms; another was the right of those authorities to exercise their power in order to make the political, legal, and economic decisions that directly affect their communities, or at a minimum to be consulted regarding decisions that will affect them. In other words, the San Andrés Accords demanded the recognition of indigenous peoples' right to a relationship with the State that is based upon the principle of consensus rather than that of command-obedience. Thus, these indigenous rights claims not only demand that the institutions of sovereignty within a nation recognize indigenous peoples for who they are—human beings with the right to equal treatment—they also demand that those same institutions not impede the functioning of an existing and parallel power structure (internal indigenous political and judicial mechanisms) in order to allow the indigenous peoples themselves to decide who they are and who they want to become.[20]

There is a marked difference between this form of identity-based rights movement and other struggles caught in the positivist and natural law legal traditions, and within the logic of neo-liberal capitalist global order. First, in contrast to many ethnic or "minority" based struggles, it does not look to the construction of a new sovereign, or even a limited sovereignty, as its final goal. Second, it is not satisfied with the recognition of its objectives within State laws and practices; it is not placated by the protection that similarities with the dominant society may provide it. That is, its demands have not been based on the natural law impulse to search for safety in similarity, nor the positive legal tradition of "equality before the law," but rather, this movement has asserted "the right to be different." Third, these rights-based claims demand nothing less than a reformulation in the exercise of sovereignty to include and protect a relationship between the sovereign and its subjects based on

consensus rather than the command-obedience structure that has otherwise characterized sovereignty in western legal thought from Hobbes and Locke to Kant and Hegel. The discussion of the Red de Defensores Comunitarios below highlights not only the unique nature of such rights-based claims, but also their significance for the conception and practice of other such struggles within the contemporary global order.

Situating the RED De Defensores Comunitarios

The Community Human Rights Defenders' Network (referred to herein as the "Red de Defensores") or "Red" was begun in 1999. Founded by Chiapas human rights attorney Miguel Angel de los Santos, the objectives were to bring together a group of young indigenous people from various conflicted regions of the state to train them in national and international human rights law, as well as in the fundamental practice of legal defense in the Mexican justice system. Because the conflict in their regions is largely tied to the struggle for greater rights and autonomy for indigenous people, a significant portion of the training was dedicated to national and international agreements on indigenous rights.

The *defensores* are all from Zapatista base support areas and were chosen by their authorities through the particular customs of their regions in response to letters of invitation sent to the five Aguascalientes. After some initial drop outs and new recruits, the course took shape with fourteen participants.[21] These representatives are from Tzeltal, Chol, Tojolobal, and Mam speaking zones. In 2001, a second generation of *defensores* was invited to join the Red de Defensores from the Zapatista regions Montaña, Maya, Trabajo, and San Pedro Michoacán.

The *defensores* participate in monthly training seminars. Their training has had four components, two conceptual and two practical. In the conceptual component, they studied international human and indigenous rights laws and treaties (particularly the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights and the ILO

Convention 169) and human rights in the Mexican framework (essentially the "rights and guarantees" contained in the Mexican Constitution). In the practical component, they study and practice legal defense work within the Mexican legal system (including Criminal Law[22] and the everyday practice of law in the jails, courts, and *Ministerio Públicos*[23] of the state), as well as the political practice of human rights defense (e.g., writing press releases, public denouncements, and handling negotiations and other interaction with public officials). In addition, a significant portion of the training is dedicated to technical instruction in the use of video cameras for human rights documentation, and in the use of computers, word processing programs, and printers. The *defensores* work in coordination with a team of several advisors who coordinate training workshops, facilitate the centralization of information, and give input and technical support on issues ranging from legal practice, to raising and managing funds, to long-range planning and organization.[24]

The Work of the *Defensores*

"In Our Own Defense"

Human rights violations are by no means a new phenomenon in Chiapas (HRW 1991). In fact, arbitrary violence by state and federal police, as well as landholders' private security forces ("white guards") were one aspect of the injustice that gave rise to the Zapatista uprising. However, since the uprising began, communities located in base support areas have suffered new types of rights violations at unprecedented levels. Militarization and military occupation (an estimated 70,000 Mexican Army troops were stationed in Chiapas at the height of the military presence) have made everyday life difficult for people in many areas. Soldiers impede their travel to agricultural fields; they occupy lands, cut down fences retaining livestock, harass women, and create a general climate of fear and surveillance (Global Exchange, et. al 1999, 2000). Notable cases of military human rights violations are the murder of three men in the community

of Morelia by soldiers in 1994 (now before the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights), and the rape of three Tzeltal women at a military checkpoint in 1995. More insidious, and with a much higher human toll, has been the paramilitarization of the conflict. The emergence of pro-ruling party paramilitary groups after 1995 has resulted in hundreds killed, tens of thousands of internally displaced, and hundreds of political prisoners (CDHFBC 1996; HRW 1997). Furthermore, all of these aspects of the conflict contribute to the disruption of traditional forms of social organization, production, and worship, and thus constitute violations of social, economic and cultural rights, including the right for people to maintain their cultures.

All of the regions covered by the Red have suffered violent conflict in recent years. Because of the micro-regionalization of conflict (in which the conflict takes on local dynamics in different micro-regions), the types of problems faced by the *defensores* and the communities of their regions vary. Some suffer more problems with militarization, while others face paramilitary violence. Still others are occupied by state police forces, and many have suffered the politically motivated imprisonment of community members.

The *defensores'* work thus entails a range of activities which depends on the needs of their region. The principle activities are taking declarations and testimonies from victims and witnesses regarding rights abuses, videotaping and photographing for evidence, presenting complaints before the Ministerio Público, sending denouncements to the press and the human rights community at large, seeking the release or pursuing the defense of people who have been unjustly detained. The most high-profile human rights case they are engaged in is the above-mentioned case of the three Zapatista base supporters killed by the Mexican Army in Morelia in January 1994. The Red is working in collaboration with the Comision Mexicana de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos, which has consultative status before the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights,

to seek redress for the widows of the victims. Also, through the Project 169, they are preparing a complaint regarding violations by the Mexican government of the Convention in the 2001 passage of the federal legislation on Indigenous Rights and Culture (Hernández, 2002).

Thus, the work of the *defensores* is varied, involves inter-actions with a variety of actors across social fields, and reflects a significant level of preparation. Prior to coming to the Red, some *defensores* had little or no experience with the concept of human rights. In the words of "Ricardo" from Nicolás Ruiz, "Before, no one talked about 'human rights.' It had no meaning for us." "Miguel," from the Northern Zone, notes the transition they have made as part of the Red: "We indigenous people do not know what our rights are. They say we have rights, but we don't know what those rights are, for example [in relation to] the taxes imposed on us by the government through its institutions. Indigenous *priistas*[25] don't know their rights. The government helps them, in order to get their votes, but they still don't know what their rights are. We as human rights *defensores* are learning what our rights are, and we are reclaiming them."[26]

But the Red de Defensores is by no means just another organization designed to tell indigenous people what their rights are. There are several aspects of the Red de Defensores that distinguish its work from that of other organizations functioning in the educational or legal realm around rights-based claims. First, in its conceptualization, the Red parted significantly from the numerous existing projects for teaching indigenous people about their human rights. Often, these have focused on the training of human rights *promotore*s (promoters) to recognize and document human rights violations, then proceed to the nearest human rights organization (usually the one that provided them the training). From there, the NGO takes the information and makes decisions about the appropriate course of action. Once the information has been taken, the *promotore*s are often sent on their way, while the organization undertakes the work of pre-

paring the denouncements; contacting the police, government human rights agencies, the press, and/or the international community; preparing the documentation; and when necessary providing follow-up on the case. In contrast, the Red de Defensores was conceived and designed to prepare the *defensores* (loosely "defenders;" however, in Spanish, defense attorneys and public defenders are called "defensores," thus it carries the connotation of legal defense of human rights, not just their "promotion") to make the decisions and proceed with the actions on their own, thereby eliminating dependence on attorneys and NGOs that have their own agendas, potentially quite distinct from those of the communities. A basic purpose of the Red, then, is to eliminate the NGO middlemen and allow the communities to "assume their own defense" (which is, in fact, the slogan of the organization).

Some of the *defensores* had previous experience or training as *promotores*. For example, Manolo, from Altamirano, had been a human rights *promotor* and regional coordinator for three years before coming to the Red. Because of this previous experience he was chosen by his community authorities to participate in the training and later in the Red when it became a formal organization: "When the invitation from Lic. Miguel Angel came, the authorities of my community told me, 'You should go because you already know something about law and you will quickly learn how to do this work.'"

Rafael had also had several years of training as a *promotor* through the local Catholic parish in Tila, which ended when the 1994 uprising began. He was clear about the difference between the training he received as a promotor and what he has received with the Red: "They taught us what human rights are… and if we saw violations, they told us, we should go to the Fray Bartolomé [Human Rights Center]…[With the Red] it is more practical—we are learning how to handle the MP [*Ministerio Público*], write documents, defend rights with the Articles [of the Mexican Constitution], the penal codes, the ILO 169…."

Like Rafael, Manolo distinguished his training as a *promotor* and as a *defensor*, and pointed to some of the reasons why training is important in his region:

> In our communities, we don't have a lot of economic resources and we don't have any way to go quickly to San Cristóbal. Even if we [do], by the time we arrive in San Cristóbal and go to an organization to explain, it is too late to make the denouncement—those who committed the violations are long gone. The journalists and human rights observers also arrive to the community too late to gather information and make the denouncement. *We* are *in* our communities. That's why we are taking this course to learn how take testimony and elaborate a denouncement. This is very important, because one never knows when [human rights violations] will happen. When the Federal Army comes or Federal Police or state police are entering the communities, we are ready.

The ability to act directly from the community is important to the victims of right violations and facilitates human rights work. For this reason, the *defensores* are based in their regions, rather than in San Cristóbal, or another town. Pablo, also from the Northern Zone, notes the value of coming from a shared language, culture and experience: "An attorney from the city doesn't speak our language. We *defensores* understand more clearly what [victims and witnesses] are trying to say and express. This is much better because we think the same, talk the same, and we have suffered the same repressions. They trust us."

There are thus some clear practical reasons why *defensores* based in the community may work more effectively without intermediary NGOs. But beyond eliminating the "middle-man," their effectiveness can also be understood as a result of strengthening autonomous practice in the nascent Zapatista autono-

mous municipalities. Indigenous communities in Zapatista autonomous regions (as elsewhere, no doubt) have often substituted NGO support for the support previously received from the government in its corporatist moment (Van der Haar forthcoming). While NGOs have no doubt provided valuable assistance and reinforcement to communities pursuing autonomy, we have already pointed to the problematic nature of the community-NGO relationship. Shifting reliance on governmental assistance to reliance on NGOs can still prevent communities from acting autonomously. This brings us to a second important aspect of the Red: its base in the communities of Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities.

Community at the Center

The defensores *seated around the meeting table in the San Cristóbal office smiled broadly when the topic of the recent workshop they had attended in Huehuetenango, Guatemala was raised. Ricardo spoke excitedly: "It went very well," he said. "Everyone [there] was very impressed with the Red. There was an exercise in which they asked us to draw a picture of the structure of our organization, and when we showed ours with the three circled and the community in the center, everyone was silent for a minute, surprised, then they all started asking, 'Can you explain it again? How does it work?' They were very impressed."*

After the initial two years of training, the Red de Defensores became a formal organization, made up of the participants of the training workshops. Its unique structure, which Ricardo refers to above, resembles conceptualizations of power relations in the communities of the *defensores* and is distinct from the structures often seen in NGOs. The latter have traditionally been conceived as pyramids with the officials at the top (coordinator, director, president, executive secretary, etc.), the attorneys, project directors, public relations and press coordinators, and fund-raisers in the middle, and *promotores* from indigenous communities at the base. The Red, by contrast, is conceptualized in concentric circles, with the communities at the center,

the *defensores* in the second ring, and an advisory council in the outer ring. Perhaps the obvious difference is in not having "outsiders" at the top, and the elimination of the top-down mode of operation. This structure emphasizes the fact that the indigenous communities are the heart of the project.

The work of the Red begins with, is directed by, and is answerable to, the communities themselves, and the authorities of the Zapatista autonomous regions to which they pertain. This fundamental principle underlies the original election of the *defensores* by the authority structures of the communities themselves, the *defensores'* work, which is based in the community, and the organizational structure that keeps the community as the center.

"To Organize Ourselves in the Way That We Choose"
It was a sunny afternoon in June of 2000, when Abelardo Mendez Arcos made some casual comments that would later contribute to a shift in our thinking on the work of legal defense from the community in Chiapas. "Its simple," he said, "I began doing legal work to help the compañeros *[Zapatistas]. It is all part of the struggle, the struggle for autonomy." Mendez Arcos, a Chol from the northern zone of the state, was a Zapatista political prisoner from 1996-1997 and upon his release became the external representative of the political prisoners group La Voz de Cerro Hueco. He is in a sense the proto-defensor, having worked with and learned from attorney De los Santos on the cases of dozens of prisoners over the last five years. Given to lengthy political monologues, he repeated the simple premise several times in different ways before flashing a suddenly self-conscious smile and concluding: "That's what the Red is for: to defend our rights, our autonomy…."[27]*

At the time, Abelardo's comments seemed like straightforward political rhetoric about "the struggle." But in the course of dialogue with the *defensores* and between the authors, we began to interpret this conceptual linkage of the Red's work in legal defense and the broader project of Zapatista autonomy of the communities that constitute its base of support. That is,

there is more to "defense from the community" than simply eliminating the middle-man or even creating local empowerment by appropriating the legal terrain of the State. Carrying out legal defense from the community is important, as we see it (and more importantly, as the *defensores* see it), primarily because it allows community members to "defend their autonomy," as Mendez Arcos put it, and because it is in itself an extension of autonomous practices.

As the opening quote suggests, the *defensores* recognize positive law, and the Mexican legal system specifically, as alien to their forms of organization and conflict resolution, but nevertheless as an important tool to use precisely in defending their communities' ability to do things "their way." They understand the political nature of "rights" as a tool of power wielded against them by the government, and which they can use to fight back:

> We, as human rights *defensores*… are getting to know what our rights are and we are demanding them. But the government is playing a political game. For example, for the government, 'civil resistance' is a violation of the law, but they do not take into account all the laws that have already been established, the international laws which they themselves signed, [because] they don't want to recognize that we have the right to organize ourselves in the way that we choose… We know how to defend ourselves with the law, because the government is not going to do it for us—it is not in their interest.[28]

In statements such as this one, the unique and politically sophisticated view of law held by the *defensores* comes into view.

In our multi-layered interactions with the *defensores*—as activists, as advisors to the Red (see note 24), and as researchers—it has become clear to us that they do not aim to protect or expand their own ability to present cases in courts or with state officials, even though this is the daily work in which they are

engaged. That is, their end goal is not the search for a just, or even an adequate, State mediation of local problems. Rather, they tend to view their work as the subproject of a much larger undertaking, which the above quoted *defensor* refers to as "civil resistance." This "resistance" is practiced through using the legal system to protect communities from general violations of law, including assassination, torture, disappearance, arbitrary detention, and military occupation. But, the rights violated by these sorts of actions are not viewed as *a priori* rights, rather they are viewed as derivative of a more central demand and "right": the right "to organize ourselves in the ways that we choose." Thus, the *defensores* not only recognize the political nature of law and the political motivations for the abuses directed against their communities, they also identify their source of strength in a larger social architecture of power and its ultimate political difference with the "law," a difference which lies in their self-organization.

The autonomy and self-determination that the indigenous rights movement seeks will not be provided by organizations such as the Red de Defensores. However, the practices of legitimizing the internal decision-making structures of indigenous communities, and of disseminating at a grass-roots level the knowledge and tools necessary for the communities to deal with adequately intrusive State structures, do tendentially strengthen those communities prior to and regardless of the recognition provided by NGOs or the State and its laws. This, in turn, allows the participating indigenous communities of Chiapas to accumulate the space necessary to further expand their internal autonomy projects, (such as building schools, hospitals, and water systems as well as forming a generation of health promoters, teachers, and community trained engineers) and thus improves their position in the national and global structure of power, making violations of human rights less likely and State mediation of local problems less and less necessary.

Conclusion

Earlier, we noted two characteristics of globalization that highlight the dangers of "law." First, the onset of neo-liberal restructuring has emptied the state of its redistributive capacity making impossible adequate mediation among the competing forces within its territory. Second, the rise of global sources of power (i.e. multinational corporations and global financial markets) to a dominant position within the current world system forces many states to accept subordinate roles that are often limited to furthering the empowerment of the global actors just mentioned. Thus, when combined with these characteristics of neoliberal rule, the law and its founding myth of sovereign power can be the trap through which oppositional groups are assimilated into a system where legal process becomes an empty signifier for the resolution of immediate conflicts, while leaving the architecture of power that created those conflicts unquestioned. Similarly, the law's illusion that organized power can only be exercised through the sovereign is combined with the desperation created by the social decay that accompanies the downsizing of the corporatist state resulting in marginalized groups making claims to a sclerotic neoliberal state whose capacity to resolve social conflict is increasingly limited to its police function. Although immediate conflict and violence may be temporarily resolved, this "resolution" comes at an increasing cost to the most basic individual liberties.[29]

      Thus, with the tendential abandonment by the state of its mediating role between competing subjects, it would seem that a critique of "law" and sovereign power would be the order of the day for disenfranchised groups in Mexico and elsewhere. Ironically, it is exactly at this juncture, that most disenfranchised identity groups and the NGO's that accompany them have adopted the discourse of "rights" and the practice of law to further their struggles. It is as if at the moment that the state is capable of doing the least to positively transform society, its

capacity for self-legitimation through the dissemination of its legal discourse and subsequent creation of "normalized" subjects is at its apex. Yet, as we hope our discussion thus far has made clear, not all rights-based claims must fall prey to the power and mystification of the law and thus not all rights-based movements are simply reproducing the structure of power that maintains neoliberal global rule.

Without a doubt, most rights-based movements and NGOs, in Mexico and around the world, are caught within the power of law. That is, they are trapped waiting for the sovereign to recognize their "rights" while leaving the power and myth of the sovereign unquestioned. Thus, these movements waste valuable energy and resources on actions that further legitimate institutions and empty forms that function to guarantee their ultimate subordination. In mobilizing the discourse of law, they reinscribe the very relations of power they are resisting. In this article, we have focused on the Red de Defensores because we believe that it represents a form of political resistance through the use of identity-based rights claims and a direct exercise of unmediated power that has implications for these questions. We offer the experience of the Red de Defensores as one example of potential alternatives that break with the normalizing characteristics of legal discourse and practice and offer us a glimpse of possible alternatives.

The Red de Defensores' appropriation of the concept and structures of law as a "site of contestation" or a "space of resistance" does not necessarily "reinforce the centrality of law as a mode of protest" (Merry 1997). The nature and power of the Red goes beyond the strategic use of rights discourses and the Mexican legal system, to the larger political project that this tool is wielded to defend. Its power is that of the Zapatista communities its defenders come from and respond to, and whose movement asserts the right to autonomy and self-determination— expressed as the capacity to control and affect their

daily lives—that inevitably puts sovereignty (state or global) and its power of absolute command in question.

This challenge takes place on the philosophical and the material terrain. The direct exercise of rights by the *defensores* is the exercise of power, free of intermediaries who in fact serve to limit their power and the power of the communities they represent. More importantly, in the unilateral exercise of their right to self-determination, they disengage from both natural and positive law and redefine "rights" as existing in their exercise, not as designations from God/the Church or the state/sovereign. Theorists from Spinoza to Foucault (1980, 1989) have considered the potential of "rights" as the product of factors purely immanent to society or as the product of particular social relations.[30]   Writing in the 1600s, Benedict de Spinoza argued: "Nature's right and its order…forbids only those things that no one desires and no one can do." That is, for Spinoza, a body's right was coextensive with what it could do.[31] From this perspective, rights exist in their exercise, not in law or in nature. At a philosophical level, this conceptualization is radically distinct from, and thus presents a challenge to, the legal discourses that underpin the power relations in the current global order.

On the material terrain, the challenge comes through the assertion of parallel power structures. That is, indigenous communities function on the knowledge that "law" and its sovereignty are a myth, and their communiqués and anti-neoliberal rhetoric signal that they are well aware of the sclerotic nature of the current state. Their actions and the shape their political project has taken expose the myth of sovereign power and escape the dangers of the normalizing force of the state by directing their resistance toward a project of self-organization: enlivening a parallel power structure. This parallel power might engage with the state and even ask it to recognize a series of "rights," as was the case with the San Andrés Accords. But, this engagement with state structures thrives on the knowledge that such rights and their protection will arise only as a result of a

struggle of social forces in which they must engage, and not because of the will or "decision" of the sovereign. The idea that rights struggles form part of the play of social forces while counteracting the notion of a sovereign power is central to the EZLN's perspective of their struggle, and is expressed by its spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos when he writes, "We the Zapatistas want to *exercise power*, not take it." The creation of the Juntas de Buen Gobierno and the alternative philosophies of rule (such as *mandar obedeciendo*) which they put into practice are part of the exercise of rights that present radical alternatives to that of the neoliberal state.

The Red de Defensores allows this powerful political understanding of the indigenous movement in Chiapas to be expressed fully because its purpose is to eliminate the need for intermediaries between the indigenous communities and the state. Besides participating in the strengthening of the communities' internal organization, the Red de Defensores allows indigenous people themselves to engage the state in order to halt repression, without having to give up their ultimate political goals. In this sense the Red de Defensores signals the re-emergence of a truly politicized legal defense. Without this defense the indigenous communities of Chiapas would be left vulnerable to intermediaries who conceptualize "rights" in a different manner and inadvertently contribute to putting indigenous communities at the mercy of law and its myth of sovereign power. Thus, the Red de Defensores, and the larger movement for autonomy of which it is a part, are redeploying globalizing discourses in ways that ultimately challenge the material structure of the global order, and the discourses of law that sustain it.

Endnotes

[1] Quote from *What is Philosophy?* (199: 107).

[2] The community *defensores* are members of the Red de Defensores Comunitarios por los Derechos Humanos (Community Human Rights Defenders Network), the organization analyzed in this article. We have given pseudonyms to the *defensores* we quote (with the exception of some public figures) out of concern for their personal security. Our use of pseudonyms is a reminder that the discourses we discuss are grounded in very real political dynamics for the "local" people the names represent, and that accountability is an issue not just for those involved in these dynamics, but for those of us who enter into critically engaged studies of them.

[3] For the paradigmatic expression of the function of the sovereign in contractarian philosophy *see* Hobbes (1996: 114) and *generally* Bobbio (1995). For the latest popular variant of this tradition see John Rawls notions of "the orignal position" and "the veil of ignorance" in *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls 1971).

[4] *See generally* Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," (1980).

[5] Garcia 1998; Collier 2000; interviews by Shannon Speed with Mercedes Olivera (July 2000), Marta Figueroa (May 1999 and June 2000), Miguel Angel de los Santos (June 1998), and Marina Patricia Jímenez (June 2000).

[6] The Diocese in 1960 covered the entire state of Chiapas. In 1964, it was divided into three (San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Tapachula, and Tuxtla Gutierrez) at the urging of Ruiz, who wanted to be able to devote more of the diocese's work to the indigenous populations of the state, virtually all of which were situated within the area of the Diocese of San Cristóbal (Womack 1998). This area, which covers 48% of the state, was then subdivided by the diocese into six ethno-geographic zones: the Zona Chol, Zona Sur, Zona Sureste, Zona Centro, Zona Tzotzil, and Zona Tzeltal (Leyva 1995).

[7] For discussion, see Fray Bartolomé De Las Casas (1974). For a discussion of the Neo-Thomism of the "Salamanca School" to which De Las Casas belonged see Anthony Pagden (1995).

[8] Samuel Ruiz is still the President. He retired as Bishop in 1999.

[9] Notably the Centro de Derechos Indígenas, A.C. (CEDIAC) in Bachajón and the Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada in Ocosingo.

[10] Collier (2000) cites at least ten more, though we were not able to verify their existence.

[11] These included the Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CMDPDH), the Academia Mexicana de Derechos

Humanos, the Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro, and the Red Todos los Derechos para Todos.

[12] International organizations with offices in Chiapas were SIPAZ and Global Exchange. Others had a periodic presence through commissions or delegations; these included Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the Humanitarian Law Project, the Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH), the Federación Internaciónal de los Derechos del Hombre (FIDH), and the Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH) (drawn in part from Collier 2000).

[13] The state government formed the Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos (CEDH) in 1990, and the Federal government's human rights agency, the Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH), was formed in 1990 and opened offices in Chiapas in 1994.

[14] Declaration of War of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, *La Jornada*, January 6, 1994.

[15] See *Fuerte es su corazón: los municipios rebeldes zapatistas* (1998).

[16] Subcomandante Marcos, "Comuniqué to the Soldiers and Comanders of the EPR," August 29, 1996.

[17] Sound recording available on-line at fzlnnet.org.

[18] We recognize that this inclusiveness is in many cases more of an ideal concept than an unfailing practice, and that tolerance of diversity at the local level is uneven.

[19] The consideration of nationhood varies from indigenous group to indigenous group but, for the purposes of this paper, we have attempted to concentrate on the express goals and principles of the indigenous movement in Southern Mexico and, more specifically in Chiapas.

[20] See, for example, Principle Two of the Declaration of Principles on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Article 7 of the International Labor Organization's Convention #169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

[21] Two from Nicolás Ruiz, two from San Miguel (Palenque), two from Cuauhtemoc Chancalá (Palenque), four from the Northern Zone municipality of Tila (Misopá Chinal, Emiliano Zapata, and Petalcingo), two from Morelia (Altamirano), one from San Jeronimo Tulijá (Chilón), and one Guatemalan refugee representing the communities of Frontera Comalapa.

[22] Because the majority of political prisoners in Chiapas are accused of common crimes rather than political crimes, knowledge of criminal law is fundamental to their defense.

[23] The Ministerio Público is the institution that receives complaints, assigns detectives to investigate crimes, and presents evidence on behalf of the state against a suspect at a preliminary hearing and during trial.

[24] Both of the authors have worked on the advisory team: Shannon Speed since its inception; Alvaro Reyes since 2000. We have also been involved with the Red de Defensores in other personal and professional capacities. Speed is married to Red founder De los Santos, and the organization was one of the principal "subjects" of her doctoral research (Speed 2001). Reyes coordinates Project 169, an independent project of the Red involving work specifically around the ILO Convention 169. These diverse roles and forms of interaction with the Red and its *defensores* did more than just enable our access to the *defensores* and ensure their trust. It also allowed us to listen to them and learn from them in ways that fundamentally shaped our ideas about the potential of the Red and "law as resistance."

[25] *Pristas* are followers of the PRI party, which ruled Mexico and the state of Chiapas for more than 70 years, until 2000.

[26] This and all quotes in this subsection are from unstructured interviews with defensores by one or both of the authors in San Cristóbal de las Casas between late 1999 and early 2001. Notes in possession of the authors.

[27] In this case we have used Mendez' real name. Because he is a public figure, his security is not likely to be (further) jeopardized by the publication of his name here. His comments were made to Shannon Speed in June, 2000. Recording and notes in possession of Shannon Speed.

[28] Interview with "Manolo," February 2000, San Cristóbal de las Casas. Notes in possession of the Red de Defensores.

[29] See Agamben (1998:126-135), Hardt and Negri (2000: 311-314), and Guehenno (1995:96).

[30] For analysis of Spinoza's conceptualization of rights see Deleuze (1993), Montag (2000), and Negri (1990).

[31] For extended discussion of the unique and radical nature of Spinoza's discourse on rights see, Negri (1990), Deleuze (1993), and Montag (2000).

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Native Women and State Violence

This special issue of *Social Justice* (Vol. 31, No. 4), guest edited by Andrea Smith and Luana Ross, takes on the difficult task of combating the personal and state violence confronting Native women. Strategies for ending violence must assure the safety of survivors of sexual/domestic violence while not strengthening the oppressive criminal justice apparatus. This involves using legal mechanisms that enhance tribal sovereignty, reconceptualizing addictive behavior as a medical problem, while protecting communities from predatory drug traffickers, looking at gender violence as an ongoing legacy of the colonial experience, and coming to terms with issues such as reparations.

ANDREA SMITH & LUANA ROSS: *Introduction: Native Women & State Violence*

HAUNANI KAY TRASK: *The Color of Violence*

SARAH DEER: *Federal Indian Law & Violent Crime: Native Women & Children at the Mercy of the State*

ROXANNE CHINOOK: *My Spirit Lives*

MYLA VICENTI CARPIO: *The Lost Generation: American Indian Women & Sterilization Abuse*

LUANA ROSS: *Native Women, Mean-Spirited Drugs & Punishing Policies*

STORMY OGDEN: *Ex-Prisoner Pomo Woman Speaks Out*

ROE BUBAR & PAMELA JUMPER THURMAN: *Violence Against Native Women*

ROE BUBAR: *Cloth, Bone & Skin* (poetry)

ANDREA SMITH: *Boarding School Abuses, Human Rights & Reparations*

RENYA RAMIREZ: *Healing, Violence & Native American Women*

LISA POUPART: *Poetry & Prose*

INÉS HERNÁNDEZ-ÁVILA: *My Eyes Breathe Fire & My Fingers Bleed Tears That Are the Ink of My Dreams* (poem)

MIXING SCALES: NEOLIBERALISM AND THE TRANSNATIONAL ZAPATISTA SOLIDARITY NETWORK[1]

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The Zapatistas are a local and national movement fighting for indigenous rights in Mexico since January 1 1994.[2] In this struggle the Mexican state and its neoliberal policies are their main opponents. Yet at the same time the Zapatistas are also a transnational movement; or perhaps more precisely, they have been transformed into a transnational movement by solidarity activists outside Mexico. These solidarity activists have created what I have referred to elsewhere as a transnational Zapatista solidarity network (Olesen 2005). My point is not that the Zapatistas have opened offices in capitals around the world or started local and national chapters. The transnational dimension of the movement is mainly a symbolic one in which the Zapatista struggle has been appropriated by local and national groups in other parts of the world. This has happened with the blessing of the movement itself. In fact, they have encouraged it from the earliest days of the uprising. They have done so because the transnational spotlight gives them some protection vis-à-vis the Mexican state and military. The main reason, however, is that in their analysis, the root of many of the problems that Mexicans face must be found outside the borders of the country. The Zapatistas have a name for these problems: neoliberalism. The objective of this article is to analyze how the Zapatistas have used this concept to link their local and national struggle with activists from around the world, thereby facilitating the formation of the transnational Zapatista solidarity network.

Theoretically, the article draws on the framing literature within social movement studies (Gamson et al. 1982; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Gamson 1995). Framing is a constructionist theory that tries to explain the processes through which grievances are given a broad appeal that allows the frame "sender" (in this case the Zapatistas) to reach a wider audience. The framing literature has become extensive in the last decades and I will not present a review of it here (for a review, see Benford and Snow 2000). Instead, I focus on the injustice frame concept developed by William A. Gamson et al. (1982). An injustice frame, according to these authors, is "an interpretation of what is happening that supports the conclusion that an authority system is violating the shared moral principles of the participants. An alternative to the legitimating frame it provides a reason for non-compliance" (Gamson et al. 1982: 123). Neoliberalism is at the center of the Zapatista injustice frame. An injustice frame has three components: the *recognition* of a problem; an understanding that the problem can be ameliorated through collective *action*; and *solution* proposals (Snow and Benford 1988; Gamson 1995). The distinction between the three components will structure much of the analysis in the article.

Framing theory has been developed with a national context in mind and we need to make a couple of adjustments to make it useful for the analysis in this article. In a transnational context, and reflecting the three injustice frame components above, the use of neoliberalism as the basis of injustice frames lies mainly in the recognition of the problem and in the acknowledgement that social action may lead to change, and to a lesser extent in proposed solutions. Physically, socially, and culturally distant actors engaged in transnational framing processes primarily use the concept of neoliberalism as a common point of reference that allows them to discern similarities in their problems. Yet it does not necessarily follow that this analysis will lead to common solutions. Therefore, while neoliberalism

may be recognized as a process affecting the majority of the world's population, and standing in need of action, solutions to the problem are mostly defined on a national level (see Olesen 2005, forthcoming a, for more detailed discussions of transnational framing).

This distinction has, as I will demonstrate in the article, been visible in the way the Zapatistas have used neoliberalism to connect their struggle with those in other settings. It also brings out some more general points about the debate on transnational social movements and global civil society that has taken off especially after the so-called Battle in Seattle in late 1999. This is a discussion that requires more attention than I can give it in this article. What is important to make clear here are two things: first, while it may be that social movements are indeed becoming increasingly transnational in both objectives and activities, it does not also mean that they are becoming less local and national. Rather, we are witnessing an imbrication of local, national and transnational levels in today's social movement action; second, the absence of common and transnational solutions to neoliberalism means that we should abandon tendencies to identify a unified global civil society standing up against the global corporate and political establishment (see Olesen forthcoming, b for a critique of the concept of global civil society). Such an approach risks overlooking that national states, as well as intergovernmental organizations, remain central sites of authority and claims making even for transnational social actors (Tarrow, in preparation).

The article is divided into five sections. In the first two sections, emphasis is put on the Zapatistas' formulation of their injustice frame. The first section discusses the national dimension in the injustice frame, while the second section shows how the Zapatistas have broadened their injustice frame to target an audience outside Mexico. In the next two sections, I look at the way the Zapatista injustice frame has been received and applied outside Mexico. Section three discusses the impact of the in-

justice frame in light of the end of the Cold War and the resulting identity crisis of the Left. Section four continues this discussion by demonstrating the role of the Zapatista injustice frame in the wave of protest against neoliberalism we have seen since the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle. The fifth section is more speculative in nature and makes a number of suggestions on the nature of the transnational Zapatista solidarity network and its future.

"Sellers of the Fatherland": The National Dimension

The Zapatistas are, as I said in the beginning of the article, a national movement seeking change mainly on the national level (e.g. EZLN 1995). Josée Johnston and Gordon Laxer (2002: 70-71) put it this way:

> While states enforce globalism, the EZLN struggles to reclaim the Mexican state as an expression of national will. Nationalism plays a constitutive role in Zapatismo, a factor not always understood or recognized within solidarity networks outside Mexico… The Zapatistas' emphasis on Mexican nationalism is particularly salient when juxtaposed against Mexico's loss of sovereignty through globalism… The power of nationalism, albeit in a sophisticated, multi-national variant, is… exceptionally important to the Zapatista struggle.

The loss of sovereignty alluded to in the quote is closely associated by the Zapatistas with the entering into force of the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) on the day of the uprising (January 1 1994). In a widely circulated statement, the Zapatistas (1994a: 64) early on referred to NAFTA as "nothing more than a death sentence to the indigenous ethnicities of Mexico, who are perfectly dispensable in the modernization program of Salinas de Gortari." The reason for this harsh judgment lies especially in the predicted impact of the trade agreement on Mexico's small maize producers, many

of whom are indigenous. Under NAFTA, all import quotas and tariffs are to be phased out during a fifteen year period. Considering that the average yield in Mexico is 1.7 tons per hectare compared to 6.9 tons in the USA, the removal of tariffs and quotas is likely to drive many indigenous maize farmers out of competition (Harvey 1998: 181).

Carlos Salinas de Gortari, whom the Zapatistas refer to in the above quote, was president of Mexico from 1988 to 1994 and is usually seen as the symbol of neoliberal reform in Mexico. Mexico, and President Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), had already embarked on a neoliberal development path following the Mexican debt crisis in 1982, but it was Salinas de Gortari who locked Mexico into a neoliberal development model and speeded up reforms. Reforms included the privatization of nationally owned corporations and the reform of Article 27 in the Mexican Constitution.[3] Mayor Moisés of the Zapatistas has later claimed that the adoption of the reforms to Article 27 was a major spark in the decision to launch an armed uprising (Le Bot 1997: 221). The Zapatistas (EZLN 1994b) even considered the reform to represent a "betrayal to the fatherland."[4] It is clear here how the Zapatistas focus strongly on the consequences of neoliberalism in the national Mexican context. This is indicated already in the name of the Zapatistas as an army for *national* liberation. For the Zapatistas, neoliberalism entails demands on countries to open their borders to the free circulation of capital. This is considered to lead to instability (EZLN 1999a):

> Those rapacious and migratory birds, that are the international financial capital, have come to nest in Mexican lands. But it will only be for a moment. The overvaluation of the Mexican peso and the lowering of interest rates are good food for those parasites, but they can only lead to their advantage if the bubble bursts. The profit comes from the 'crack,' not from stability.[5]

These lines were clearly written in the light of the financial crisis that hit Asia in 1997, and was contributed in large part to the free movement of speculative financial capital.[6] In order to criticize this situation where the national borders of Mexico are opened to financial capital by a neoliberal national government of *vendepatrias* (sellers of the fatherland) (EZLN 1994b), the Zapatistas have made wide-spread use of notions of history and nation. The Zapatistas, in other words, have been conscious to insert the uprising into the long history of social struggle in Mexico. This anchoring in Mexican history is evidenced by the opening lines of their first public statement, the Declaration of the Lacandon Forest (EZLN 1994c):

> We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us... We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle.[7]

Nowhere is the national dimension clearer than in the Zapatistas' eponymous reference to Emiliano Zapata. Referring to Zapata is referring to the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919). As a result of its self-perception as an inheritor of the Mexican Revolution, the Zapatistas are engaged in a dispute over the right to appropriate the symbols of Mexican history. The PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or the Institutional Revolutionary Party) considered by the Zapatistas as their main opponent at the time of the uprising also makes extensive

use of the revolution as a source of legitimacy.[8] This is obvious even in the name of the party. The PRI came into being in 1929 in an attempt to unite the many factions of the revolution. The figure of Emiliano Zapata was appropriated for this purpose by the PRI and turned into a "co-founder and consecrator of the political regime" (Rajchenberg and Héau-Lambert 1998: 23). When, for example, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari announced the reform of Article 27 in the Mexican Constitution, he did so with an image of Emiliano Zapata in the background (Rajchenberg and Héau-Lambert 1998: 23). The Zapatistas (EZLN 1994b), on the other hand, consider the PRI's neoliberal policies to have betrayed the revolution and the ideas of Emiliano Zapata:

> Today, April 10, 1994 is the 75th anniversary of the assassination of General Emiliano Zapata... Today the usurper Salinas de Gortari, who named himself 'President of the Mexican Republic,' lies to the Mexican people saying that his reforms to Article 27 of the constitution reflect the true spirit of General Zapata. The supreme government lies!... The right to land for those who work it can never be given up and the war cry 'Land and Liberty' lives on without rest in Mexican lands. Under the cloak of neoliberalism which casts shadows on our soils, peasants who struggle for their agrarian rights are imprisoned and murdered.[9]

In an interview with Samuel Blixen and Carlos Fazio (1995), Subcomandante Marcos, the primary spokesman of the Zapatistas, alludes to the agrarian reforms touched on above and elaborates on the connection between neoliberalism and the nation:

> Those who defend the national project are either assassinated or thrown out. The neoliberal project

> demands this internationalization of history; it demands
> that national history is erased and made international; it
> demands the erasing of cultural borders... Neoliberalism's
> main error is to think that one can go against history…
> and to make believe as if here there was never a history, a
> culture or anything.

The above quotes and discussions demonstrate how the Zapatistas' use of neoliberalism as an injustice frame is closely tied to the consequences of neoliberalism in a national Mexican context. They rarely make specific suggestions on how the problems associated with neoliberalism may be ameliorated. Yet, as evidenced below (EZLN 1997), the focus on neoliberalism as a development model erasing the history and culture of Mexico naturally points to the strengthening of the national state as the obvious response:

> The Zapatistas think that, in Mexico… the recuperation
> and defense of national sovereignty is part of an anti-
> neoliberal revolution… The Zapatistas think that the
> defense of the national state is necessary in view of
> globalization, and that the attempts to slice Mexico to
> pieces come from the governing group.[10]

This stance has led the Zapatistas to lend support to a wide range of causes opposing initiatives of privatization in Mexico.[11] The focus on the *national* consequences of neoliberalism by the Zapatistas may be taken to suggest that their injustice frame has limited reach beyond Mexico. The distinction made in the beginning of the article between the three injustice frame components (recognition, action, and solutions) may help us refine this perception. Put differently, the *transnational* resonance of the Zapatistas' injustice frame lies primarily in the first two dimensions, recognition and action, and to a lesser extent in the third dimension; solutions. While

the Zapatistas have made vague suggestions towards solutions within the context of Mexico (i.e. the recuperation of national sovereignty; see the quote above) this has not been the case in regard to places outside Mexico. It is true, as will be shown below, that the Zapatistas have suggested that neoliberalism be countered by a loose and informal transnational network of social activists (EZLN 1996a). This, however, does not denote a solution per se but rather recognition that neoliberalism affects people all over the world, albeit in different guises, and that social action may lead to social change. Solutions, on the other hand, are to take place within the local and national contexts of activists.

In the next section I continue this line of argument. I do so by taking a closer look at how the Zapatistas have broadened the aspects of recognition and action in their use of neoliberalism as an injustice frame so as to make it accessible for a non-Mexican audience, while at the same time refraining from advancing concrete solution proposals.

The "Fourth World War" Against "Humanity": The Transnational Dimension

The Zapatistas started giving their injustice frame a specific transnational dimension in 1996 where they convened two encounters "for humanity and against neoliberalism" in Chiapas.[12] The broadening of the injustice frame after 1996 was not a move away from the national dimension. Rather, the two dimensions are simultaneously present. Similarly, the argument concerning the transnational leap of the Zapatista injustice frame after 1996 does not indicate that the Zapatistas had not given their injustice frame a transnational dimension before this time, or that people outside Mexico were not attentive to the transnational relevance of the use of neoliberalism as an injustice frame. As early as November 1994, Cecilia Rodriguez (1994), in a speech to the USA based Native Forest Network, made the following links between the Zapatistas and neoliberalism:

> The struggle of the Zapatistas runs clearly and directly against the policies of Neo-liberalism... It is neo-liberalism which the Zapatistas are fighting against, in the midst of progressive forces which are unable to identify their enemy, and the failures of rigid Marxist dogma, and this is the global significance of their struggle, this therefore makes their front line your front line as well.

The early linkage made between the Zapatistas and neoliberalism was in large part due to the coincidence between the uprising and the coming into force of NAFTA on January 1 1994. As noted above, the Zapatistas declared NAFTA to be a death sentence for the indigenous population of Mexico. The large majority of observers (e.g. Morton 2000; Ayres 2002) have accordingly focused on the coincidence between the uprising and the coming into force of NAFTA as the result of strategic considerations. Whether the choice of date was in fact so conscious is difficult to verify. In an early interview (EZLN 1994a: 144), Subcomandante Marcos instead referred to a number of more practical reasons for the choice of date, while acknowledging the usefulness and symbolic value of the coincidence.

Whether or not the choice of date was a deliberate attempt by the Zapatistas to create attention, it is beyond doubt that "[t]he Zapatistas' decision to attack on the NAFTA's implementation date provided an international link for what might otherwise have been seen as a local or at most national conflict" (Bob 2001: 324). At the same time, Mexico's participation in NAFTA also provided the Zapatistas with a certain amount of protection as the agreement exposed Mexico to closer scrutiny from its northern neighbors and increased the visibility of Mexican politics (Nash and Kovic 1996: 180). The coincidence between the uprising and the coming into force of NAFTA served to draw special attention to Chiapas from activists in the USA, Canada, and Mexico who had been involved in activities opposing NAFTA in the early 1990s (Bob 2001). Harry Cleaver

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(1994: 21-22) refers to the importance of these dormant and already existing networks:

> So when the Zapatista Army marched into San Cristóbal and the other towns of Chiapas, not only did those already concerned with the struggles of indigenous peoples react quickly, but so did the much more extensive organizational connections of anti-NAFTA struggles. Already in place were the computer conferences and lists of the anti-NAFTA alliances. For many, the first information on their struggles came in the regular postings of the NAFTA Monitor on 'trade.news' or 'trade.strategy' either on Peacenet or through the Internet.

The case of NAFTA is especially interesting because it is a free trade agreement involving both developed (USA, Canada) and developing (Mexico) countries. As suggested by the quote from Cleaver (1994), opposition to NAFTA had resulted in the formation of transnational relations, especially between workers and unions in the three countries. The transnational anti-NAFTA activities have, however, been initiated mainly by activists in the USA and Canada. Accordingly, Barry Carr (1999: 52) has worried about the asymmetrical character of cross-border labor contacts: "The vast majority of these initiatives have been launched from the north… and reproduce consciously and unconsciously elements of chauvinism, paternalism, patron-clientelism and protectionism."

Seen in the light of observations of this type, the resonance of the Zapatistas in for example Canada and the USA is noteworthy as it points to the reverse situation. Transnational activities involving movements in the developing countries have typically taken the form of unidirectional solidarity. The transnational solidarity activities surrounding the Zapatistas have been conspicuous exactly because of its development from a unidirectional relationship to one of more mutual solidarity and

exchange (Olesen 2004, 2005). As indicated in the opening lines of this section, this development should be considered in relation to the Continental and Intercontinental Encounters in Chiapas in 1996. While NAFTA provided an early connection between the Zapatistas and critics of neoliberalism, the encounters in 1996 significantly strengthened it. In other words, the Encounters spurred a development where the Zapatistas gradually moved from being an object of solidarity in the eyes of transnational activists to become an important node in a critique of neoliberalism that extends beyond the borders of Mexico.

The Zapatistas' interpretation of neoliberalism as a global phenomenon was developed mainly in the First and Second Declarations of La Realidad. The First Declaration was issued in January 1996 to announce the first Intercontinental Encounter while the Second Declaration was issued at the end of the encounter in August 1996. The Zapatistas used the encounter to establish a link between neoliberalism and its threats to humanity as a whole. At the inauguration of the April 1996 American preparatory encounter for the Intercontinental Encounter, they (EZLN 1996b) underlined the interconnectedness of the world and the global reach of their struggle by stating that it is "[a] world-wide system that enables crime to turn itself into government in Mexico. It is a national system enabling crime to rule in Chiapas. Fighting in the mountains of South Eastern Mexico, we fight for Mexico, for humanity and against neoliberalism." The link between neoliberalism and its threat to humanity, evident already in the name of the encounter (*for* humanity and *against* neoliberalism), thus invokes a global consciousness projecting the problems associated with neoliberalism beyond the borders of Chiapas and Mexico:

> During the last years, the power of money has presented a new mask over its criminal face. Disregarding borders, with no importance given to races or colors, the Power

> of money humiliates dignities, insults honesties and assassinates hopes. Re-named as 'Neoliberalism,' the historic crime of the concentration of privileges, wealth and impunities, democratizes misery and hopelessness. A new world-war is waged, but now against the entire humanity... With the name of 'globalization' they describe this modern war which assassinates and forgets... A new lie is sold to us as history. [T]he lie about the victory of neoliberalism... Instead of humanity, it offers us stock market value indexes, instead of dignity it offers us globalization of misery, instead of hope it offers us emptiness, instead of life it offers us the international of terror.

In an address to the International Civil Commission for Human Rights Observation (Comisión Civil Internacional de Observación por los Derechos Humanos) that visited Chiapas in November 1999, Subcomandante Marcos elaborated on this definition. In the address which was later published in *La Jornada* (EZLN 2001), Subcomandante Marcos defined neoliberalism as a Fourth World War (the previous three being World War I, World War II, and the Cold War). The main combatants in this war are considered to be, on the one side, neoliberal globalization and, on the other side, humanity. Neoliberal globalization, argues Subcomandante Marcos, is driving towards the penetration of market rationalities into more and more social relations. This development involves increasing homogenization and a corresponding eradication of difference and identity as valuable characteristics of humanity. Considering that identity is to a large extent tied to nation states and national cultures, nation states and ethnic groups with their cultural particularities are among the first victims in the Fourth World War. These two aspects of neoliberalism, the expansion of market rationalities and the eradication of difference, form the basis of the Zapatistas' critique of neoliberalism. This interpretation of the global implications of neoliberalism does not differ significantly

from the one presented above in relation to the Mexican context. In many ways, the Zapatistas have simply broadened its national interpretation to the transnational arena.

Those activists outside of Mexico who received and embraced the broadened Zapatista injustice frame were already involved in activities springing from a critique of neoliberalism. This was evidenced for example in the early connection between anti-NAFTA activists and the Zapatistas mentioned earlier. As noted by Lynn Stephen (interview 2001), the resonance of the Zapatista injustice frame outside Mexico thus had much to do with the choice of the concept:

> The Zapatistas like many poor, indigenous, rural people in the world understood long before westerners did, that free trade and other aspects of neo-liberal policy were not working for them. They didn't call it neo-liberalism. They called it people coming in to take over their resources without consulting them. This is a really old colonial issue. So once the leadership of the EZLN like Marcos, and others in the command who had long-term experience in peasant movements and negotiating the government in Mexico found a new label, neo-liberalism, they used it, and connected with other global movements.

The concept of neoliberalism has its roots in the 1980s where it was used by people and organizations in the USA and Europe to criticize the policies enacted by Ronald Reagan in the USA and by Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain. By choosing the concept of neoliberalism as the axis of its injustice frame, the Zapatistas provided an already well-established and widely acknowledged point of reference suited to give their injustice frame resonance beyond the borders of Mexico. In other words, and pointing back to the distinction between the recognition, action, and solution components of injustice frame, we may

say that the choice of the concept of neoliberalism significantly strengthened the recognition component of the injustice frame.

The discussion above has focused on the Zapatistas' interpretations and definitions of the problems associated with neoliberalism. In contrast, the Second Declaration of La Realidad presented at the closing ceremony of the Intercontinental Encounter in 1996 paid more heed to the potentials of globalizing resistance to neoliberalism. In other words, the Zapatistas (EZLN 1996a) called for the creation of a:

> Collective network of all our struggles and particular resistances. An intercontinental network of resistance against neoliberalism, an intercontinental network of resistance for humanity. This intercontinental network, recognizing differences and knowing similarities, will seek to meet with other resistances all over the world. This intercontinental network of resistance will be the medium through which the different resistances can support each other. This intercontinental network of resistance is not an organizing structure, it does not have a leading or decision-making center, it does not have central leadership or hierarchies. The network is all of us who resist.

This quote leads us back to the theoretical arguments made in the introduction. Here, the Zapatista injustice frame was argued not to contain specific suggestions for solutions. The above quote may seem to contradict this point as it proposes a concrete initiative to struggle against neoliberalism in its different guises. However, in line with my earlier comments this proposal should not be considered a solution proposal. Rather, it draws up the contours of a framework for finding solutions. As the discussions in the section have demonstrated, the injustice frame presented by the Zapatistas finds resonance outside Mexico not because it contains *solutions*, but because it *recognizes*

and defines neoliberalism as a global phenomenon and because it points to the utility of social *action* and resistance.

In the section below, I continue this discussion with particular focus on the action component. The above discussions have provided an understanding of the national and transnational dimensions in the Zapatistas' use of neoliberalism as an injustice frame. The fact that a movement gives its injustice frame a transnational dimension, however, does not necessarily mean that this injustice frame is also received and understood by a transnational audience. Transnational framing processes thus always involve a sender-recipient relationship. So far, we have looked mainly at the question of injustice frames mainly from the point of view of the sender (the Zapatistas). In the remainder of the article I look at how the Zapatista injustice frame has been received outside of Mexico and how it has been understood and applied by non-Mexican actors.

The "Ultimate Underdogs": The Left After the End of the Cold War

The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of an identity crisis within the radical Left. In the Latin American context, and beyond, this tendency was reinforced by the 1990 electoral defeat of Nicaragua's Sandinistas that coincided with the end of the Cold War.[13] Whether or not people on the radical Left had supported the variety of socialism found in the Soviet Bloc, its demise precipitated the need for rethinking the foundations of a radical Left position.[14] In his epitaph over the radical Latin American Left, *Utopia Unarmed*, Jorge G. Castañeda (1994: 240-241) notes that:

> The most damaging effect of the Cold War's conclusion on the Latin American left lies in the generalized perception of defeat... This sense of defeat is derived from the left's perceived or real connection with existing socialism. For the left, the fall of socialism in the Soviet

> Union and Eastern Europe represents the end of a stirring, effective, nearly century old utopia. Indeed, the very notion of an overall alternative to the status quo has been severely questioned.

This retrenchment of the radical Left after the end of the Cold War does not lie in the fact that the original causes underlying its existence have vanished or diminished. It is useful to make a detour to some of the social and economic conditions characterizing Latin America and Chiapas today. According to studies by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, or CEPAL), more than a third of Latin American households, corresponding to 211 million people, lived below the line of poverty in 1999. Mexico lies above this average with 38 % of its households living below the line of poverty. Comparing urban and rural households, the study shows that poverty is considerably more widespread in rural areas (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2001).

If we lower our sight to mainly rural Chiapas, the home state of the Zapatistas, we are met with even more extreme indicators of poverty. In some municipalities in Chiapas, more than two thirds of the households are without electricity, while half or more of the households are without drinking water (Harvey 1998: 184). It should be noted that these numbers are well above the averages for Mexico as well as for the state of Chiapas as a whole. The inhabitants of the municipalities mentioned by Neil Harvey (1998), Ocosingo, Altamirano, and Las Margaritas, are at the same time predominantly indigenous. This points to the fact that, not only in Mexico but all over Latin America, the indigenous people live under socio-economic conditions comparably worse than those of society in general. Considering, at the same time, that Chiapas is one of the poorest states in Mexico, the indigenous people of Chiapas, who form the basis of the Zapatistas, belong to the most marginalized

sector of the Mexican population. The socio-economical problems of the indigenous people in Chiapas were reflected by the Zapatistas (EZLN 1994c) in the Declaration of the Lacandon Forest where eleven demands were made, among them a number of concrete demands for work, housing, land, food, and health.

The fact that the uprising took place despite these difficult conditions has attracted considerable sympathy and astonishment from transnational activists. Considering this apparent paradox, Kerry Appel (interview 2000) comments that:

> It is them, the most excluded people in the world, the indigenous Mayan men and women from the marginalized, poverty stricken communities, with little or no education, little or no food or resources, little or no rights of recognition that have risen up and said, we can change the world, and have put themselves and their lives on the line in order to do that.

This view is echoed on a website calling for the formation of a so-called Zapatista Bloc at the anti-FTAA protests in Québec in April 2001 (Zapatista Bloc 2002):[15]

> Because of the symbolic nature of their revolt, their ability to draw connections between local oppression and international structures of institutionalized violence and repression, and their stance on indigenous rights and autonomy, the Zapatistas have been an important part of the struggle against global capitalism. The Zapatistas, the *ultimate underdogs* (my emphasis), have constantly and effectively battled not only with arms but also with words, ideas and visions for a sustainable and just future. The Zapatistas have inspired the mobilization of civil society in Mexico and around the world in the fight for democracy, liberty and justice.

The surprising appearance of the Zapatistas in the post-Cold War period is a common thread in many accounts regarding their resonance beyond the borders of Mexico. These accounts in turn often make reference to Francis Fukuyama's (1989) famous insistence on the end of history that seemed to leave little room for alternatives to liberal democracy and neoliberal capitalism. Justin Paulson (interview 2001) thus situates the importance of the uprising in a post-Cold War setting characterized by a radical Left on the retreat and without promising alternatives to the end of history:

> In terms of time, the EZLN sprang into public view three years after the collapse of the USSR. [T]he 'End of History' had been declared; the Labor Movement was relatively weak, especially in the United States; NAFTA was being enacted; etc. For both the activist Left and the academic Left, the early 1990s was a period of retreat and of resigned capitulation to neoliberalism. What was so surprising about the Zapatistas was that they weren't supposed to be there! What's a National Liberation Army doing when there aren't supposed to be any more National Liberation Armies?… The EZLN has reminded people that there is still reason to struggle… I think for a lot of people, seeing indigenous women armed only with sticks opposing heavily-armed soldiers and tanks was something of a wake-up call: 'if they can do it, I can do it too.' Not only in sympathy, but in solidarity.

When asked about the main contribution of the Zapatistas to activists outside Mexico, John Ross (interview 2001) echoes Paulson's remarks:

> Hope. The Zapatista rebellion dawned in a world that didn't have much Left left in it. Years of Reagan-Bush, the sell-outs in Central America, the suicide of the Soviet

> Union, the Persian Gulf 'war,' NAFTA, were all knots in a long string of defeats. So the sudden appearance of the Zaps seemed hopeful… we were ready for them.

The Zapatistas themselves also seem to be quite aware of this contribution. Commenting on the relationship between the Zapatistas and transnational solidarity activists, Subcomandante Marcos (Le Bot 1997: 260) sums up the Zapatista contribution to the faltering radical Left:

> Perhaps Zapatismo helped them remember that it was necessary to struggle and that struggling is worth the effort.… It is a kind of agreement: they obtain from Zapatismo what they need, this reminder, this trampoline to jump again, and the communities obtain this support, this help guaranteeing their survival.

These quotes all seem to convey the impression that the radical Left had not died out in the wake of the Cold War, but rather that it found itself in an identity crisis, lacking focus and direction. As briefly touched on above, moreover, this crisis was not a result of the disappearance of the conditions usually considered to underlie the social indignation of the radical Left. This leads us to return for a moment to the previous discussions of the three components in an injustice frame (recognition, action, and solution). What seems to emerge from the quotes above is that the resonance of the Zapatista injustice frame to a significant extent lies in the *action* component. The action component in an injustice frame serves to provide a rationale and motivation to engage in social action to ameliorate social and political problems. The quotes above depict the time of the uprising as a time characterized not by the absence of just causes for a radical Left, but by a lack of self-confidence and conviction that action and struggle is possible and potentially effective. As suggested in the quotes from Paulson and

others, the symbolic power of the Zapatista uprising was strengthened by the fact that it took place despite the adverse conditions surrounding the movement.

In the preceding section, I concluded by referring to the lack of concrete *solutions* on the part of the Zapatistas in regard to the problems associated with neoliberalism. The absence of concrete solutions in the injustice frame reflects the anti-vanguardist position of the Zapatistas (Olesen 2004, 2005). While acknowledging the effects of neoliberalism as a worldwide phenomenon, the variation and diversity in the forms of resistance to neoliberalism are consequently considered by the Zapatistas (EZLN 1997) to be valuable rather than problematic:

> [N]ot only in the mountains of South Eastern Mexico is there resistance and struggle against neoliberalism. In other parts of Mexico, in Latin America, in the United States and Canada, in the Europe of the Maastricht Treaty, in Africa, in Asia, and in Oceania, the pockets of resistance multiply. Each one has its own history, its differences, its similarities, its demands, its struggles, its accomplishments… This is a model of pockets of resistance, but do not pay too much attention to it. There are as many models as there are resistances… So draw the model you prefer. In regard to the pockets, as well as in regard to the resistances, diversity is richness.

In a seemingly paradoxical manner, it is to a large extent the insistence of the Zapatistas on the diversity of social struggles that has given them a significant role in the wave of protests we have seen since the so-called Battle in Seattle in 1999 (I will henceforth refer to this as the global justice and solidarity movement). This inspiration is a recurrent thread in the accounts and self-perceptions of activists inspired by the Zapatistas. Speaking to an audience at the protests against the

IMF/World Bank meeting in Prague in September 2000, Andrew Flood (2000) of the Irish Mexico Group outlined the major inspirations stemming from the Zapatistas:

> [T]his movement [the TPN] has no single starting point. That **s**aid… I will point to one of the places we are coming from. I believe there is a debt to be acknowledged to the people who declared '*Ya basta*!' to the new economic order on the 1st of January 1994. I'd trace my involvement in this new anti-capitalist movement to Mexico and to the '1st encounter for humanity and against neoliberalism,' held in Zapatista camps in Chiapas in 1996… [I]f we were to pick a point where the movements against neoliberalism moved from the single campaign/issue to global anti-capitalism perhaps that point is found in the jungles of the Mexican South East some four years ago. This 'historical' introduction is relevant to where we are going. Some left parties who don't understand this history are trying to take control of the movement in the hope of building their organisations, of becoming our leadership… The protests lack the guiding hand of the party not because we have not realised the need for one but because many of us have explicitly rejected the experience of this authoritarian method of organisation.

The following section continues the exploration of the connection between the Zapatistas and the global justice and solidarity movement referred to in the quote from Flood. In other words, I take a closer look at the way the Zapatista injustice frame has been received and used by activists outside of Mexico.

Chiapas in Seattle: Overlapping Networks
The Zapatistas' role in the formation of the global justice and solidarity movement is acknowledged by the large majority of

Zapatista solidarity activists, the majority of whom also consider themselves to be part of the global justice and solidarity movement. The exact importance of this role, however, is disputed. The quotes below underline the differences. Tom Hansen (interview 2000), director of the Mexico Solidarity Network, presents the more skeptical view:

> I do think that there is a broad progressive transnational network that is based around some very fundamental critiques of globalization… I think that Zapatista support groups are… part of this broad transnational movement, but I don't think that the Zapatistas are leading this movement or are even the inspiration for the majority of the movement. There are other international networks that are much more developed than the Zapatista support network, for example, the Hemispheric Social Alliance, Jubilee 2000 or Grito de los Excluidos, to name a few... I would like to be able to give the Zapatistas their due credit without overly romanticizing their contribution.

Referring to the Seattle 1999 protests, Luis Espinosa-Organista (interview 2000) of the Denver Peace and Justice Committee attributes more importance to the Zapatistas:

> [T]he EZLN or the Zapatista movement is not in itself responsible… but it had a huge influence on those protests that happened, I am not saying that they are the authors but I am saying that the awareness there is in the world about globalization and the impacts of the economy comes from the analysis of the Zapatistas.

Despite the differences, the above quotes all point to some kind of role of the Zapatistas in the global justice and solidarity movement. This role in many ways has its origins in the 1996 First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and

against Neoliberalism (Primer Encuentro Intercontinental por la Humanidad y contra el Neoliberalismo) in Chiapas. As noted by John Ross (interview 2001):

> International solidarity increased in 1996 with the *Intergaláctica* [the First Intercontinental Encounter] which placed the EZLN in the vanguard of the just-beginning-to-burgeon anti-globalization movement. Suddenly, the Zapatistas were players on a much larger battlefield and Chiapas became a mandatory way stop on the road to the new resistance that first exploded in Seattle, 1999.

The 1996 Intercontinental Encounter, as well as the continental American Encounter in the spring of 1996, heralded a situation where the transnational Zapatista solidarity network increasingly started overlapping with other transnational networks. These converging networks would later become an important part of the dynamics leading to the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999 and to the global justice and solidarity movement. The influence of the Zapatistas and the 1996 encounters in Chiapas on the global justice and solidarity movement is visible in some of its main actors; the Peoples' Global Action (PGA) and the Italian Ya Basta group (not to be confused with the Ya Basta! website). The PGA (Peoples' Global Action 2001a) is a transnational network of people and groups whose hallmarks are:

> A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and feudalism; all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalisation... A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organisations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker.

The PGA (Peoples' Global Action 2001a) does not consider itself to be an organization in any traditional sense but rather a network or tool for co-ordination:

> PGA is a tool for coordination not an organisation. The political analysis and call to action of PGA are reflected in its manifesto, a dynamic, evolving document that will be revised at each PGA conference. PGA has no members and does not have and will not have a juridical personality. No organisation or person represents the PGA, nor does the PGA represent any organisation or person. PGA will limit itself to facilitating co-ordination and exchange of information between grassroots movements through conferences and means of communication.

The PGA was officially formed in February 1998 in Geneva but in many ways it is an outcome of transnational Zapatista solidarity activities and the discussions on neoliberalism at the intercontinental encounters in Chiapas in 1996 and in Spain 1997. This is clearly reflected in the following account from the Peoples' Global Action (2001b) website:

> The sense of possibility that this uprising gave to millions of people across the globe was extraordinary. In 1996, the Zapatistas, with trepidation as they thought no-one might come, sent out an e-mail calling for a gathering, called an '*encuentro*' (encounter), of international activists and intellectuals to meet in specially constructed arenas in the Chiapas jungle to discuss common tactics, problems and solutions... This was followed a year later by a gathering in Spain, where the idea for the construction of a more action focused network, to be named Peoples' Global Action (PGA), was hatched.

As mentioned elsewhere (see note 12), the Second Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism (Segundo Encuentro Intercontinental por la Humanidad y contra el Neoliberalismo) was a follow-up to the 1996 Chiapas intercontinental encounter but was not convened or organized by the Zapatistas. This Second Intercontinental Encounter was consequently instrumental in moving the global justice and solidarity movement in the making further away from the Zapatistas. Another example of the lines of diffusion between the transnational Zapatista solidarity network and the global justice and solidarity movement is the Italian Ya Basta group. The relationship between the Zapatistas and the 1996 intercontinental encounter in Chiapas, on the one hand, and the Ya Basta group on the other, is reflected in this statement by the Ya Basta (2001):

> The Zapatista movement is a popular resistance movement, which aims to defend the right to survival and self-determination of the indigenous peoples of Chiapas. In the summer of 1996 thousands of people from all over the world gathered in the rebellious South East of Mexico, to support the Zapatista movement and their presence and to take part in the global meeting of liberation movements, that was known as the First Intercontinental Meeting for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism. A group of Italian delegates (many of whom were activists from the Social Centres) decided to establish an association that would be a useful tool for supporting the Zapatistas' fight in Chiapas and their struggle against neoliberalism in Europe.[16]

Today the Ya Basta group is closely associated with the so-called White Overalls that have played a significant role in the protests of the global justice and solidarity movement in recent years. The White Overalls use foam padding and hel-

mets to protect themselves in clashes with police during demonstrations and have become a powerful and visible symbol of the world-wide protests against the WTO (Seattle 1999), the IMF and World Bank (Washington, April 2000 and Prague, September 2000), the FTAA (Québec, April 2001), the European Union (Gothenburg, June 2001), and the G-8 (Genova, July 2001). While the Ya Basta group has become increasingly involved in other struggles, it maintains a close relation with the Zapatista struggle in Chiapas and Mexico. David Martin (interview 2000), director of the Denver Justice and Peace Committee, and a participant in the Seattle and Washington protests against the WTO and the IMF/World Bank, makes the following observation regarding the presence and influence of the Zapatistas and the Ya Basta group in Seattle and Washington:

> I have been to the Seattle protest against the WTO and I went to the one in April against the IMF/World Bank and supporters of the Zapatistas are everywhere. For instance, in the morning of November 30 [in Seattle] we went to shut down the convention center, our parade was led by indigenous people from Chiapas, Global Exchange actually brought people from Chiapas. [I]n [Washington] D.C., one of the major protests on the day before the attempt to shut down the IMF/World Bank meeting was at the Mexican consulate…you see people dress like anarchists but you also see people dress like Zapatistas… it is interesting to me because it is such a dominant segment of this movement against the IMF, World Bank, WTO, and it is kind of interesting to see that… in Prague you have the Italian Ya Basta… and they had this foam padding, the Italian group Ya Basta spearheaded the penetration of the police barricade in Prague because they had developed this way of providing padding and wearing helmets and gas masks and they charged the police and pushed their way through the police lines.

What is particularly interesting about the Ya Basta group is not that it has been formed as a response to the Zapatista uprising. The main point to be gathered from this example is that the Ya Basta group has become one of the most central and vociferous actors in the global justice and solidarity movement, thus expanding its activities much beyond those first related more narrowly to the Zapatistas. During the Zapatista March for Indigenous Dignity (Marcha por la Dignidad Indígena) in February and March 2001 to Mexico City, the Zapatistas were accompanied by White Overalls (Petrich 2001). This return of the Ya Basta group to Chiapas and Mexico in the form of White Overalls illustrates well the reciprocal relationship there is today between the Zapatistas, the transnational Zapatista solidarity network, and the global justice and solidarity movement.

Two Networks: Some Reflections on the Present State and Future of the Transnational Zapatista Solidarity Network

In terms of activities, the transnational Zapatista solidarity network probably experienced its most intense period from February 1995 to early 1998. At its extremities, this period was characterized by two major events: the Mexican Army's offensive against the Zapatistas in February 1995 and the massacre at Acteal, Chiapas in December 1997. These events both caused a very high level of activity, especially in the months following the Acteal massacre where a whole range of new organizations and initiatives were launched. The momentum created by the Acteal massacre has been impossible to sustain, and many organizations and initiatives have since disappeared. Nevertheless, the Acteal massacre and the February 1995 offensive were instrumental in drawing new activists and organizations into the network, some of which remained active even after the first wave of interest and concern had died down.

The importance of the February 1995 and December 1997 events in generating activity points to an interesting distinction in discussing the transnational Zapatista solidarity network. It seems fair to suggest an analytical distinction between two networks that are, in reality, intertwined. The first network consists of activists and organizations whose activities are closely connected to actual events in Chiapas and Mexico and/or to specific initiatives launched by the Zapatistas. This network is, to some extent, dormant, and is activated primarily when events in Chiapas and Mexico seem to require attention. The second network is more stable and also more political. Its origins are found mainly in the intercontinental encounter arranged by the Zapatistas in Chiapas in 1996. The activists involved in this network find important inspiration for their own local and national political activities in the Zapatistas and its radical democratic critique of neoliberalism. This network is consequently also less dependent on specific events and initiatives in Chiapas and Mexico than the first network.

In April 2001, the Zapatistas entered into a period of prolonged silence only interrupted in October 2001 by a communiqué on the assassination of human rights lawyer Digna Ochoa in Mexico City in October 2001. This situation led to a decrease in transnational activity, especially in regard to the first of the two networks described above. The Zapatistas' silence came as a result of the approbation in the Mexican Congress of what was considered to be a mutilated version of the reform on indigenous rights originally presented in late 1996 by a commission of Mexican legislators (COCOPA).[17] During the presidential campaign, Vicente Fox proclaimed that he would solve the Chiapas conflict in fifteen minutes. The Zapatistas tried to take advantage of the new political situation and the apparent willingness of the new government to dialogue with the Zapatistas by staging the March for Indigenous Dignity in February/March 2001, just a few months after the inauguration of Vicente Fox as president of Mexico. The aim of the march was

to put back on the agenda the question of constitutional re-
form of the relationship between the Mexican state and the
indigenous population. Despite the public success of the march
which ended with Zapatista commanders delivering speeches
in the Mexican Congress, the momentum created was checked
when the Fox administration presented a reform proposal that
did not live up to the original COCOPA proposal and to the
demands of the Zapatistas and other indigenous groups in
Mexico. For the Zapatistas, this meant that any basis for serious
dialogue with the new government under Vicente Fox was gone.
As a result the Zapatistas decided to redraw to consider their
response. In the meantime, Fox used the silence on part of the
Zapatistas to show the world that peace existed in Chiapas when
the truth is that the state is still heavily militarized and paramili-
tary violence continues to create a climate of fear and intimida-
tion.

While these circumstances surrounding the question of
indigenous reform have been the direct cause of the Zapatista
silence after April 2001, this must also be seen in the context of
two major events, one on a national scale and the other on a
global scale, which have had significant consequences for the
Zapatistas' analysis of its social and political environment. In
2000 the electoral victory of Vicente Fox and the PAN (Partido
de Acción Nacional, or National Action Party) put an end to
seventy-one years of rule by the same party, the PRI. As dis-
cussed elsewhere, the PRI was formed in the wake of the Mexi-
can Revolution. This central part of Mexican history has al-
ways been a major reference point and source of legitimacy for
the party, which tellingly calls itself the Institutional Revolu-
tionary Party. When the Zapatistas initiated their uprising in
1994 the PRI was seen from the beginning as their major and
most direct opponent. The Zapatistas thus saw and portrayed
themselves as defenders of some of the revolutionary and na-
tional values betrayed by the PRI in its adherence to neoliberal
ideologies and its increasingly tight relationship with the USA

as expressed in Mexico's NAFTA membership. This critique resonated well in large segments of the Mexican population where the legitimacy of the PRI had been declining for a number of years. In this context, the Zapatista critique of the PRI as "sellers of the fatherland" and of the lack of democracy in Mexico found a fertile soil in the 1990s.

With the coming into office of Fox and the PAN the Zapatistas have in a way lost their main opponent. This obviously calls for a new analysis of the national political landscape in which the Zapatistas move. The 2001 March for Indigenous Dignity was, for example, an attempt to assess this terrain and put pressure on the Fox administration. This change of system in what was widely considered a fair and clean election has taken some of the sting out of the democratic critique which has become a characteristic of the Zapatistas. This does not directly affect the Zapatistas' radical democratic critique, but it has certainly changed the background on which this critique has taken place, and as such new analyses and evaluations are needed. On the other hand, the relevance and potency of the Zapatistas' critique of neoliberalism has remained intact after the change in power. The PAN in many ways has continued the neoliberal policies of free trade and privatization associated with the PRI since the 1980s. The cornerstone of this course is the Plan Puebla Panamá, a development project including southern Mexico and the Central American countries, and an integral part of the more ambitious Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) initiative currently under negotiation. For critics, the Plan Puebla Panamá is designed to take advantage of cheap labor and natural resources in these areas and the project has attracted considerable resistance, including from the Zapatistas.

The other major event with obvious consequences for the Zapatistas is the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA. This event has created a potentially difficult situation for the Zapatistas which may have prolonged the period of silence begun in April 2001. Even if the Zapatistas have not used armed

force since the early days of the uprising, and despite the fact that the US government has not officially labeled the Zapatistas as a terrorist organization, there is no doubt that the social and political climate created by September 11 calls for caution and deliberation on the part of the Zapatistas. After September 11, many observers on the Left saw the event as an opening, a chance to discuss and reconsider different social, economical and political aspects of the global condition. The effect, however, seems to have been much the opposite, especially in the USA. What has occurred has been a resurgence of national and conservative security values that, in turn, seem to have weakened the legitimacy of radical politics and positions, especially those critical of the USA. In the post-September 11 world, states in general tend to have a larger room of maneuver in regard to the surveillance and repression of all kinds of political dissent. This change has obviously also had an indirect impact on the Zapatistas as well as on the transnational Zapatista solidarity network and the global justice and solidarity network. Following September 11 new political initiatives need to be analyzed and proposed with September 11 and this new political climate in mind.

Recalling the earlier distinction between two transnational Zapatista solidarity networks, it is important to note that the quiet period of the Zapatistas does not denote a situation where the network is dormant and waiting to be awakened by new events and initiatives. Throughout the period of silence after April 2001, for example, the network continued its circulation of information. The focus of this information has not so much been the Zapatistas but rather the problems of militarization and paramilitarization that persist in Chiapas. But activities have not only taken place in computer mediated information circuits: for example, in November 2001, Danish high school students devoted a day of labor to collect money for a school project in the conflict zone in Chiapas, and in March 2002, the third International Civil Commission for Human

Rights Observation visited Chiapas to assess the human rights situation in Chiapas.

In other words, this rather high level of activity despite the Zapatistas' silence indicates that the network has a stable core that works on a continuous basis. These points also suggest that the network will continue to exist and develop in the future. Recalling the distinction between the two networks, it might be useful when speaking about the future development of the transnational Zapatista solidarity network to refer to these as a core and periphery network respectively. Put differently, it is the core network that we should expect to continue and develop. The periphery network, on the other hand, will be dependent on specific events and initiatives for its involvement in Zapatista and Chiapas solidarity activities. Of course, certain future developments in Chiapas and Mexico may have a partially dissolving effect on even the core of the network. The Zapatistas and Subcomandante Marcos have alluded that they might take off their masks at some point in the future and turn the movement into a political and non-armed civil society organization. This, however, is unlikely to happen before a solution is reached in the ongoing debate and conflict over the issue of indigenous rights. On the other hand, the idea of such a move from the Zapatistas is not completely alien, considering their ability to present surprising initiatives, and considering their anti-vanguardist perception and continuous emphasis on the Zapatistas as a symptom of a larger conflict.

This larger conflict is expressed, to a significant extent, by what has been referred to in the article as the global justice and solidarity movement. This movement barely existed at the time of the Zapatista uprising in 1994 when the Left was still trying to find its feet after the end of the Cold War. In the second half of the 1990s the network began to take shape, and made its first strong impression in Seattle in November 1999. As indicated at several points throughout the article, the Zapatistas, and especially the intercontinental encounter in

Chiapas in 1996, have played important roles in this development. The prospects for the Left have, accordingly, undergone significant changes during the 1990s and the Zapatistas have seen many of its political ideas and visions echoed in the activities of the global justice and solidarity movement. In a larger and global perspective, the Zapatistas have viewed themselves mainly as a catalyst and inspiration for a revitalization of the Left after the Cold War. With an apparently vibrant and active global justice and solidarity movement, the Zapatistas may in many ways consider this task completed and its own presence to be of less importance than in the 1990s. Unless the issue of indigenous rights remains pending and unresolved, there is thus good reason to expect changes in the Zapatistas' strategy and consequently a radical change of the transnational Zapatista solidarity network. The events of September 11 may, however, have changed the likeliness of such a development.

In 2002 and 2003, the transnational Zapatista solidarity network has begun to reactivate following the reappearance of the Zapatistas. The Zapatistas broke the period of silence in November 2002 with a message from Subcomandante Marcos on the occasion of the launching of a new political magazine in Mexico, *Revista Rebeldía*. In this intervention, Subcomandante Marcos jokes about rumors attributing the Zapatista silence to his death or serious illness or to internal strife in the movement. This is not the first period where the Zapatistas have "disappeared" and each time rumors surface about the fate of Subcomandante Marcos. Apparently, the Zapatistas use the periods of silence to deliberate new developments and prepare responses in consultation with the Zapatista communities. In 2003, the Zapatistas embarked on an ambitious restructuring of the Zapatista communities in Chiapas. The aguascalientes that had so far served as the nerve centres of Zapatista territory were renamed as caracoles. The Caracoles are to serve as locations for what the Zapatistas call Good Government Juntas. The Juntas were created in order to strengthen democracy

and equality within Zapatista territory and to establish a more direct link with the world outside it.

This initiative came in the lead-up to the ten years anniversary of the uprising in 2004. This date led to a renewal of solidarity activities in and outside Mexico, but at a more moderate level than what was seen only a few years ago. This may suggest two things: first, a dampening of contentious politics, national and transnational, in the wake of September 11, and, second, a deliberate attempt by the Zapatistas to concentrate on internal and local issues. In fact, the restructuring process has also involved a critique of some elements in the transnational solidarity directed to the Zapatistas and Chiapas as being disrespectful and paternalistic. This perhaps heralds a phase where the Zapatistas wish to strengthen its influence over solidarity activities. This will most certainly push some activists away from the Zapatistas and Chiapas. What we may expect, therefore, is a situation where the transnational solidarity network will become smaller and concentrated around the core network.

Conclusion

The Zapatista injustice frame is centered round the concept of neoliberalism. This use of the concept of neoliberalism has a national as well as a transnational dimension. These two dimensions are not mutually exclusive, but are simultaneously present in the Zapatista injustice frame. The national dimension in the injustice frame is primarily based in references to Mexican history and culture. In particular, reference is made to the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919) and the popular demands by Emiliano Zapata during the revolution. The present neoliberal policies are considered by the Zapatistas to contain a betrayal of the most important outcomes of the revolution, for example agrarian reform. The national dimension in the injustice frame is rooted in an interpretation of neoliberalism as a force threatening the national and cultural particularities of Mexico. Neoliberal policies force national borders to be opened to the

circulation of money and labor. The NAFTA is seen by the Zapatistas as a major development in this direction. The coincidence between the coming into force of NAFTA and the uprising on January 1, 1994, enabled an early connection between the Zapatista injustice frame and non-Mexican activists who had been involved in activities opposing NAFTA in the years preceding 1994.

The Continental and Intercontinental Encounters in Chiapas in 1996 heralded a new phase in the transnationalization of the injustice frame and thus also a new phase in the development of the transnational Zapatista solidarity network. It was in the time around the encounters that the Zapatistas began giving their injustice frame an explicitly transnational dimension. This involved portraying neoliberal policies as a Fourth World War being waged against humanity as a whole. This transnationalization of the injustice frame did not involve any specific solution proposals. Instead, the Zapatistas have continuously emphasized the value of the diversity of local and national solutions to the problems associated with neoliberal policies. This indicates that the *solution* component in the injustice frame is more or less absent. The resonance of the injustice frame beyond Mexico was strengthened by the fact that the concept of neoliberalism was already in use and had been so since the 1980s, in and outside of Mexico. The choice of neoliberalism as the conceptual center of the injustice frame made it relatively easy for the Zapatistas to create transnational resonance. This point indicates that part of the transnational resonance of the injustice frame is due to the *recognition* component of the injustice frame. The resonance of the injustice frame should be considered in the light of the end of the Cold War and the subsequent identity crisis suffered by the radical Left. The emergence of the Zapatistas at this point in time was received by many people as proof that history had not ended and that social struggle was still possible and needed. This shows that the *action* component in the injustice frame is particularly

relevant in regard to explaining the transnational resonance of the injustice frame.

Since 1996, the transnational Zapatista solidarity network has become increasingly integrated or diffused with a number of other transnational movement networks that may be considered part of the global justice and solidarity movement. The Zapatistas have a strong symbolic role within this movement and people participating in transnational Zapatista solidarity also to a large extent consider themselves to be part of the global justice and solidarity movement. This diffusion between the transnational Zapatista solidarity network and the global justice and solidarity movement denotes a politicization of solidarity with the Zapatistas. This politicization has taken place especially after the 1996 encounters and is primarily a result of the transnationalization of the Zapatista injustice frame after this time. The politicization of solidarity involves viewing the Zapatistas as a symbol of social struggle rather than an object of one-way and altruistic solidarity.

Today, it is possible to distinguish analytically between two transnational Zapatista solidarity networks. The first network is made up of activists and organizations engaged in activities that are closely connected to events in Chiapas and Mexico and to specific Zapatista initiatives. This network is activated primarily when events in Chiapas and Mexico require attention. The second network is both more stable and more political. Its origins are found mainly in the intercontinental encounter arranged by the Zapatistas in Chiapas in 1996. Currently, the transnational Zapatista solidarity network is less active than in the mid to late 1990s. In other words, it is mainly the second network that defines Zapatista solidarity work today. The present waning of transnational solidarity is partly a result of a more introvert Zapatista strategy since 2001. This situation in turn may reflect major political changes and impasses in Mexico and the new world political climate after September 11.

Endnotes

[1] This article builds on chapters six and nine of a book-length study of the transnational Zapatista solidarity network (Olesen 2005).

[2] The official name of the Zapatistas is EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, or Zapatista Army of National Liberation).

[3] Article 27 in the Mexican Constitution regards the so-called *ejido* system. The *ejido* system rests on a degree of shared ownership of land and was established in the wake of the social demands made during and after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919). The reform had the objective of opening up the *ejido* sector to private ownership and investment.

[4] Where nothing else is indicated translated quotes are mine.

[5] Translation from the Spanish taken from the Irish Mexico Group website at *http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ ezln/1999/marcos_newton_may99.html*.

[6] The statement to some extent echoes Ignacio Ramonet's (1997) article, "Disarming the Markets," in *Le Monde Diplomatique* in December 1997. The article took its point of departure in a critique of financial globalization and called for a number of initiatives aimed at restricting the free circulation of financial and speculative capital. Among the initiatives was a call for the formation of a movement under the name of ATTAC (Action for a Tobin Tax to Assist the Citizen).

[7] Translation from the Spanish taken from the Ya Basta! website at *www.ezln.org/documentos/1994/199312xx.en.htm*.

[8] In 2000, after 71 years of uninterrupted rule, the PRI ceded presidential power to the PAN (Partido de Acción Nacional, or National Action Party).

[9] Translation from the Spanish taken from the Ya Basta! website at *www.ezln.org/documentos/1994/19940410a.en.htm*. The reference to president Salinas de Gortari as an usurper reflects a widespread perception that the PRI's victory in the presidential elections in 1988 was fraudulent. The legitimate victor of the elections was considered to be Cuahtémoc Cárdenas of the left-center coalition FDN (Frente Democrático Nacional, or National Democratic Front). After the elections, the FDN was dissolved and the PRD (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, or Party of the Democratic Revolution) formed by Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz-Ledo. The PRD is currently Mexico's third largest party.

[10] Translation from the Spanish taken from an English version available at *www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3849/ marcos_7pieces.html*.

[11] Two prominent examples of anti-neoliberal protest that have attracted the attention and support of the Zapatistas have been the student strike at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional

Autónoma de México, or UNAM) (EZLN 1999b) and the protest against plans to privatize Mexico's archeological sites (EZLN 1999c). Also in 1999, the Zapatistas issued statements of support for electricity workers opposing privatization plans for Mexico's electricity sector (EZLN 1999d).

[12] Meetings along these lines have subsequently been held in Spain in 1997 and in Brazil in 1999. The meeting in Spain, the Second Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism (*Segundo Encuentro Intercontinental por la Humanidad y contra el Neoliberalismo*), was seen as a follow-up to the intercontinental meeting in Chiapas. The meeting was not called by the Zapatistas, but the encounter in Spain did have the participation of two representatives from the Zapatista communities in Chiapas. In December 1999 in Belém, Brazil was held the Second American Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism (*Segundo Encuentro Americano por la Humanidad y contra el Neoliberalismo*). This was a follow-up to the continental American meeting staged in Chiapas in April 1996 as a preparatory meeting for the intercontinental encounter. This encounter was not organized or convened by the Zapatistas, but the Zapatistas endorsed and encouraged the initiative in June of 1999 (EZLN 1999e). Today, this string of meetings in the late 1990s seems to have been taken over by the so-called World Social Forums held in Brazil and India.

[13] In an interview with Le Bot (1997: 340), Subcomandante Marcos has explained that even if the socialism of the Soviet Bloc was in many ways alien to the Zapatista vision, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War did instill a certain feeling of "loneliness" in the movement.

[14] This is not to suggest that such trends only became apparent after the end of the Cold War. In Europe, similar discussions had been present since the late 1970s and early 1980s. This debate took place, *inter alia*, around the so-called New Left and often pointed to the emergence of so-called new social movements as the bearers and creators of new political identities thought to be less rooted in class (e.g. Melucci 1980; Offe 1985).

[15] There are current negotiations to extend NAFTA to a new free trade agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) including all countries in Central America, the Caribbean, and South America except, of course, Cuba. Negotiations were initiated shortly after the implementation of NAFTA and are scheduled to conclude in 2005. In line with these visions, the Mexican government under Vicente Fox has launched plans to create a development project involving the area between Puebla in Mexico and Panama. This plan is commonly known as the Plan Puebla Panama and has already drawn significant criticism from social activists in and outside of Mexico.

[16] The quote has been corrected and edited at a few points to improve readability.

[17] COCOPA is mainly made up of representatives from the Mexican parliament. It was set up in 1995 to facilitate negotiations between the Zapatistas and the government.

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CELEBRATION OF ZAPATISMO[1]

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Zapatismo is nowadays the most radical, and perhaps the most important, political initiative in the world. But the Zapatistas continue to be a mystery and a paradox. Can there be such a thing as a revolutionary group with no interest in seizing power? Revolutionary leaders who refuse to hold any public post, now or in the future? An *army* that fires words and civil disobedience, championing non-violence? An organization profoundly rooted in its local culture with a global scope? A group that is strongly affiliated with democratic principles, and yet is democracy's most radical critic? People profoundly rooted in ancient Mayan traditions and yet immersed in contemporary ideas, problems, and technologies? "Everything for everyone, nothing for us," a principle daily applied in their initiatives, includes power: they don't want power, even within their own communities, where the powers that be don't dare to interfere. What kind of movement is this? Is it possible to apply to them, to their ideas and practices, conventional or alternative notions of Power or power? Do they fit in the archetypal model of the Prince? The expression "national liberation" is included in the name they gave to their movement, but they seem to be radically different from the movements for national liberation of the post war era. How do we deal with their ideas and practices expressing their radical freedom, their fascinating notion of liberty and liberation?

The Zapatistas challenge, in words and deeds, every aspect of contemporary society. In revealing the root cause of the current predicaments, they tear to tatters the framework of the economic society (capitalism), the nation-state, formal democracy and all modern institutions. They also render obsolete

conventional ways and practices of social and political movements and initiatives. In reconstructing the world from the bottom up, they reveal the illusory or counterproductive nature of changes conceived or implemented from the top down. Their path encourages everywhere resistance to globalization and neoliberalism, and inspires struggles for liberation. They also contribute to articulate those struggles.

The Zapatistas liberated hope from Pandora's Box.

> The original Pandora, the All-Giver, was an Earth goddess in prehistoric matriarchal Greece. She let all ills escape from her amphora (*pythos*). But she closed the lid before Hope could escape. The history of modern man begins with the degradation of Pandora's myth… It is the history of the Promethean Endeavour to forge institutions in order to corral each of the rampant ills. It is the history of fading hope and rising expectations... The Promethean ethos has now eclipsed hope. Survival of the human race depends on its rediscovery as a social force (Illich 1996: 105).

In liberating hope, the Zapatistas dis-covered a net of plural paths, as a pertinent substitute for the very western notion of One World, One Truth, One Path, which has been the ideological root of all colonialisms. In so doing, the Zapatistas paved the way for a renaissance. They are still a source of inspiration for those walking along those paths. But they do not pretend to administer or control such a net, which has its own impulses, strength and orientation. We all are, or can be, Zapatistas.

> Behind our black mask, behind our armed voice, behind our unnamable name, behind what you see of us, behind this, we are you. Behind this, we are the same simple and ordinary men and women who are repeated in all races, painted in all colors, speak in all languages,

and live in all places. Behind this, we are the same forgotten men and women, the same excluded, the same intolerated, the same persecuted, the same as you. Behind this, we are you.[2]

¡*Basta*! Enough!

At midnight of 1ˢᵗ January 1994, NAFTA— the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the US and Canada, came into force. Barely two hours later, thousands of Indians armed with machetes, clubs, and a few guns occupied four of the main towns in Chiapas, a province bordering Guatemala, and declared war on the Mexican government. The rebels revealed that they were Indians of different ethnic groups calling themselves Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). They appealed for an end to five hundred years of oppression and fifty years of "development," and expressed the hope that a new political regime would allow them to reclaim their commons and to regenerate their own forms of governance and their art of living and dying. It was time to say "¡*Basta*! Enough!"

For ten years, encircled by 50-60,000 troops, a third of the Mexican Army, the Zapatistas have peacefully resisted the "low intensity" war waged against them by the government. They have been continually exposed to public attention. In fact, no contemporary social or political movement has attracted more public attention and for more time than Zapatismo.[3] But there is continuing debate about the very nature and prospects of their initiatives. Time and again, the constituted powers and both friends and enemies assume that they are history, that they *were* a kind of lightening in the middle of darkness but their best moment and opportunity is over and they are now suffering a kind of agony in a small area in the south of Mexico. Who are they? Are they still alive and well, at the very beginning of their initiative—as they say—or are they history, as many critics observe?

It is evident what Zapatismo is not.

The Zapatistas are not a fundamentalist or messianic movement. Within their ranks, very different beliefs and religions, most of them well rooted in their traditions, harmoniously coexist. They are very open and ecumenical in religious matters. The majority of them are indigenous people, but they did not start an indigenous or ethnic movement. They do not reduce the scope of their initiative to indigenous peoples, to a "minority" or even less to themselves, to their own claims: "Everything for everyone, nothing for us" is not a slogan but a political attitude and practice.

The Zapatistas are not a nationalist, separatist, or "autonomist" movement. They show no desire for Chiapas to become a small nation-state, an indigenous republic, or an "autonomous" administrative district, in line with the demands of minorities in some other countries. They actively resist the modern propensity to subsume local ways of being and cultural differences in the homogenizing treatment given to people classed as "minorities" in the modern nation state –usually another way of hiding discrimination and entrenching individualism.

The Zapatistas are not guerrillas. They are not a fish that swims in the sea of the people, as Che Guevara would define a guerrilla. They are the sea, not the fish: the uprising was the collective decision of hundreds of communities not interested in power. And they are not a revolutionary group in search of popular support to seize power. In exploring this attitude, as I do later in this essay, we can discover one of the most important and challenging traits of the Zapatistas.

Listening While You Walk

"The first fundamental act of the EZLN was to learn how to listen and to speak," say the Zapatistas.[4]

On the 17th November 1983 a group of six professional revolutionaries arrived in Chiapas to establish a guerrilla centre and base. Their first task was to learn how to survive in the

jungle by themselves. After one year, the person later represented as old Antonio discovered them and introduced them to the communities. Their marxist-leninist-guevarist ideology could not permeate their conversations. "Your word is too harsh," people kept telling them. The guerrillas' "square" ideas were thus not only dented but so severely damaged that they became unrecognizable. The first Zapatistas say that in this initial confrontation they lost—they, those bearing that ideology and that political project, a would-be guerrilla in the Latin American tradition. But out of this intercultural dialogue Zapatismo was born and rooted itself in hundreds of communities.

In the following years, these communities tried every legal tool at their disposal, every form of social, economic or political organization. They organized marches, sit-ins, every-thing. They even walked two thousand kilometers from Chiapas to the capital, Mexico City, in order to find someone to hear their call. No one listened. Not the society and not the govern-ment. They were dying like flies. They thus preferred a digni-fied death to the docile march of sheep to the slaughter. "The mountain told us to take up arms so we would have a voice. It told us to cover our faces so we would have a face. It told us to forget our names so we could be named. It told us to protect our past so we would have a future" (The Zapatistas 1998: 22). All they had been left with was their dignity. They affirmed themselves in it, hoping that their sacrifice might awaken soci-ety; and that perhaps their children and grandchildren could live a better life.

They were the weakest. Nobody was listening. But their uprising was echoed by the "civil society,"[5] which urged them to try a peaceful and political way. They accepted such a man-date and they made themselves strong in it, changing the form of their struggle. Only twelve days after the armed uprising started, they became the champions of non-violence.[6]

According to the Zapatistas, after the Dialogue of the Cathedral in March 1994 (frustrated after the assassination of

the presidential candidate of the official party) and the elections of that year, they needed to create a different kind of space for dialogue:

> We needed a space to learn to listen and to speak with this plurality that we call 'civil society.' We agreed then to construct such space and to call it Aguascalientes, since it would be the headquarters of the National Democratic Convention, whose name alluded to the Convention of the Mexican revolutionary forces in the second decade of the 20th Century… On 8th August 1994 commander Tacho, in the name of the Revolutionary indigenous Clandestine Committee of the EZLN inaugurated, before six thousand people from different parts of the world, the so called Aguascalientes and he delivered it to national and international civil society... But the idea of Aguascalientes was going *más allá*, beyond. We wanted a space for the dialogue with civil society. And dialogue means also to learn to listen to the other and learning how to speak to him or her.

When the Aguascalientes of Guadalupe Tepeyac was destroyed by the federal army, in February 1995, other Aguascalientes were born in different Zapatista communities. They served since then many purposes, especially for the relationship with "civil society."

In December 1995 autonomous municipalities started to be created in the Zapatista area. In them, in spite of the military encirclement and other external pressures, the Zapatistas practiced their autonomy, both within each of the communities constituting every municipality and within each municipality, where the communities organized and controlled a governing council.

After a long reflection on these experiences, the Zapatistas introduced important changes in their internal struc-

ture and in their ways of relating to "civil society." In order to inform about them, burying the Aguascalientes and giving birth to the Caracoles (snails, seashells), they held a great celebration from 8th to 10th August 2003.

Internally they decided to separate the military structure from the civil organization and to harmonize the activities of the autonomous municipalities in every Zapatista region through Juntas de Buen Gobierno (Councils or Boards of Good Government). These new autonomous bodies were created "to take care that in Zapatista territory those that lead, lead by following... In each rebel area there will be a Junta, constituted by one or two delegates of each of the Autonomous Councils (of the municipalities) of the area."

The autonomous communities and municipalities will thus continue functioning with their own structure, but now they will also have these Juntas de Buen Gobierno, articulating several municipalities. The Juntas will attend to conflicts and difficulties of the autonomous municipalities within the jurisdiction of each Junta. Anyone feeling that an injustice has been committed in his or her community or municipality, or that things are not being done like they ought to be done, according to the community will and the principle of "command by obeying," may have recourse to this new instance. These juntas will also be in charge of any dealings with "civil society" and if needed with government agencies.

Why call the new political bodies *caracoles*? The Zapatistas offered different explanations.

> The wise ones of olden times say that the hearts of men and women are in the shape of a *caracol*, and that those who have good in their hearts and thoughts walk from one place to the other, awakening gods and men for them to check that the world remains right. For that reason, who keeps vigil while the others are sleeping

uses his *caracol,* and he uses it for many things, but most of all as not to forget.

They say here that the most ancient ones said that others before them said that the very first people of these lands held an appreciation for the symbol of the *caracol.* They say, that they say, that they said that the *caracol* represents entering into the heart, that this is what the very first one's called knowledge. They say that they say that they said that the *caracol* also represents exiting from the heart to walk the world, that this is what the very first called life. And not only, they say that they say that they said that with the *caracol* the community was called together for the word to travel from one to the other and thus accord were born. And also they say that they say that they said that the *caracol* was a gift for the ear to hear even the most distant words. This they say that the say, that hey said.

The *caracoles* will be like doors to enter into the communities and for the communities to come out; like windows to see us inside and also for us to see outside; like loudspeakers in order to send far and wide our word and also to hear the words from the one who is far away. But, most of all, they will remind us that we ought to keep watch and to check uprightness of the worlds that populate the world.

At the celebration that buried the Aguascalientes, and birthed the Caracoles, the Zapatistas announced that in their territories the Plan Puebla-Panamá—a neoliberal scheme for Southern Mexico and Central America—would not be applied. They proposed instead the Plan La Realidad-Tijuana that "consists in linking all the resistances in our country, and reconstructing Mexico from the bottom up."

As these highlights of the very complex story of Zapatismo illustrate, the Zapatistas do not enclose themselves in a body of doctrine, in an ideology, which usually starts as a guide to action and ends transmogrified into a rigid and authoritarian straightjacket. They have changed continually, enriching their statements and ways, according with changing circumstances and following their intense interaction with other groups and organizations. They listen, learn from others and apply in each step a healthy self-criticism. Yet this is not mere pragmatism. They continue to be solidly attached to certain principles of behavior and they possess a splendid moral integrity. They also possess the strength of character that emanates from a well rooted, open and hospitable dignity.

There are few things more distinctive of the Zapatistas than their capacity to listen... and to change, according to what they heard, operating profound mutations in their movement. What some people see as chameleonic behavior or betrayal to sacred principles or doctrinaire statements, is instead an expression of vitality, flexibility, openness and capacity to change. This is the challenge in describing Zapatismo. You need to allude to the mutations of the subject itself and its attitudes.

Desperately Seeking Marcos

Many people still insist on reducing Zapatismo to Marcos. This looks like racism. An educated white man is surely manipulating those poor, illiterate Mayas. They cannot say what he is saying and even less conceive such a movement. This looks like racism.

But, what about the crowds? In 2001 Subcomandante Marcos and twenty five Zapatista commanders traveled to Mexico City. For the first time, millions were able to see and hear them. Time and again the crowds did not allow the other Zapatistas or local indigenous leaders to speak. "Marcos! Marcos!" they demanded. No one else. They wanted to listen to him. Were they also racists?

In the plaza of Tepatepec, Hidalgo, a new legend started. For two years not a drop of water had fallen in the region. The very minute Marcos started his speech a torrential rain began. "Of course," said an old woman; "This man is turning our political system upside down. Why shouldn't he command the rain?" Was she racist? Or just an innocent searcher looking for hope incarnated in a charismatic leader?

And what about the millions collecting the Zapatista communiqués penned by Marcos, his stories, his interviews, his letters? What about the editors publishing with impressive love and care his "selected writings"? (Subcomandante Marcos 2001) The book, with a Foreword by Saramago, celebrates him as one of the best Latin American writers of all times. Norman Mailer writes, in the cover of that book: "Marcos has earned his indignation like few men alive." Are these admirers racists as well?

Should we think, alternatively, that the "system" performed its usual operation and did not wait thirty years to sell Marcos T-shirts? (Benetton offered him one million dollars to include his face in its collection.) Or should we accept the view that he really is the timely savior that the world was waiting for; an icon that globaphobics can now use to express their dissent; the new flag for rebellion in these desperate times?[7] Is Marcos the romantic revolutionary, a living substitute for Che? Is he really an extra-ordinary leader, as wise as he is heroic, awakening us out of confusion and conformity, and thus deserving trust and subordination?

No doubt, the person behind the mask is extra-ordinary. Who can deny his literary talent? Even the very anti-Zapatista Nobel Prize winner, Octavio Paz, recognized it. No one can question his political savvy. Loved and hated by many people, Marcos, like the Zapatistas, remains a mystery and a paradox, a puzzle. Does he really fit into the image of a new revolutionary archetype? Unquestionably, he has charisma. He enchants both the crowds and his readers. But, is he really a

leader, romantic or not? And even more pertinent to the point, is he the very core of Zapatismo, as Mao was for Maoism and Che for Guevarism? Is this particular poet-writer-strategist-rebel-revolutionary what many of his followers and readers seem to assume him to be?

During the Zapatista March to Mexico City, Marcos experienced for the first time his mesmerizing impact on the crowds.[8] He candidly declared afterwards that the Zapatistas did not foresee this problem. Marcos became their spokesperson by accident, at the beginning of the uprising. Observing his effectiveness, they used him extensively in that role. The mask, used to avoid personality cult, became counterproductive. His transformation into an iconic image took them by surprise.

I do not want to minimize his role as a spokesperson. It has been critical to overcome one of the main challenges for the Zapatistas. Fully rooted in their own culture, they were keenly aware that their radical otherness was an obstacle to convey to others the spirit and meaning of their movement, without betraying their unique view of the world. How to avoid misinterpretation? How to be truthful without colonizing others with their brand of truth? How to share an attitude whose "global" scope derived from its deep cultural rootedness in Chiapas?

Few Zapatistas are proficient in Spanish; none, but Marcos, masters it. But the challenge for effective interaction was not only a question of language. It was associated with the very conception and orientation of the movement, whose radical novelty comes from both its ancient cultural roots and its contemporary innovations. Their views, fully immersed in their own cultures, seemed impenetrable for people of other cultures. Their political stance, strictly contemporary, was conceived outside the modern political spectrum. It has no clear precedents. There were no words to talk about it.

This challenge was evident since the uprising started. The Zapatistas needed to draw a line to differentiate themselves from other armed movements in Latin America, the narco-guer-

rillas, and classic peasant rebellions. Through very effective images, using both ordinary language and the epic tone of some predecessors, they appealed to people's imagination. Many analysts took the document with which they introduced themselves for a delirious and politically insane declaration. Instead, the people received it as a sign of hope, inspiring and awaking them. In a matter of hours the Zapatistas established themselves in a new domain, outside the spectrum of classifications that scholars, analysts, and reactionaries would try to pigeon hole them in.

After ten years of clandestineness, well trained in the intercultural dialogue through which Zapatismo was born, the Zapatistas and Marcos himself discovered his function as a cultural bridge, in order to open a dialogue with "civil society" and spread the contagion of dignity and hope. Instead of a cold, abstract ideology, frozen in seductive slogans, Marcos uses images, stories, metaphors, and characters like Durito and old Antonio.[9] He was not selling any political code or ideology "to plug everyone into." In this way, his masked voice became the voice of many voices.

Marcos himself explained "the futility for scientists and the police of speculating over who is behind the criminal nose and ski mask" (Gilly et al. 1995, Marcos 2001: 249). The Zapatistas show themselves by hiding and hide by showing themselves. They are the face that hides itself to be seen, the name that hides itself to be named. It is futile to look both for the individual "author" of plans and conceptions, or for the "real" individual self behind the nosed ski mask. Marcos, born on January 1st 1994, will soon vanish. It will no longer be needed; it will not, like Cid or Che, win battles after death; it will not be used as a credential legitimizing power.

Today, the Zapatistas are a source of inspiration, not of guidance. Zapatismo escapes all "isms." They do not ask the people to affiliate themselves to a church, a party, an ideology, a political strategy, or plan. They inspire dignity, courage, and self-

respect. They nourish with their moral strength and political imagination non-violent initiatives against neoliberalism and globalization.

Both the system and its discontents use Marcos. By criminalizing or idealizing the "individual" behind the mask, they dissipate precisely what they try to take hold of. They are thus unable to see with new eyes the Zapatistas' radical stance.

Many others, however, derive continual inspiration from them. They do not need to desperately seek Marcos and idolize him. They know that we all are Marcos, in our own way and place, with our own face and dignity, in our own struggle. As the participants in the Zapatista Encuentro of 1996 declared, "The rebels search each other out. They walk towards one another… They begin to recognize themselves… and continue on their fatiguing walk, walking as is now necessary to walk, that is to say, struggling" (The Zapatistas 1998: 43).

Walking at the Pace of the Slowest

All the "revolutionary vanguards" are obsessively focused on keeping their position of leadership and command. They must be at the top and control, by all means, the "masses." And they always are in a rush. They have to be the first to arrive in the Promised Land, which usually means seizing Power. Once in Power, they think, they will be able to lead the people in the realization of their revolutionary project.

The Zapatistas are instead focused on seeking consensus and walking at the pace of the slowest. No important political decision is taken by a small group of leaders. As a consequence, the decision process is slow and complex. It requires long and convoluted forms of discussion and consultation. They do not speed it up through the method of voting, which always leaves a balance of winners and losers, majorities and minorities. And the march itself, walking the consensual path, is unavoidably slow.

Such search for consensus rejects the assumption of homogeneity in the understanding of social subjects or issues, as well as in the basic attitudes of the assembled people, implicit in conventional "democratic consensus." The ballot box for referenda, plebiscite, and elections are not only exposed to manipulation and control; they are also based on the assumption that everyone shares a common understanding of the matters to be voted for and that the voters also share some basic attitudes determining the "democratic consensus" constructed through their votes. Fully aware of the many differences in the plurality of interests, perceptions, attitudes, and voices of the real world, the Zapatistas try to identify by consensus the paths to be walked. And in walking them, once agreed upon by everyone, they adjust the pace of the walk to those lagging behind. The slowest, on their part, have been accelerating their pace, as they see the institutional roof falling over them.

At the same time, while walking that path, the Zapatistas are resorting to legal and political procedures, in order to construct another level of consensus. They seem convinced that those procedures, integral to one another, are the best way to protect the structure of freedom they are creating.

For ten years, the Zapatistas have repeatedly challenged the state of things and its legal form, as both *refuseniks* and outlaws, and each time, in the same operation, they have appealed to political and legal procedures. The best example is that on 1ˢᵗ January 1994: the Zapatistas framed their declaration of war to the Mexican government within the Mexican Constitution, whose article 39 establishes that "all public power is originated in the people" and "the people have at all times the inalienable right to alter or modify the form of government." But it is in fact a pattern, observed in the "revolutionary laws" illegally applied in the Zapatista territories, in the Accords of San Andrés (the most important: a Constitutional reform) or the Juntas de Buen Gobierno.

From the Leyes de Indias imposed by the Spaniards onwards, the law has been used against the indigenous peoples. It has been, for 500 years, a tool to oppress and marginalize them. And this background is now compounded by "judiciary inflation": more and more, every personal or collective conflict is brought to court and transmogrified there into an illusion of justice. It is entrusted to professionals, who derive dignity and income from using and abusing the law for individual gain. Such professional expertise is clearly detached from any consideration about the common good, people's will or real justice. Seven of every ten living lawyers live in the US, where they are legally forced to use the law for the benefit of their clients (who often are criminals) even if in doing so they are manifestly going against the principle of justice. The case of O.J. Simpson is now becoming paradigmatic. To know what is good or bad you now need professional assistance—increasingly corrupt!

The horrors of the judiciary system, supposedly dedicated to the administration and delivery of justice, are increasingly evident. Justice does not appear to be a theme of any Supreme Court, even though they usually have the word in their name. The notion of justice has been reduced to the mechanical and formalist application of unjust laws. The judicial authorities appeal to the law, when they practice their despotism in show tribunals. They may or not recognize the increasingly evident aberrations of the law, but as long as it is standing—they say—they must apply it. They thus wash their hands about the atrocities, mistakes and nonsense of the judiciary system, which also seems to be beyond the field of responsibility of the legislative powers.

Far from abandoning this mined territory, given its terrible condition, the Zapatistas vindicate it. They do not throw the baby out with the bath water. They seem fully aware that having resource to formal structure, recorded in the history of a people, permits to denounce the cancerous hypertrophy of the dominant regime and to tell the truth, showing the aberra-

tion of this modern form of idolatry. In spite of its fragility, the word, the verb, the formal expression of legal and political procedures, can gather the multitude of men and women, what we call a people, in order to leave behind such state of things and continue with the task of reconstruction.

> The concept of Law keeps all its force, even where society makes access to legal machinery a privilege, or where it systematically denies justice, or where it cloaks despotism in the mantle of show tribunals... The structure of political and legal procedures are integral to one another. Both shape and express the structure of freedom... Law can be used as the most dramatic, symbolic and convivial tool in the political area (Illich 1974)

To protect the formal structure of freedom the Zapatistas continually appeal to the legal and political procedures, fully aware of what such procedures are and have been, in the history of a people, in spite of the distortions and perversions imposed on them by successive structures of domination.

The Zapatistas insist that they are rebels, not revolutionaries. Perhaps they are right. The true revolutionaries would be those ordinary men and women mobilized by the dignified rebellion of the Zapatistas. They are producing a radical change at the grassroots, all over the world. For the most part, the change has not yet crystallized in enduring institutions, but it seems to have very solid foundations. It is perhaps the first social revolution of the XXI century: the revolution of the new commons (Esteva and Prakash 1998, Esteva 2000).

Presence and Representation

During their First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism, in July-August, 1996, Subcomandante Marcos explained, in an informal intervention, the attitude of the Zapatistas about power when they were preparing the uprising:

> We thought that we needed to reformulate the question of power. We will not repeat the formula that to change the world you need to seize power, and once in power you will organize it the way it is the best for the world, that is, what is the best for me, because I am in power. We thought that if we conceived a change in the premise of the question of power, arguing that we did not want to take it, this would produce a different form of politics, another kind of politicians, other human beings who could make politics very different to the one practiced by the politicians we suffer today along the whole political spectrum (EZLN 1996: 69).

On 1st January, 1996, in their Fourth Declaration of Selva Lacandona, the Zapatistas invited everyone to explore at the local level what the people can do without political parties and the government. For the Zapatistas, the question is not who is in Power, or how any person, group or party got a power position (through elections or other means), but the very nature of the power system. They do not believe that the improvement in the electoral procedures, which seem to need everywhere a complete overhaul, will be able to address the problems embedded in the very structure of the "democratic" nation-state. They do not think that the needed changes should, or can, come from above. They think instead that those changes can only be realized with the transformation of the society by itself, from within, in people's social fabric in communities, *barrios,* municipalities.

Democracy, in fact, can only be where the people are, and not "up there" at the top of the institutions, no matter how perfect the procedures to elect representatives who will shape and operate those institutions could be. Instead of putting their trust in the constituted powers, whose legitimacy they question, the Zapatistas deposit their hope in the "constituent force," the force constituting the constituted powers, the one that can give, or not, life, meaning and substance to them.[10] Zapatismo has been, from the very beginning, an open appeal to this "constituent force" of the society, an invitation to those forming it to directly and consciously deal with social transformation, not through their supposed representatives.

It is increasingly evident, everywhere, that the constituted powers are not respecting the people's will. The voices of 30 million people, for example, occupying the streets everywhere on February 15th 2003, attempting to stop the war in the Middle East, were not heard. This situation generates increasing disenchantment with formal democracy. It produces a feeling of impotence. Many people react with apathy, indifference, even desperation. Both to vote, or to abandon the ballot box, may be useless or counterproductive. The recent presidential election in the US may be a case in point. There was intense and extensive social and political pressure to vote. Both Republicans and Democrats considered that this was a critical, very important election. The turnout, however, was not really higher than the historical low level of the post-war era.[11] Many people recognized the importance of the episode, but did not consider it useful to participate in the exercise. In the capital of the state where I live, Oaxaca, the new Municipal President took office (January 1st 2005) with 12% of the electorate (5% of the population); 70% of the electorate did not vote, in spite of the importance of this specific authority for them and this election in particular, due to their fundamental disenchantment with the system.

The Zapatistas created an alternative path—a political *force*, instead of a political party, which transforms social and political reality at the grassroots and can enclose the enclosers, encircling and controlling the powers that be. The Zapatistas know very well that their current struggle occurs within the legal and political framework of the Mexican State. But they are not trapped in the perverse illusion that the State is the only general political reality or a privileged form of political activity. Politics, for them, is a commitment to the common good, as expressed in common sense, the sense held in the community. They take away from the State and the market the function of defining the good life and reclaim it as a faculty of "civil society," i.e., the people.

The radical critique of the Zapatistas to the representative system is not reduced to the current conditions of democratic procedures in Mexico or the world. It embraced the very nature of the system. They are challenging the principle of representation, which hides under the democratic appearance of the modern constituted powers in the nation-state the authoritarian tradition of their monarquic predecessors. Within the design of the nation-state, social and politic power, constructed on the unity of men, is concentrated in the hands of the sovereign, in the head of the state. Hobbes saw this clearly:

> A multitude of men, are made one person, when they are by one man , or one person, represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that multitude in particular. For it is the *unity* of the represented, that maketh the person *one*. And it is the representer that beareth the person, and but one person: and *unity*, cannot otherwise be understood in multitude. (Hobbes 1839, vol.III: 151)

Hobbes clarifies that "an actor may be many men made one by plurality of voices," like in a modern Congress. The fact that

the constituted powers in the modern "democratic" states are many and they are exposed to many checks and balances, including in some cases the principle of recall, does not change their very nature as a structure of domination. "The instructions of the State are formulated in the name of the will of all, since it is assumed that the constitutive assembly is the bearer of the social will" (González Pedrero 1993: 157).

The Power becomes a will to command; the subjects should obey. Those in Power may decide against the explicit will of the majority of the governed: that is within their power, their legal capacities. Their subjects have surrendered to them their will. This is precisely the experience that is producing increasing disenchantment with democracy everywhere.

Perhaps we need a whole new language to express the new attitudes, supported in an old tradition, to create an alternative to this structure of domination until now called democracy.

"Autonomy," said Don Gregorio, an old Yaqui Indian, speaking during a recent meeting of indigenous peoples in Oaxaca, Mexico, "is not something we ought to ask for or that anyone can give us. It is something we have, despite everything. Its other name is dignity." Indigenous peoples in Mexico are now practicing autonomy in their communities. While its momentum comes from the past, it acquired new vitality and meaning with the Zapatista uprising. Autonomy includes their own ways of regulating community life.

In Mazateco the word for person, *shu* symbolizes "a walking flower." The *shu-tashá,* "a walking flower in the hands of the people," is the supreme authority for the Mazatecos, one of the many indigenous peoples of Oaxaca. No one would dare to defy it. This authority deals with marital problems and conflicts between communities. It has no power to enforce its will or opinion, but it has the authority bestowed on it by the community. The people are free to consult him or not. He rules by obeying, as the Zapatistas put it, in his search for the common

good rooted in harmony. The people see wisdom in him, not power.

In thousands of indigenous communities, whoever commits a transgression to the customary rules and tradition is seen as a person in need of comfort, not punishment. People in the village may tie him to a tree, but only to wait for the elders to come. Once the elders bring him back from his supposed delirium (the assumption is that he committed the crime when he was out of his mind) they untie him from the tree. The point then is to compensate the victim and re-establish harmony. Whoever kills someone must support the family of the victim for the rest of his life. There are no lawyers, judges or prisoners. The killer is free. And he usually becomes a very good citizen, given the economic burden he carries on his shoulders. He may even go to the US, to earn dollars for his two families. To flee from his grave responsibility would be worse than death or jail.

One of the best traditions of these indigenous communities and peoples is the tradition to change the tradition in a traditional way. Each generation inherits customs and rules that govern their community life, but each changes them autonomously, adapting them to the times and learning from others. By refusing to break with the past—to escape to the future as the "moderns" do—they maintain their historical continuity.

Political activists and market boosters take turns trying to co-opt them and many other people disenchanted with democracy. They pressure them to participate in broader political initiatives, in elections, in struggles to occupy seats of Power, or at least to have a piece of them. They recognize the value of what the people are doing, but observing that they won't get anywhere this way. They consider such struggle to be sterile and they warn them that they will just keep wearing themselves down under police repression and economic colonization, until global forces wipe them from the map or turn them into their servants.

Some people within their own ranks share that concern. They observe that in their own communities they might win, but on the outside they will lose battles, as threats and repression escalate, while the schools and the media conquer the hearts of their young people. These people form political groupings, accept positions in the government or candidacies in the parties—both conceded to seduce those communities and peoples—and they pester them to take part in elections. (Their absence could be dangerous, they say; despots and the far-Right will win if the democratic people abandon the ballot box). Others seek to complement the representative regime with popular initiative, referendum and recall, to enrich the democratic elements in the society.

Many people are not closing their ears to those voices, but they continue learning from experience. Every time some of their people win political office, even as the result of a collective struggle, they get lost in the logic of the governmental and party system. They don't understand the obsession with political office, under the conviction that to occupy it will contribute to the common good. The Zapatista uprising allowed the indigenous communities and peoples of the neighboring state of Oaxaca to win legal recognition for their political autonomy and a new kind of legal respect in 1995 and 1998. Since then, graffiti appears regularly in their villages: "No political parties allowed, least of all the PRI" (the dominant party). Parties split them, they dissolve their communal bonds—their way of living in community—they divide them and subordinate them to forces beyond their control.

More and more, people discover that modern democracy is a regime in which a self-appointed small minority reproduces itself in order to control and dominate everyone else. Within each party, a small group determines the candidates and formulates the "platform." A minority of the people decides which party will take office and a tiny minority writes the laws and takes all the important decisions.

The Zapatistas are also fully aware of the current debate about the situation and prospects of the nation-state itself. Nowadays it is a conglomerate of economic and professional corporations. Each one promotes its products and services and takes care of its own interests. Periodically, the parties bring together all the stockholders—business people, union leaders, professional associations, churches, corporations—to elect a board. Democratic process is conspicuously absent inside the parties. Electoral victories are determined by marketing techniques in a media circus. Once legitimized by the vote, the winners barely take note of people's opinions. That's what leads to disenchantment with the ballot box, which attracts fewer and fewer voters.

The Zapatistas observe that the nation-state, within which the economic society was organized and promoted in both capitalist and socialist forms, is now exposed to a two-pronged attack by transnational forces and institutions, or by internal groups with ethnic, religious or ideological claims. They seem clearly interested in the different notions of nation and state, abandoned after the creation of the nation-state, which different groups are now reclaiming. They appreciate the efforts attempting to transform the homogeneous state (monocultural or multicultural) into a plural state, according to diverse conceptions.[12] But they have not committed their will or their discourse to any specific political design, suggested as a substitute for the "democratic" nation-state. They seem convinced that "society as a whole" (the general design of a society) is always the outcome of a multiplicity of initiatives, forces, and impulses—not the fruit of social engineering or theoretical designs. They appeal to sociological and political imagination, while emphasizing that what is really needed is the full participation of everyone, particularly those until now excluded, in the concepts and practices that will give a new shape to the society and its political regime. One critical aspect in this attitude is that it associates the initiative to the living present, instead of linking

it to any design or conception of the future, thus hanging people's lives from promises and expectations about an abstraction associated with social engineering.

This attitude is increasingly shared by other groups. The Congress of Ecuarunari, for example, the largest organization in the Indigenous peoples network CONAIE in Ecuador, recently broke its alliance with the government. Its president, Humberto Cholango, pointed out:

> We have always been autonomous from all governments, and of course from the current one that has swindled the people by imposing neoliberal policies… The principles of the indigenous movement are more important than any post of minister of undersecretary, and that fact can't be revoked (Esteva 2003, 22).

At the Latin American conference on "Indigenous Movements: Resistance and Alternatives," held in Mexico City at the end of May 2003, the participants repeated this message over and over again. José Naín, Mapuche from Chile, said: "On the road to self-determination we do not wish to be inside the state, rather we wish to surround the state" (Esteva 2003: 22).

The indigenous movement underlined the Aymara from Bolivia, Felipe Quispe, must have two arms: one framed within the state and the other outside it. Félix Patzi, also from Bolivia, observed:

> They say that democracy is not perfect but it is the best system. We say that the communal system isn't perfect either, but it is better than democracy… In the communal system, political leadership, the administration of justice and decision-making do not lie within an individual or a group, rather in the community. The vested authority is the expression of community decision-mak-

ing. The system is based on truth, trust and commitment. What is said is what is done (Esteva 2003: 22).

In their own regions, where they are in control, the Zapatistas seem to be clearing a path in which democracy means presence, rather than representation.

Beyond Both Universalism and Relativism

The idea of *One World* is an old western dream, project and design, whose origins can be traced back to the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Apostle Paul.

> The Enlightenment secularized this heritage and turned it into a humanist creed. Neither class nor sex, neither religion nor race count before human nature, as they didn't count before God. Thus the universality of the Son ship of God was recast as the universality of human dignity. From then on, 'humanity' became the common denominator uniting all peoples, causing differences in skin color, beliefs and social customs to decline in significance (Sachs 1992: 103).

Accepting the assumption that there is a fundamental sameness in all human beings, the construction of *One World* was adopted in the West as a moral obligation. It became a destructive and colonizing adventure attempting to absorb and dissolve, in the same movement, all the different traditions and forms of existence on this planet. This old project, supported by all the forms of the cross and the sword, is now carried on under US hegemony. At the end of the Second World War, such hegemony used the emblem of development (Esteva 1992). The emblem of globalization substituted it at the end of the cold war, to promote with more violence than ever a universal culturicide.

The current global project is economic in nature: it attempts the transmogrification of every man and women on Earth into *homo economicus*, the possessive and competitive individual born in the West, who is the social foundation of capitalism (and socialism), what makes possible the social relationships defining it. This economic project has a political face: formal or representative democracy. And a moral or ethical face: human rights. (When the economic project requires it, these "faces" are abandoned) (Esteva and Prakash 1998).

"*Enough*!" said the Zapatistas to all this. For centuries, their communities entrenched themselves in their own places, resisting colonizers and developers. Such cultural resistance often expressed forms of localism or even fundamentalism. Through atrocious experiences, the Zapatista communities learned that in the era of globalization no localism will survive and no cultural resistance is enough. They also learned that capital now has more appetite than ever, but not enough stomach to digest all those that it attempts to control. Millions of people, as a consequence, and clearly most indigenous people, are becoming dispensable.

The Zapatistas transformed their resistance into a struggle for liberation. They remembered the experience of Emiliano Zapata, who gave them their name. In 1914, when the peasant and indigenous armies occupied Mexico's capital, after the defeat of the dictatorship bringing them to extinction, Zapata and Villa, the two main leaders of the revolution, fell into perplexity. Their uprising was not to seize power and govern the country. They wanted Land and Freedom. They thus came back to their own places, dismantled the *haciendas* of the big landowners exploiting them and started to enjoy the land and freedom they conquered through their struggle. Four years later, both of them were assassinated. True, thanks to the revolution most peasants and indigenous people got some land, but step-by-step they lost freedom and autonomy in the political regime established after the armed struggle.

Today's Zapatistas, as the former, are not interested in seizing power and governing the country. But they learned the lesson of their predecessors. They are clearly interested in the kind of regime to be established in the country. It should permanently and fully respect their land, their autonomy, their freedom, their radical democracy. They do not attempt to impose on others their own conceptions and ways. They only hope that such a regime would be really conceived and constructed by *all* Mexicans— not only a few, not only the elite or a revolutionary vanguard. And that such a regime can be defined by the harmonious coexistence of different peoples and cultures.

This position challenges the assumption that there is a fundamental sameness in all "human beings." There are *human invariants*—what distinguishes us from other species—but not *cultural universals*: each culture perceives and conceives the world and even those invariants in a different way. This radical rejection of all forms of universalism does not imply to surrender to the risky adventure of cultural relativism. It assumes instead, firmly and courageously, cultural *relativity*; the fact that no person or culture can assume or represent the totality of human experience; that there are not one or many truths (truth is incommensurable); that the only legitimate, coherent and sensible attitude before the real plurality of the world is radical pluralism (See Panikkar 1995, 1996, and Vachon 1995).

The Zapatistas resisted the secular, liberal temptation, of "liberating" themselves from their own culture in order to adopt some "universal" ideologies or values. Well affirmed in their own cultures and communities, they opened themselves to wide coalitions of the discontented. Their *localization* is thus radically different to both globalization and localism. It invites those still searching for a change in the frame of *One World* to create a whole new world, in which many worlds can be embraced. It is an invitation to go *más allá* (beyond) mere cultural resistance or economic or political claims (in a struggle for a bigger piece of the existing cake), towards an epic of transfor-

mation open to many cultures. It is an invitation, not preaching or instructing. It is not a sermon or a lesson, but a gesture.

The Zapatistas are fully aware that in the current situation any local reality is directly and immediately global, in the sense that it is exposed to interaction with global forces and processes. To be deeply immersed in strictly local affairs, to rigorously deal and cope with them, in the way everyone wants and can do, implies dealing with the intertwining, interpenetration and interdependence of all localities. This kind of awareness has compelled many of the discontented with the neoliberal shape of the global project to conceive alternative globalizations. The Zapatistas resist such temptation. They are fully and deeply committed with the articulation of all resistances, with wide coalitions of the discontented, with the gathering of all rebellions. But they do not attempt to subsume all the struggles in a single definition of the present and the future, in a single doctrine, slogan or ideology. They are aware that the shared construction of a real *por-venir* (the world to come) for all those discontented, increasingly dispensable for capital, can only be realized in a world in which many worlds can be embraced. They know that the time has come to bury forever the dream and project of constructing *One World*, which has been the pretext of all colonialisms and today nourishes forms of fundamentalism whose level of violence has no precedents. What is emerging, instead, can be expressed in the formula "One No, Many Yeses" (Midnight Notes 1997, Kingsnorth 2003).

Zapatistas and Zapatismo

The record of the Zapatista impact until now is pretty impressive.

• The Zapatistas were a decisive factor in the dismantling of the oldest authoritarian regime in the world, Mexico's *ancién regime*. They created an option in the profound social and political transformation which started after the collapse of that regime.[13] Autonomous municipalities, in different parts of Mexico, and other initiatives inspired by the Zapatistas have now increasing visibility and political space. Their convening power grew from the few thousands of the first week of 1994, to the three to four million for the national and international consultation of 1996, to the more than 40 million (40% of Mexican population), for the 2001 March.

• The situation in Chiapas changed dramatically; thousand of peasants, mostly indigenous, got the land they have been struggling for and a new balance of political forces is redefining the social fabric.

• In the territories occupied by the Zapatistas, in spite of military encirclement and continual paramilitary threats, they have been doing what they said from the very beginning that they wanted to do: after reclaiming their commons, they are regenerating their own forms of governance and their art of living and dying. They have been able to operate autonomously, improving their living conditions, without any kind of services or funds from the government. They are in fact living beyond the logic of the market and the State, beyond the logic of capital.

• All over the world, there are gestures, changes, mobilizations, that seem to be inspired by the Zapatistas. The highly visible social movements against globalization, neoliberalism, or war, quote the Zapatistas as source of inspiration and support them. Thousand of committees, which call themselves "Zapatista committees," operate across the world. They were founded as an expression of solidarity with the Zapatista cause. They are still ready to offer such solidarity and some of them are actively engaged in doing something with or for the Zapatistas. Most of them are rather involved in local or issue struggles: *for* their own dreams, projects, initiatives, or *against* a specific or general development or injustice: a dam, a road, a dumping ground, a McDonalds... or a war, a policy, a government...

One must go back very far in history to find another political initiative with similar global repercussions. Wallerstein found in Gandhi and Mandela points of comparison.[14] But a real historic equivalent would require going much farther back.

While the Zapatistas affirm today that Zapatismo is stronger than ever, the political classes, the media, many analysts, even some sympathizers, are beginning to consider that the Zapatistas are history. Parallel to the extensive celebrations organized around the world for their 10th and 20th anniversary, there were many attempts to organize their funeral. It was said that they failed as a social and political movement. That far from an improvement, the material conditions of the Zapatista communities have deteriorated under their leadership and control. That the Zapatistas are now increasingly isolated in four municipalities in Chiapas, and are basically irrelevant in the national or international political scene.

The Zapatistas have frequently used a very noisy "strategy of silence" which usually generates wide bewilderment, and suspicions about their political death. They have radically aban-

doned the conventional political arena. They openly reject all political parties and refuse to have any contact with the government, both for its services or funds—which they reject—or for a dialogue—since the government has not honored its word and signature in the San Andrés Accord.[15] They refuse to participate in the electoral process. All these elements contribute to explain the conventional, reactionary or even sympathetic perception that the Zapatistas are history, that the peak of their movement and initiatives is over. On January 11, 2005, President Fox declared in Chiapas that "Zapatismo is already falling behind" (*quedzado en el pasado*). The very noisy public reactions he provoked with such a statement showed that it is Fox, not the Zapatistas, who is falling behind, becoming earlier than expected a lame duck. "We are just beginning," Commander Abraham said recently (Muñoz 2003: 77). He is probably right. The depth of the radicality of the Zapatistas, and at the same time their amazing restraint, make it particularly difficult to appreciate their situation and prospects.

Words are windows of perception, matters of thought. Depending upon the words we use, we see, we think, we act. They form the statements with which we govern ourselves and others. Words always enfleshed in their behavior have been the main weapon of the Zapatistas. Using brilliantly and effectively their words, they have been dismantling the dominant discourse. They continually undermine the institutional system of production of the dominant statements, of the established "truth." They thus shake, peacefully and democratically, the very foundation of the existing Power/Knowledge system.[16] While this system hides within spectacular shows of strength its increasing fragility, the Zapatistas exploit for their struggle its profound cracks, denounce it as a structure of domination and control, and begin the construction of an alternative.

The importance of Zapatismo derives from its grassroots radicality (Esteva and Prakash 1998). It operates as a riverbed for the flow of growing discontent with conventional

organizations, political parties, and governments, particularly to resist the neoliberal globalization as the current form of capital expansion.

The Zapatistas opposed globalization when it was universally perceived as an ineluctable reality, a necessary path, a historical fact. By revealing, before anyone else, that the emperor had no clothes, the Zapatistas awakened those intuiting the situation and yet not daring to recognize it. In showing an alternative, they created an opportunity to escape from the intellectual and political straitjacket in which the dominant "truths" had trapped us.

The radical promise of the Zapatistas is not a new ideological construction of possible futures. It is continually self-fulfilled in their deeds, in their daily behavior, as a redefinition of hope. Their position is not equivalent to expectation, as the conviction that something will turn out well. It expresses the conviction that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. "Hope is that rejection of conformity and defeat" (The Zapatistas 1998: 13).

Such attitude, defining Zapatismo, is called dignity by the Zapatistas. "Dignity is that nation without nationality, that rainbow that is also a bridge, that murmur of the heart no matter what blood lives it, that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, customs, and wars" (The Zapatistas 1998: 13). They are fully aware that "the expanding dignity of each man and each human relationship must necessarily challenge existing systems" (Illich 1972: 18). Their localization is a feasible and effective alternative to both localism and globalization. Their autonomy challenges the centralism of the state, marginalizes the economy and resists modern and capitalist individualization promoted by both internal and external colonizers. Rooted in their dignity, the Zapatistas have been erecting some landmarks and signposts in what looks as a net of plural paths (Zapatismo). Whoever walks by these paths can see, with the diffuse and intense quality of a rainbow, a large range of political perspectives that

herald a new social order, beyond both modernity and post modernity (Esteva and Prakash 1998), beyond the economic society (be it capitalist or socialist), beyond formal democracy and the nation state. *Más allá* (beyond) the current conditions of the world and their intellectual, ideological and institutional underpinnings.

The Zapatistas seem increasingly to be ordinary men and women with an extraordinary behavior. They are one of a kind, and at the same time they are typical: they continue inspiring hearts and heads but only exemplify thousands of initiatives now being taken at the grassroots everywhere. The Zapatistas are no longer the Zapatismo circulating in the world.

At the Intercontinental Encounter against Neoliberalism in 1996, the Zapatistas told all the participants that they were not together to change the world, something quite difficult if not impossible, but *to create a whole new world*. The phrase was received with fascination and enthusiasm... but also skepticism: it appeared unfeasible and romantic. Step by step, however, as soon as many people started to escape from the dominant intellectual and ideological straightjackets, they discovered in themselves a dignity similar to that of the Zapatistas and started to walk their own path.

Today's Zapatismo is no longer in the hands of the Zapatistas. And it may ignore its original or current source of inspiration.

The Transition to Hope

I was talking with Doña Trinidad, a magnificent old woman of Morelia, one of the Zapatista communities most affected and harassed by both the military and the paramilitary. I wanted to know how they were feeling in such difficult conditions. She told me, smiling: "We are still hungry. We are still threatened and harassed. But now we have hope. And that changes everything." I can imagine the terrible feeling of living under such atrocious oppression and thinking that your children and grand-

children will continue suffering it. If you can see the light at the end of the tunnel, if you can nourish some hope, restrictions become bearable and life livable.

The Zapatistas have brought *prosperity* to the communities, if we reclaim the original meaning of the word: from the Latin *pro spere*, according to hope. For ten years they have organized their own life with no dependence on the State, whose services, proposals, programs or projects they reject, and they have kept the market at their margin, instead of hanging from it their very existence. They are still dealing with too many restrictions, none of which is a novelty for them. But they have found the path that allows them to overcome one by one of those restrictions, as they walk their path.

Hope is the very essence of popular movements (Lummis 1996). Nonconformity and discontent are not enough. Neither is critical awareness enough. People mobilize themselves when they think that their action may bring about a change, when they have hope, when they share the conviction that something makes sense.

With words and deeds, with amazing talent, imagination and courage, the Zapatistas brought a new hope to the planet. Millions of people seem now to be sharing and nourishing it. In celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Zapatista uprising and the twentieth anniversary of the original initiative, we all are really celebrating the *beginning* of Zapatismo.

Endnotes

[1] Edited version of an essay written for Multiversity & Citizens International.

[2] Welcoming words by the Comandancia General of EZLN, at the First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity against Neoliberalism, spoken by the respected major Ana María, on 27th July, 1996. The Zapatistas 1998, 24.

[3] Zapatista communiqués are published timely and regularly in a dozen languages. They immediately appear on many internet web pages. (There are thousands of web pages about the Zapatistas and hundreds of thou-

sands of references. Google cannot stop when you click Zapatistas. I am including in the References a list of the main web pages). The books containing communiqués and other materials generated by the Zapatistas are published in multiple languages and fill several meters of a library shelf. The books, essays, and articles published *about* the Zapatistas may fill a whole middle seize library. News about the Zapatistas appear regularly in the media, which continually attempt to forget them but are forced to bring them back to the front page every time they take an important initiative.

[4] Unless indicated otherwise, all the quotations come from Zapatista communiqués of July and August 2003.

[5] The theoretical and political history of the expression "civil society" is complex and convoluted. During the last twenty years the people redefined its meaning and uses. It was used in Poland, the Philippines, Argentina and other countries to dismantle authoritarian regimes. It was also used to allude to the "third sector," organisations existing outside the market (capital) or the State. And it basically expressed the autonomous action of the people, at the grassroots. In Mexico, the epic of the victims of the Mexico City earthquake in 1985 and the Zapatista uprising would be the key episodes giving new content and meaning to the use of the expression. See Aubry (1994) and Esteva (2001).

[6] Such mutation can be examined in Gandhian terms. For Gandhi, "non-violence is the greatest virtue, cowardice the greatest vice." The weak may have no option but violence or passive resistance, the non-violence of the weak. What is needed, assumed Gandhi, is the non-violence of the strong. He did not see any reason for 300,000 Hindus to be afraid of 150,000 British. Being the strong, they should resort to non-violence. (See the section on Non-violence in *Gandhi: Essential Writings,* Ed. by V.V.Ramana Murti, (New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1970), particularly pp. 170-174 and 198). With this approach, it is possible to see how the Zapatistas were using violence when they were weak and resorted to non-violence when the uprising of the "civil society" made them strong.

[7] The neologism "globaphobics" is usually used to allude to people, movements and initiatives organized against globalization itself or against the neoliberal shape of globalization. They got increasing visibility after their mobilizations in Seattle. The World Social Forum is the best, current expression of "globaphobics," using the slogan: "Another World is Possible."

[8] This impact is in fact mysterious. He speaks in a very low voice, without exaltation, mocking himself all the time, always ending his speeches in an anti-climactic way. He looks as the opposite of any leader or demagogue. In person, it becomes very evident how much he abhors a power position. Would this be the secret of his fascination for an audience tired of the rhetoric and attitudes of politicians and publicists?

[9] In the literature generated by the Zapatistas, through their spokesperson, allusions to legends and stories often appear. Don Durito de la Lacandona, an audacious and enlightened beetle who gives contemporary meaning to Don Quixote (the *Subcomandante* would be his Sancho Panza), was "a memorable literary creation" for Octavio Paz, the Nobel Prize winner. The fictional encounters with "old Antonio" allow us to follow, through his stories and allegories, the threads of indigenous communal wisdom. They operate as a bridge that allows the urban modern mentality, more or less westernized, to take a look at the mystery of alternative worldviews which are beyond its conceptual system. One advantage of a bridge is that it allows walking in both directions.

[10] I am borrowing the expression "constituent force" from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000), who have renovated its meaning, while taking a critical distance of the book, which, for example, seems unable to grasp both the nature and deeds of Zapatismo. The notion can only be understood as the counterpart of the constituted powers, as the force constituting them. In that sense, it seems inappropriate to describe what the Zapatistas are saying and doing. The "political force" they are talking about should control the constituted powers and in time marginalize and dismantle them, not to constitute them. In spite of this, I am using the expression to underline the fact that, even in the "democratic" structure of the nation-state, the people themselves are the only source of legitimate "power." The Zapatistas do not use this expression, for good reasons.

[11] Since November 3 it has been said time and again that it was the highest turnout. It was, in absolute terms, given the demographic increase. In the 1960s, the percentage was above the 60s: 63% in 1960, 61.9% in 1964 and 60.8% in 1968. The following years it was in the lower 50s, with the highest in 1972 (55.2%) and 1992 (55.9%) and the exception of 1996 (49%, the lowest). The turnout of 2004, (59.1%), is thus in the rank of the postwar era. (Figures of the Federal Election Commission as disseminated by Associated Press).

[12] The notion of multiculturalism does not modify the homogeneous character of the nation-state. It is based on the idea of sameness (the possessive individual, *homo economicus*, as the fundamental atom of the social structure). It relegates to a secondary condition, adjective, cultural differences. Instead of solving the problem, multiculturalism aggravates it. The *plural* state (not merely multicultural) is a step in the appropriate direction, in spite of its limitations. See Villoro (1997, 1998) and Esteva (2001).

[13] Mexico had the oldest authoritarian regime in the world. A Mafia-like group, the "revolutionary family," the heirs of the 1910 revolutionaries articulated in the PRI—the "official" party- governed the country for seventy years. It was a kind of renewable monarchy, substituting the king every

six years through manipulated and fraudulent elections. Such regime is over. The current government follows the same neoliberal orientation of its predecessors, but to implement its policies and programs it can no longer use the tools of the *ancient régime,* which in fact is dead. There is no real substitute. What is now at stake is the character of the new regime that will emerge after the current transition. Restoration seems impossible, even if the PRI wins again in what now may be "clean" elections. Conventional democratic competition between political parties—a novelty in Mexico— is compounded with often ferocious struggles between the several Mafia-like groups remaining in the PRI. No one can take for granted that the dominant forces will succeed in consolidating a "neoliberal republic," in the US model. The Zapatistas created an option.

True, the regime change cannot be fully or exclusively attributed to the Zapatistas. Many different forces struggled for years for what they called the democratisation of the country, i.e., rooting in it a formal, representative democracy. But the fact is that the Zapatista uprising produced a dramatic change in the political balance of forces. The political opposition got in a month, after the Zapatista uprising, more concessions from the government than in the previous fifty years. The situation of the former President Salinas illustrates the situation. In December, 1993, he was at the peak of this glory. "We will be in power for the next 25 years," his government told a high level commission of Japanese investors in those days. "I did not commit the mistake of Gorbachov," Salinas explained. "The economic reform should be fully implemented, before starting the political reform." Salinas was universally recognised as a global leader, who understood the direction of the new global winds and was bringing his country out of underdevelopment. He was thus *the* candidate to be the first director of WTO, the organisation quintessentially defining globalisation. A few months later, Salinas was forced to live in a kind of exile in Ireland. His brother is still in jail. His policies, once universally celebrated, are now considered fundamentally wrong, while Mexico confronted what the IMF Director called the "first financial crisis of the XXI century."

[14] The comparison of Gandhi-Mandela-Marcos (Wallerstein 2001) emphasises the element of non-violence and offers some interesting angles of reflection. However, in fundamental ways this comparison distorts the analysis of Zapatismo, reducing it to Marcos.

[15] The San Andrés Accords, signed after the tense and complex negotiations between the Federal Government and the Zapatistas, defined a new social and political relationship between the indigenous peoples and the Mexican state and society. (See Aubry 2003, Esteva 2003 and Hernández 1999).

[16] See the works of Michael Foucault, for a good description of this system, its role on the construction of modern society and its regime of power, and the current shapes of the rebellion of "subordinated knowledge" as political uprising. See, in particular, (1980, 1984, 2002).

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ZAPATISMO URBANO

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I

I am not an indigenous peasant. Probably you, dear reader, are not an indigenous peasant either. And yet this issue revolves around an indigenous peasant uprising.

The Zapatistas of Chiapas are peasants. Most of us who read and write this journal are city-dwellers. Our experiences are far removed from those of the Zapatistas of Chiapas. Our living conditions are very different from those of the Zapatistas of Chiapas, and our forms of struggle too. And yet the resonance of the Zapatista uprising in the cities has been enormous. Why? What does Zapatismo mean in the cities?

There have been two forms of reaction in the cities. The first is a reaction of solidarity: the struggle of the indigenous of Chiapas is a just struggle and we give it all the material and political support possible. Solidarity defines the struggle as being the struggle of a "them," and "they" are indians who live in Chiapas. I do not dismiss this reaction, but it is not what interests me here.

The second reaction goes much further. Here it is not a question of solidarity with the struggle of others, but of understanding that the Zapatistas and we are part of the same struggle. The Zapatistas of Chiapas do not give us a model that we can apply to our part of the struggle, but we see their forms of struggle as an inspiration for the development of our forms of struggle. In that sense we can speak of the spread of Zapatismo to the cities, the development of an urban Zapatismo,

for which the EZLN is not a model but a constant point of reference.

There is no linear progression here. It is not the spread of an organisation that we are speaking of (though certainly the spread of the Frente Zapatista within Mexico is part of the process). Neither is it really a question of the spread of an influence from Chiapas. It is not that the decisions of the EZLN have an influence on struggles in Rome or Buenos Aires. It is rather a question of resonance and inspiration. The Zapatista uprising has had an enormous impact in the cities of the world because the themes that the EZLN raise and the orientations they suggest have resonated strongly with the preoccupations and directions of people in the cities. They have been a constant source of inspiration because they have formulated with particular clarity (not just in the communiqués but in their actions) directions and themes that were already present in the struggles of the cities.

The purpose of speaking of urban Zapatismo is twofold. On the one hand it is a way of focusing more closely on this process. What is this resonance? Is it an imagined or a real resonance? What are the differences between Zapatismo in the cities and Zapatismo in the countryside? What are the practical problems for the development of this sort of politics in the cities?

But secondly, to speak of urban Zapatismo is to speak of Zapatismo as a challenge. The Zapatistas do not ask for our sympathy or our solidarity. To commemorate the ten and twenty years of the EZLN should not be a celebration of them, but a challenge to us. They ask us to join in their struggle for a world of dignity.[1] How do we do it, we who live in the cities, we who write and read this journal?

II

The Zapatista uprising has been a fundamental point of reference for urban struggles over the last ten years. And yet there are obvious differences in the conditions and forms of struggle. We who live in the cities and look to the Zapatistas are not organized as an army. We do not live within the sort of communal support structures that exist in Chiapas. We do not have land on which to grow the basic foodstuffs necessary for survival, and we are not, on the whole, accustomed to the levels of complete poverty that is the daily experience of the Zapatistas of Chiapas.

There are aspects of the Zapatista uprising that have not found any echo in the cities. We urban Zapatistas generally do not want to be organised as an army and often reject militarism as a form of organisation and concept of struggle. In the current debates in Italy, the Zapatistas are even held up as a model in arguing for a complete rejection of all violence. The other aspect of the Zapatismo of Chiapas that has found little resonance in the cities is their use of national symbols—the national flag, the playing of the national anthem. The urban-Zapatista movement tends not to be nationalist and in many cases it is profoundly anti-nationalist. It has been not so much an inter-national movement as a global movement, a movement of struggle for which global capitalism and not the nation-state has been the principal point of reference.

What, then, are the aspects of the Zapatista uprising that have found echo in the cities of the world? The most obvious is the mere fact of rebellion— the fact that the Zapatistas rose up when the time for rebellion seemed to have passed, their ¡*Ya Basta*! to a world that is so obviously obscene.

But it is more than that. It is also that their ¡*Ya Basta*! turns too against a Left that had grown stale and stiff and alienating. It is the rejection both of revolutionary vanguardism and

of state-oriented reformism, the rejection of the party as an organisational form and of the pursuit of power as an aim.

The rejection of the old forms of left-wing politics leaves us with an enormous question mark. That itself is important. The Zapatista saying "*caminamos preguntando*" acquires a particular resonance because we are conscious that we do not know the way forward. The world around us makes us scream, but where do we go with our scream, what do we do with our scream?[2] The politics of rebellion is a politics of searching—not for the correct line, but for some sort of way forward, some way of making our scream effective. There is no party to tell us which way to go, so we must find it for ourselves.

The politics of asking leads on to certain forms of organisation. The organisational forms of the Zapatistas of Chiapas are characterised by a tension, as they themselves emphasize. This is the tension concentrated in their principle of "*mandar obedeciendo.*" On the one hand, they are organised as an army, with all that that means in terms of vertical lines of command. On the other hand, the army is subject to the control of the village councils, where discussion and consensus are the guiding principles.

The rejection of the party as an organisational form has meant (inevitably, perhaps) the revival of councilism, the revival of the council or assembly.[3] The council is the traditional form for expressing revolt which arises again and again in rebellions, from the Paris Commune to the Neighbourhood Councils of the recent revolt in Argentina. It is an expressive form of organisation, one that seeks to articulate the anger and worries of the participants. This can be contrasted with the party form, which is not expressive but instrumental, designed to attain the end of winning state power. As an expressive form, the council tends to be horizontal in its structures, encouraging the free participation of all and aiming to reach consensus in its decisions. Seen in this way, the council is not so much a formal structure as an organisational orientation. This organisational

orientation—the emphasis on horizontality, the encouragement of the expression of people's concerns, whether or not they are "revolutionary" or "political" —has been a characteristic feature of the current wave of urban struggle: not just of the neighbourhood councils of Argentina, but equally of some of the *piquetero* groups, of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, of the Centri Sociali of Rome, Milan or Turin, of the *altermundista* movement in general.

Councilism is related to the question of community. In the Zapatista areas of Chiapas the community exists, not as an idyll to be romanticised, but simply because most of the people of a village have known one another all their lives and because there are established practices of common work and decision-making. In the cities, there is often very little sense of community. The people who work together do not necessarily live close together, and people who live close to one another often have no contact. The scream of protest that we feel is often experienced as an isolated and hopeless scream, a scream that we share at best with a handful of friends. The (re)construction of community bonds has, therefore, been a central concern of the movement in the cities. The construction of social centres or alternative cafés, the coming together of people in informal and changing movements create new patterns of community and mutual trust which are part and parcel of the development of councilist forms of organisation.

Perhaps the central challenge of urban Zapatismo is the challenge of autonomy. Autonomy is simply the other side of saying that we want to change the world without taking power. Rejecting the pursuit of state power means rejection of the party as a form of organisation (understanding the party as a state-oriented form of organisation). But it means much more than that. It means also a change in the understanding of social conflict or class struggle.[4] The traditional concept sees class struggle as a struggle for power, a struggle for power which inevitably determines the agenda, the rhythms and the forms

of struggle. Confrontation is then the pivot of social struggle. If, however, we say that we do not want to take power, then the whole conception of struggle shifts. What is central now is not the confrontation with the other side (capital) but the construction of our own world. We try to focus on our own doing, to push confrontation to one side. This is still class struggle, it is still confrontation with capital (inevitably, since capital is the imposition of an alien control of our activity). But in so far as possible we seize the initiative, we seize the agenda. We make capital follow our agenda, so it becomes clear that the aggression comes from them, not from us. We cannot be autonomous in a capitalist society, but we can push our autonomy as far as possible. Capital is the negation of autonomy, the ever-repeated negation of our self-determination. (As part of this, the state is the ever-repeated negation of the council.) If we see confrontation as the axis of struggle, then we are anticipating and therefore participating in this negation. By making the development of our own creativity (our own power-to-do) the centre of the movement, capital is revealed as a parasite, forced all the time to run after us. This is illustrated by the Caracoles, the Zapatista establishment of their own Juntas de Buen Gobierno,[5] in which the Zapatistas shrug off the state, turn their back on the state, neither demanding anything of it nor openly confronting it, just doing their own thing.

But doing our own thing, developing our own creativity, is not the same in the cities as in the countryside. We do not possess land on which we can grow even the most basic food crops. It may be possible to occupy land for these purposes (as some of the *piquetero* groups in Argentina are beginning to do), but for most urban groups this is not an option. In order to develop our autonomy we are forced into contradictory situations, in which it is much better to recognise those contradictions rather than to gloss over them, just as the Zapatistas of Chiapas have had the great merit of recognising from the beginning the contradiction of their military organisation in a

movement for human dignity. Urban autonomous groups survive either on the basis of state subsidies (sometimes forced by the groups themselves as in the case of the *piqueteros* who use the roadblocks to force the government to give money to the unemployed) or on the basis of some mixture of occasional or regular paid employment and state subsidies.[6] Thus, many urban groups are composed of a mixture of people in regular employment, of people who are by choice or by necessity in irregular or occasional employment and of those who (again by choice or necessity) are unemployed, often dependent on state subsidies or some sort of market activity for their survival. These different forms of dependency on forces that we do not control (on capital) pose problems and limitations that should be recognised. At the same time, the significance of these limitations obviously depends on the collective strength of the groups: in the case of the *piqueteros*, for example, the payment of the state subsidies was imposed by road blocks and administered by the groups themselves.

All these different forms of dependency on capital are imposed by property, by the fact that all the wealth produced by human doing is congealed in the form of property which confronts and excludes us. The limiting of our autonomous self-determination appears in the form of property, behind which stand the forces of law and order which defend property. We seem to be forced, then, back into a logic of confrontation in which we lose the initiative, or in which we are forced to focus on winning power so that we can control the police and change the laws on property. If we exclude this course (simply because control of the state tends to become control by the state), how can we go forward? Possibly by defetishising property, by seeing that property is not an established thing, but a constant process of appropriating, a verb and not a noun. The problem then is not to conceptualise our own action in terms of the challenge to property, but to focus on our own construc-

tion of an alternative world and think how to avoid the capitalist appropriation of the products of our own doing.

The problems indicated all point to the dangers of confusing an emphasis on autonomy with a concept of micropolitics. The notion of autonomy, as understood here, points to the centrality of our own doing and the development of our own power to do: if we see the world from this perspective, then it is clear that capital is a parasite and that the so-called "rulers" simply run after us all the time trying to appropriate the results of our creative doing. The problem of revolution is to shake off these parasites, to prevent them appropriating our creativity and its results, to make them irrelevant. This struggle does not require any central organisation (and certainly not any orientation towards the state) but its strength does depend on its massive character. What any particular group can achieve clearly depends on the strength of an entire movement pushing in the same or similar directions. The strength of the component groups depends on the strength of the movement, just as the strength of the movement depends on the strength of the component groups.

III

However we think of revolution, we are faced with the task of dissolving Reality. The transformation of the world means moving from a world ruled by objective reality to a world in which subjective creativity is the centre, in which humanity becomes its "own true sun."[7] The struggle for such a world means a constant process of criticism, a process of undermining the objectivity of reality and showing that it depends absolutely for its existence on subjective creation. Our struggle is a struggle against the world-that-is, with its rules of logic that tell us that there-is-no-alternative, with its language of prose that closes our horizons.

The poetry of the Zapatista uprising (of their communiqués and their actions) is not peripheral to their movement, not the external decoration of a fundamentally serious movement, but central to their whole struggle. The fact that the Zapatistas of Chiapas (and to some extent other Latin American indigenous movements) have made such an impact in the urban struggles of the world has much to do with the language they use. This is not just a question of pretty words or of Marcos's undoubted literary skills. It is above all that they offer a different way of seeing the world, a vision that breaks with the dominant logic of there-is-no-alternative.[8] Poetry (and indeed other forms of artistic expression) have come to play a central role in anti-capitalist struggle: poetry not as pretty words but as struggle against the prosaic logic of the world, poetry as the call of a world that does not yet exist.

Is this a dangerous romanticism? Are the Zapatistas unwittingly leading the rebellious youth of the world into forms of action that are dangerously unrealistic? Recently, as part of the 10/20 celebrations, the Zapatistas have been emphasising the centrality of organisation in their struggle: is this a way of countering the impression that their struggle is just poetry, just the power of the word?

Perhaps there is an element of romanticism in the resonance of the Zapatista struggle. Sometimes, for Zapatista supporters who visit the Zapatista communities in Chiapas, there is undoubtedly a clash between their expectations and the reality of their experience. In general, however, this is not the case. Those actively involved in struggle, whether in the cities or in the countryside, are aware of the difficulties they face and of the importance of organisation. The poetry of Zapatismo does not deflect people from the question of organisation. What it does rather is to open up perspectives in a world that seems so terribly closed. More than that, it suggests forms of action that break with the logic of capital and are more difficult for capital to integrate into the texture of domination.

The accusation of romanticism really has to do with the question of power. 'Realism' is identified with a perspective that focuses on power and sees organisation and action as being *instruments* to achieve certain changes (whether minor changes or the radical change of society). What this realist perspective fails to see is that the very instrumentality of the approach leads to the adoption of forms of action and of organisation that defuse and demobilise the movement for change. It is precisely because instrumentalist realism has failed to achieve the objective of radical social change that people everywhere have turned away from this approach to forms of action that are *expressive* rather than instrumental. Part of this is the turn away from the goal of taking state power and from the party as an organisational form. The poetry of the movement is part of the same process.

Will this poetic romanticism prove more realistic than the previous socialist realism? We do not know. What we know is that the realism of power politics failed to achieve radical social change and that hope lies in breaking reality, in establishing our own reality, our own logic, our own language, our own colours, our own music, our own time, our own space. That is the core of the struggle not only against "them" but against ourselves, that is the core of the Zapatista resonance.

Endnotes

[1] On the question of dignity, see Holloway (1998).

[2] On the politics of the scream, see Holloway (2002)

[3] See for example, Ouviña (2003) or Zibechi (2003).

[4] On this, see, for example, Holloway (2004), Zibechi (2003), Colectivo Situaciones/ MTD Solano (2002), Aubenas and Benasayag (2003).

[5] In August 2003 the Zapatistas established a number of Juntas de Buen Gobierno. This involved a reorganization of their own forms of government. One of the most important implications of this reorganisation is that, after years of unsuccessfully calling on the state to implement the Acuerdos de San Andrés on indigenous rights, the Zapatistas in effect declared that they would no longer make demands on the government but simply carry on with the implementation of the agreements themselves. In

effect, they have turned their back on the state.

[6] For a discussion of the practice of the *piqueteros* and especially of the MTD Solano, see Colectivo Situaciones/ MTD Solano (2002). This is one of the most enriching discussions of the possibilities and difficulties of urban Zapatismo that I know.

[7] See Marx (1975, p.176): "The criticism of religion disillusions man to make him think and act and shape his reality like a man who has been disillusioned and has come to reason, so that he will resolve around himself and therefore round his true sun. Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves round man as long as he does not revolve round himself."

[8] Mrs. Thatcher's famous phrase to explain the necessity of subordinating politics to the market.

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"ZAPATISMO" AND GLOBALISATION AS SOCIAL RELATIONS

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In this paper I want to discuss some aspects of Zapatista politics that bring together a de-fetishised understanding of global capitalist markets and a politics of empowerment and liberation. I argue that from their injection on to the scene of world politics in 1994, the Zapatistas have shown a deep understanding of the core nature of capitalist social relations, far more clearly than traditional orthodox radical interpretations of capitalist phenomena, which regards them mostly as collection of things rather than emerging from social relations and processes. Correspondently, their politics have offered fresh and insightful coordinates that provide a general framework empowering individuals and communities to invent their own politics and construct alternative social relations.

The Zapatista's politics in other words is not a politics that closes avenues by providing lines, but offers horizons within which people in communication explore their own emancipatory paths. What is clear in "Zapatismo" is that the terrain of emancipation is the terrain that problematises *social relations* and the correspondent processes they constitute. Politics is grounded on this terrain. Although this political methodology has begun to pervade a variety of organizational forms and political movements, the force of inertia of traditional discourses grounding politics on "ideologies" and "lines" is still to be overcome, as it will be seen in our discussion of the Social Forum movement with respect to these themes.

The paper is thus divided. In section two, I discuss some key features of global capitalist markets understood as system of social relations created by enclosures and disciplinary integration. In section three, I discuss the reasons why the type of political discourse pioneered by the Zapatistas is well suited to challenge

the processes discussed in the previous section. In section four, I show that the features of globalisation discussed in section two are well identified by the early Zapatista writings in which they spell out their understanding of globalisation and the position of communities like theirs within the global system of social relations. It is this understanding of globalisation as a system of social relations that allows the Zapatistas to propose a new and fresh emancipatory politics whose main features have just begun to influence our political practices. In the final section, I discuss the question of "alternatives" to capital in the terms posed by the Zapatistas and the difficulty this approach faces in the contexts of the Social Forum movement.

Global Capitalist Markets: Enclosures and Disciplinary Integration

When the Zapatistas appeared to public attention on January 1994, those who were involved in struggles against various forms of neoliberal policies around the world were trying to find ways to challenge capital's globalization, not only by weaving international networks of struggles (Cleaver 1998), but also by formulating new political discourses grounded in networks, democracy, pluralism and participation. In this sense, the spread of the Internet as a communication tool, provided not only a means for swarming capital through a variety of successful campaigns during the 1990s, but also served as a locus of reflection on organizational forms which were alternative to capital.

Neoliberalism had in a sense made it necessary to search for a new discourse, or discourses, of emancipation that could find a way to articulate the demands for freedom, democracy, autonomy, and diversity with a united opposition to capital. Starting from the 1980s, neoliberalism was able to ride the struggles for freedom of the previous decades and turn them into a set of policies of market deregulation in all spheres of life. To many commentators, the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of that decade precipitated the end of ideologies, that is of

comprehensive systems of thought regarded as justifying action and maintained regardless of the course of events. In reality, of course, one ideology was left standing through these years, with tremendous hegemonic power. Francis Fukuyama's (1992) end of history was not the end of ideologies, but the end of the world in which for the world at large, social conflict took the form of battles among ideologies. *This* battle ended with the triumph of the market ideology in the sense that the only clear ideological argument left with an idea of *how* to articulate people's actions in the reproduction of their livelihoods, no matter what the context, no matter what the human and social cost, was the one predicated on markets, their extension, promotion, and defense.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the victims of structural adjustment policies that have been sacrificed to the altar of the market ideology are countless. This is an ideology that seemed to proclaim unchallenged once and for all that the only "proper" way to access resources and engage in human exchange is through markets. Many of us struggled against the implications of the There Is No Alternative (TINA) ideology. Yet, somehow, it was difficult to reinvent a politics without ideologies, without some rhetorical call to some unifying and transcendental image of what "ism" we stand for in opposition to "their" neoliberalism. Thus any time ideologies were posed in concrete battles, your demands seemed, precisely, ideological, that is insensitive to the times, spaces, needs of circumstances shaped by globalizing processes.

Before exploring in the next section how the Zapatistas succeeded in dealing with this by proposing a politics beyond ideology, we must bear in mind that behind the market ideology there is a distinctive image of how our lives are or should be articulated in the course of our labour or, to put it with John Holloway (2002), of our doing, of our many activities to reproduce our livelihoods and follow our desires. Market ideologies in other words embed a vision of the organizational principles of our social doing. We need to understand this image because neoliberalism is the version of

capitalist strategy that accepted no compromise on shaping the world following this image.

We must therefore look at current capitalist markets with the view of problematising the types of social relations they entail, rather than focusing only on the types of outcomes they produce. When doing this, we obviously must not underplay the many "horrors" that contemporary processes of neoliberal global integration are producing, and that are discussed by many critics and participants in the alter-globalisation movement.[1] From the perspective of an analysis of social processes and social relations, what I am suggesting is that the key problem of capitalist markets is not so much the creation of "losers," but *a mode of articulation of productive "nodes" across the social body that constantly creates "winners" and "losers."* Indeed, the very social constitution of capitalist markets is one of the continuous dispensation of "rewards" and "punishments."

The relational meaning of capitalist markets can also be seen for example when we read the conventional understanding of globalisation as increasing "interdependence" between people, regions, or countries in the world. Inter-dependence means we *depend* on each other, but it *also* implies that what we do has an *effect* on others somewhere else in the world.

Thus, for example, dam construction in a country in the South might be financed by Europe's future pensioners, whose pension fund managers put their money into those dam companies paying high returns on the market, but implying the uprooting of millions of traditional communities, thus contributing directly or indirectly, to the flows of economic refugees that pour into European countries. It is not just, as Anthony Giddens puts it (1990: 64), that "local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away, and vice versa." The fact is that when the value of my pension depends on the successful uprooting of communities in some parts of the world (Schmid, Harris and Sexton 2003), we have a form of interdependence that sucks! We have here a clear example of how capitalist markets articulate different communities' needs for livelihoods (the community of workers forced into

private pension funds and the community of villagers forced out of their land) in such a way that they are opposed to each other.

The forms of *global interdependence* predicated on capitalist markets is all of this kind, an "interdependence" among human beings whose life preservation strategies are *articulated* by a global mechanism that sets them in opposition to each other. Capital's form of global interdependence means that my going to work today and eagerly complying with all the requirements of a competitive society and economy implies that my actions have an effect on somebody else somewhere in the world. To put it bluntly, the competitive market logic implies one of three things: "we" are more efficient than "them" and thus we contribute to their ruin; "they" are more efficient than "us" so "they" are contributing to "our" ruin; or both opposites are true and alternate in an endless rat race that runs both "their" and "our" lives.

This form of inter-dependence represents the underlying basis of the dangerous and pervasive characters of globalisation that is today so widely contested. Obviously human societies, understood as networks of individuals and communities who cooperate and therefore *inter-act* to reproduce their lives, can only be understood in terms of degrees and forms of inter-dependency. The problem with capitalist markets is the *form* of this interdependence, the *type* of globalisation processes. The questions for us are therefore *how* this integration is brought about—that is, how markets are created—and *how* this integration operates once it is set in place. Two broad answers to these questions are enclosures and disciplinary integration.

It is possible to theorise the process of market *creation* in terms of "enclosures" (Caffentzis 1995; De Angelis 2004a). Enclosures refer to those strategies promoted by global economic and political elites that "commodify" things and, in particular, turn the powers of doing (Holloway 2002), of labour, into a commodity, a thing. This opens up to what Marx refers to as commodity-fetishism, that is the fact that social relations between people "appear as *what they are*, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations

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between persons in their work, but rather as material relations between persons and social relation between things" (Marx 1867: 165).[2] In general commodification is to turn resources that are held in common among communities, or exchanged as gifts among its members or across members of different communities, into things that are bought and sold on the market, commodities. The "things" turned into commodities often represent important resources necessary for communities to reproduce their livelihoods, and their "enclosure" represents at the same time the destruction of those communities and their dependence on markets. The consolidation, development and deepening of capitalism in our lives heavily depends on enclosures. Indeed, as others and I have argued, enclosures are a continuous element of capitalist mode of production (Caffentzis 1995; De Angelis 2004a; Perelman 2000), an element that from the very origin depends on various degrees on force and violence of the state necessary to separate communities from the conditions of their livelihoods.

Today, enclosures, the commodification of resources upon which people depend on for their livelihoods, take many names and follow many processes. They may involve the dispossession of thousands of farming communities from land and water resources following international banking funding of dam construction, such as in the case of the dam project in the Narmada valley in India or the Plan Puebla Panama in Latin America. Or they can take the form of cuts in social spending on hospitals, medicines, and schools, or, especially in countries in the south, cuts in food subsidies so as to have money to pay interest on a mounting international debt. In all these cases, cuts, dispossessions, and austerity, namely "enclosures," are imposed for the sake of "efficiency," and rationalization and "global competitiveness." Enclosures are therefore any strategy to push people to depend on markets for their livelihood.

Enclosures only create a *context* for market social interaction to occur. If enclosures push people into increasing the degree of their dependence towards markets for the reproduction of their

livelihoods, then markets integrate their activities in a system that pits all against all. This implies that any "node" of social production, at whatever scale—whether an individual on the labour market, a company in a particular industry, a city or country in competition to attract capital and investments vis-à-vis other cities or countries—face an external force that forces them to adapt to certain standards of doing things, to adopt certain forms of social cooperation, in order to beat the competitor or else having their means for livelihoods threatened. But "beating the competitor" is also at the same time threatening the livelihoods of other communities we are competing with, to the extent that they also depend on markets to reproduce their own livelihoods. The more we depend on money and markets to satisfy our needs and follow our desires, the more we are exposed to a vicious circle of dependency that pits livelihoods against each other. Some of us win, and some of us lose, in either case we are all involved in perpetrating the system that keeps us reproducing scarcity when in fact we could celebrate abundance.

Through this process of ongoing compulsion and continuous redistribution of rewards and punishments, the market also becomes a mechanism in which the norms of our doing are created. As Foucault (1977) has pointed out in the case of Bentham's model prison the Panopticon, this mode of articulation across the social body is disciplinary (see De Angelis 2002), and from the perspective of any "node," the mode of articulation among nodes is an alien force, a context and environment generated "outside."

By norms of our doing, or norms of production, I am here referring to the variety of principles of allocation of resources and distribution associated to social human production as well as ways of doing things, rhythms and forms of cooperation in both waged and unwaged spheres of our lives. Norms of production (that is, ways of relating to each other) are answers to fundamental questions: Questions such as *what* we shall produce, *how* we shall produce it, *how much* we shall produce it, *how long* we should spend of our lives working to produce that, and *who* shall produce it—

namely, all very concrete questions that define *process* and *relational* questions concerning the reproduction of our social body, concerning the ways we relate to each other and to nature.

As far as market processes are concerned, these questions are not answered by people themselves taking charge of their lives and the relations among themselves, and thus equally, the norms of social production and of their relations to each other are not defined collectively. Instead they are defined by a socially constructed *abstract* mechanism that we take as "natural" in the daily practices of our lives. It is the abstract process of disciplinary markets that articulates the social body in such a way as to constitute social norms of production, rather than individual social actors negotiating among themselves the norms of their free co-operation. In this market mechanism, individual actors must respond to existing heteronymous norms imposed by the blind mechanism of the market by meeting or beating the market benchmark (or the simulated market benchmark imposed by neoliberalism's state bodies), an activity which in turn affects the market norm itself. In this continuous feedback mechanism livelihoods are pitted against each other. When rewards and punishments are repeated in a system, norms are created. This is a process that the paladin of market freedom, Friederick Hayek, well understood, although he ignores the question of power and enclosure processes in explaining the emergence of capitalist markets. For him the abstract mechanism of the market is a spontaneously emerging system of freedom.[3]

Thus, if another world is possible, the minimum condition is that we coordinate social action in a different way, one in which the norms of interaction among ourselves cooperating in social production are defined directly by ourselves (those who are doing the interaction), and not by a blind and abstract mechanism that pits livelihoods against each other. When we ground a politics of emancipation on this field of relations, "lines," "norms" and "programmes" (i.e. simply stated all those strategic devices to inform us what to do next) become *emergent properties* of communicational processes rather than the other way around. Communica-

tional processes are those in which "values" are defined, shared, contested, problematised, and posited.

Politics of Social Relations: Zapatismo and Social Forum

Behind the market ideology therefore there is not so much an idea of distribution of resources, there is a mode of doing and therefore of relating. Distribution is either a particular premise (in the forms of enclosure and expropriation) or result (in the form of emergent patterns of exploitation) of this mode of doing. But the *center* around which capitalism and the neoliberal discourse are constructed is a mode of doing, a mode of articulating social cooperation through the market. This *ideology* must be challenged *not* with another ideology, but with the positing of values that open up a million other *modes of social doing* and of articulation of social cooperation. The historical importance of the Zapatistas, I suggest, is to have begun both in practice and discursively the journey to that other "world that contains many worlds" in which the *forms* of the "containing" or articulation, cannot be spelled out clearly by an ideology, but must *emerge* out of the free interaction of the people constituting those many worlds.

Thus, the Zapatistas did not enter the scene with an ideology to oppose the ideology of capital and disciplinary markets. They did not rebuke neoliberalism with an ideological formula to apply to all contexts and situations. Many were waiting and hoping for them to do exactly that. Some left solidarity circles disillusioned by the fact that the Zapatistas had not followed the paths we were familiar with. Many, who were aware that power relations and oppression were behind old emancipatory ideologies, checked for those signs of impurity in their practice, tried to shame them with the "gothca" attitude for their alleged "deviations" on nationalism, sexism, or petty-bourgeoise tendencies. But Zapatismo was not about a new ideology, or about an asymptotic convergence to an ideological credo that needs to be measured in terms of its degree of purity. It is not even a reformulation of the old ones. Zapatismo was about a politics of social relations, and since political activity is

by its nature a *relational* activity, Zapatismo has introduced the plane of immanence in politics: the end and organisational means of political activity coincide; they both have to do with social relations, hence the world we want *and* our activities to get to that world are not external to each other but are two sides of the same coin, that is, two interrelated moments of a transformational activity.

And if this is the case therefore, new questions start to emerge, questions that were somehow straight jacketed within old ideological frameworks. How do we coordinate social action to build a different world? And who is "we"? What are the lines of inclusion and exclusion? And when this "we" is somehow grasped, what is it that this "we" (so diverse because made of so many different "minorities") wants? And when we have defined what "we" want, how do we go about getting it? In a word, how do we *live* a new set of social relations? Before the Zapatistas entered the scene, these types of questions seemed naïve. Answers were already there for anybody entering a political milieu: we, the "working class" want "socialism," and we get it either through "revolution" or "reform," two diverse schools of thought indeed, which however were agreeing on one thing: the leadership of "the party" is there to guide us into the promised land and seize state power. With the Zapatistas, politics is turned upside down, as Holloway puts it, "revolution is redefined as a question rather than an answer" (Holloway 1998), a question of communal self-empowerment rather than a pre-established answer in the hands of few enlightened people belonging to some central committee. Life cannot be postponed to the "after revolution," and in the process of asking questions we walk forward and deal with the problems as they come. *Preguntando caminamos*, "asking we walk," is a famous Zapatista saying. And in the process of asking questions people struggle to go beyond the obstacles that are encountered. And in the process of asking questions, people also dance and sing thus stripping politics of its alienated mantle of dedicated and professional seriousness. Politics becomes a human affair, in its totality.

This clear cut difference between traditional revolutionary politcs predicated on ideology and the horizons proposed by the Zapatistas is, for example, evident in a communiqué of the EZLN to the EPR (Revolutionary Popular Army), a guerrilla group with bases in Guerrero, the Zapatistas spell out the differences that according to them exist between the two formations. To me, these differences are the differences between the "Zapatistas' revolutionary expropriation of politics" (Moreno 1995) which is based on people's *exercise* of power, and the traditional conception of politics, based on the *seizure* of state power (whether through revolutionary or reformist means, this does not really matter).[4]

> What we look for, what we need, what we want, is that all people without party nor organisation agree on what they want and organize to get it (preferably in peaceful and civil ways) not to seize power, but to exercise it. I know that you will say that this is utopian and not much orthodox, but this is the way of being of the Zapatistas (Marcos, 29 Aug. 1996).

Their concept of politics is as simple as this: that the people with no party or organisation agree on what they want and how to get it. But such simplicity is so radical in that it opens the question of the problematisation *in the here and now* of a mode of organizing human affairs we thought belonged to our desired or dreamed future. No, instead the challenge of *how we exercise human powers* becomes *constituent* of the political discourse, becomes *the* terrain of struggle.

This contrast between concepts of politics reappears in a different context within the space of the Social Forum movement which, in the last few years, has attracted tens of thousands activists from a variety of backgrounds in its various global, regional and local gatherings.[5] The charter of principles of the Social Forum proclaims the forum to be an open space and a *process* for the construction of alternatives.[6] Participation, inclusion and democ-

racy are seen as key constituents of this open space. However, the social forum movement also shows the difficulty encountered when faced with old practices and old ideologies. For example, Jai Sen, member of the WSF Indian committee in 2002 during the first year of the WSF process in India leading to the Mumbai WSF in 2004, laments that "when looking back over the first year, it is clear that the idea of building a broad process within the country was undermined at an early stage, by virtue of WSF India focusing all its attention on the *event*. This has only been all the more the case in the second year, leading up to the world meeting in Mumbai" (Sen 2004a: 296).

This managerial focusing on the event is related to the type of "political entities" that "clearly dominated the Forum and its organisational structures" (Sen 2004a: 298), namely political parties of the orthodox left or the "front" organisations that they set up to circumvent the Forum's rule that prevents political parties to affiliate. The orthodox political *discourse* instead is highly inadequate to even conceive the strategic, relational, and communicational complexities of a political process of building a new world in the here and now. This because the aspirational horizon embedded in this discourse is all directed toward the future of "after revolution" in which these complexities will be dealt with—or so we are told—while in the present it is eager to subordinate this or that struggle, this or that relational demand for openness, democracy, and participation to the goals they set themselves to. This is also evident for example in the experience of the "horizontal" movement for democratisation of the European Social Forum during the preparation of the London edition in 2004 (Horizontals 2004a; 2004b; 2004c), as well as, at a more local level, in the challenges faced by the London Social Forum within the context of a traditional political culture (De Angelis 2004b).

The Social Forum movement—both as event and process—thus faces a fundamental paradox. On one side, its charter of principles proclaims it to be a space, a process, and a framework, within which not only resistance to neoliberalism is strengthened

and struggles circulate, but a space in which alternatives are actively promoted; and by "alternatives," this should logically include alternatives to prevailing cultures of politics. On the other hand, it also contains a deep-rooted political culture that, despite the formal exclusion of parties from the WSF, means that it reproduces *traditional* party discourses everywhere. In the middle of course, there is an ongoing struggle even within the WSF, a struggle fundamentally between two cultures.

Zapatismo and Globalisation

The Zapatistas' approach to politics emerges from a particular understanding of one's position in that heavily interdependent—hence "globalised"—world we discussed in section two.

In the first place, the Zapatistas have provided an understanding of globalisation as "world war" deployed against the poor of the world.[7] According to Subcomandante Marcos, globalisation is a world war, it is a war waged against humanity: "A new world war is waged, but now against the entire humanity. As in all world wars, what is being sought is a new distribution of the world" (DOR). The character of this distribution is something which we all know quite well, and Marcos refers to as "concentrating power in power and misery in misery" (DOR). The theme of expropriation of resources, like water, is well inserted in a narrative that touches poetically the cruel reality of enclosure processes of which the indigenous communities are victims (or threatened victims). And it is also clear that this is rooted in an understanding of neoliberal *strategies* of enclosures discussed before.[8]

In the Zapatistas' hands however, this reflection on globalization as a world war, expropriation, and enclosures does not lead to a self-indulging lament, but to a reflection of what is *common* between the indigenous communities they are part of, and other world's "minorities" they are inter-dependent with. This implies essentially to begin a process of problematisation of the "we," a reflection on who the political subjects are, and how they are articulated among each other. The subjects are "minorities" and

their articulation is a process of exclusion and fragmentation. This "new distribution of the world" has the power of *exclusion* of what at first appear as isolated minorities, and then, with a magic twist within the argumentative line, show themselves for what they are, the greatest majority of the world population: The new distribution of the world excludes "minorities." The indigenous, youth, women, homosexuals, lesbians, people of color, immigrants, workers, peasants; the majority who make up the world basements are presented, for power, as disposable. The new distribution of the world excludes the majorities (DOR).

The majority is made of minorities, but minorities are minorities to the extent they are isolated, atomized, fragments facing the whole as an alien force, yet it is their inter-dependence that constitutes the whole! The writings of the Zapatistas contain therefore both the awareness of the condition of fragmentation within the division of labour constituting the global factory (Marcos 1992: 26) and the realisation of the consequent condition of invisibility.[9] However, this is an invisibility that is constructed by a particular *mode of relation*. This invisibility, this atomisation and fragmentation of an entire population within the huge global productive machine is not only a characteristic of the Maya people in Southeast of Mexico. It is increasingly a condition of existence of all kinds of people and individuals (although in different forms and contexts), *once they are understood in terms of their relation to each other, a relation that constitutes global disciplinary markets* as we discussed in the previous section.

The process of intensification and deepening of global disciplinary markets that has accelerated in the last twenty years has led to the paradoxical result of both the increased inter-dependency among people around the world, and at the same time the acceleration of their *isolation,* alienation from each other and indifference. This means essentially that inter-dependency expresses itself as an external power to the individuals, instead of these individuals expressing their human powers through their inter-dependency. There is nothing new in this typical process of capitalist

accumulation, only its intensification and deepening. In this context their discourse provides a politically humble but yet incredibly important recognition that in these conditions emancipation can only occur *by connecting what has been fragmented*, by turning inter-dependency from being the product of the external and alien power of the market, into an act of freedom. Yet this connection cannot occur on the ground of *abstract unity*, that is a ground that subordinates everybody to an externally defined cause (the "unite and fight" which leaves the "what for?" to be decided *after* the "revolution"), or an externally defined abstract mechanism like the market. On the contrary, the ground for unity, the recognition of what is *common*, must emerge out of the communication among what is *different*. The Zapatistas' appeal is for a world that contains many worlds, for a world in which "all are equals *because* they are different" (Major Ana Maria 1996: 28. My emphasis). A paladin of modern disciplinary markets *or* state-form would be for a world in which all are different because they are equal, just the opposite. In the case of the market, people are equal as buyers and sellers because they all engage in market transactions, which in turn depends on difference in commodities exchanged. All the same, in the case of state systems, we are said to be equal in front of the law which aims at regulating our difference in behaviors. In both cases, "equality," or what is common, is posited beforehand, and it becomes the ground, the terrain in which we "measure" our difference (for example, we can evaluate difference in prices among two objects only because they both are commodities, i.e. they have prices). What I think the Zapatistas are saying here, is that in transformative processes the commons, the equality, the shared among us must emerge out of difference, hence the central importance of communicational processes that lead and facilitate this emergence. These commons, this ground for equality that emerges from difference, "because" of difference, is set against the power of capital and disciplinary markets, power which *takes for granted* that every aspect of life, every single social relations must be centered on a common system of

values—monetary values and correspondent economic calculus—which instead we contest.

If we are all equal *because* we are different, then the key question becomes, what can the diverse nodes do to help to establish what is common? The answer is simple: break the siege. Thus, the Zapatista concept and practice of internationalism arises out of their concept of themselves (Indigenous communities of Chiapas) as *one oppression among many, as one voice among many, as one struggle among many, as one assertion of dignity among many.* And it arises out of their perceived need to break the siege that they (as one of the many minorities) experience. The siege is broken by establishing *communication* among the different opposition nuclei. Here communication is not regarded instrumentally, as a mere means for activists in different parts of the world to bring their solidarity to the insurgents (although this solidarity is part of the story). Not even as only an exchange of information (although also this is part of the story). The main point of this communication is that it is a moment of the constitution of the "*commune*," of what is common among them. What is common is not defined negatively. This is important, because usually a definition of what is common, which is a definition of political identity, occurs primarily in "opposition to." Instead, what is common acquires primarily a *positive* or better, constituent character. To constitute what is common through difference, one cannot draw lines of exclusion based on ideas, ideologies, principles and the likes. There can only be relational principles that govern the interaction of diversity, and the Zapatistas propose three: dignity, hope, and life. These are three relational modes: with the other in the here and now (dignity), with the other in process of constituting the future (hope), with the other and nature in the process of self-making (life).

As globalisation isolates and fragments people (while it paradoxically increases their interdependency) dignity is the reclamation of one's position in the world as social being. Dignity is the bridge that breaks the siege[10]: "Dignity is that nation without nationality, that rainbow that is also a bridge, that murmur of the

heart no matter what blood lives it, that rebel irreverence that mocks borders, custom and wars" (DOR).

Hope is the slap in the face of power's vision, is the refusal of "*pansée unique,*" of the lack of alternatives, of options, of crass realism of the market, of the false boundaries encircling aspirations, in short: "Hope is that rejection of conformity and defeat" (DOR).

Finally, life is nothing else than the life of individuals who consider themselves as members of communities, as dependent on each other, as *social individuals*. Life is not only the satisfaction of needs (i.e. life-conditions), but also the definition of these needs, the freedom to define them through *self-government* and *autonomy*. In short, life is "the right to govern and to govern ourselves, to think and act with a freedom that is not exercised over the slavery of others, the right to give and receive what is just" (DOR).

What is striking of these three fundamental principles framing the emergence of what is *common* among the different opposition nuclei, is that they are not a mere "interest" in the traditional sense of the world, they are not something to be pursued because it has a prospected payoff. They are neither something to be lived in the future nor a shared common pre-defined ideology. They are *to be lived in the here and now: the value of dignity, the experience of hope, the practice of autonomy and self-government.* These three dimensions are, I believe, essential dimensions of Zapatista politics, and can help us to shed light on the process of recomposition of today's social movements.[11]

One "No" Many "Yeses"

The Zapatistas have helped us to re-ground our politics, from a politics centred on things and ideologies, to a politics centred on social relations. In this way, they themselves are the product of our times, they are an eclectic accumulation of wisdom, desires and struggles. This is a meshing together of centuries-old indigenous communal practices, with political strategic thinking of the revolutionary traditions and the rainbow of subjectivities that demand

freedom, respect, and inclusion which have emerged with greater clarity in the "post-modern" era. The early Zapatista attempts to include all the problematics raised by these traditions, and the only way to do it was to centre their politics on social relations. Ultimately, this approach points to the question of organisation in a new way, not as a vertical recruiting and subordinating singularities to a line, but of horizontal building bridges, of establishing links, learning from mistakes, de-fetishising our relations to the others, reaching out and being reached, sharing resources and creating commons, reinventing local and trans-local communities, articulating flows from movement to society and vice-versa. In other words, within this framework politics is redefined in terms of the constitution of a social force that learns to articulate many yeses, that takes responsibility for the production of new social relations.

This problematic emerged perhaps with greatest clarity during the second Encuentro for Humanity against Neoliberalism promoted by the Zapatistas, held in Spain in 1997, where the final slogan became known as "one no, many yeses": the one "no" against neoliberal promotion of markets into any spheres of life, and the "many yeses" expressing the plurality of needs, desires, aspirations and ways of doing of a diverse social body.[12] It is a discourse that is clearly evident in the inclusive principle of the WSF charter of principles, and manifests itself in the diverse and colourful carnival of identities at any large SF event.

I believe that the message that combines opposition with opening the question of the articulation of the many yeses, is perhaps the single most important message that we receive from the Zapatistas' experience when we attempt to make sense of "Zapatismo" for our political activities in contexts that are so different from those in which the indigenous communities of Chiapas live. However, it is not easy to turn this discourse into political practice. It faces many prejudices and we must strive to develop critical mass in order to "shift" those discursive and organisational constraints that have been crystallising through the years. As we have briefly seen, the problematic of the alternative articulation of

"many yeses" has become a terrain of struggle within the Social Forum movement, a struggle that divides people among those who mostly look at the Social Forum as an event, and those that regard it as process. The most important questions raised by the former are managerial, top-down, vertical, closed to the problematisation of social relations. The questions of the latter instead are the opposite, the nature of the event is nothing but the emergent property of a modality of relations. The latter are the focus of this approach. This struggle can be read as a struggle between two opposite political conceptions regarding modes of articulating social cooperation that we can name, borrowing from a current terminology, the "there is no alternative" (TINA) and "there are many alternatives" (TAMA) conceptions. Indeed, this problematic is common to both the problematic of the relation of our social movements vis-à-vis capital *and* among the process versus event poles within the Social Forum movement.

We must notice that TINA and TAMA refer to two different things. TINA—a term introduced by Margaret Thatcher in the early 1980s—proclaims that there is no alternative to a *mode* of articulation among social practices/subjects, in other words an alternative to capitalist markets as modes of articulation of difference (different products, mode of producing, locality, and so on). TINA represents the neoliberal project of disciplinary integration across the global social body. It says that there is no alternative to the centre of gravity of capitalist markets: all human action must be coordinated by this. But neoliberalism is not the only locus of TINA; for the orthodox left sectarian discourse is also a TINA discourse in the sense that there is no alternative to the mode of articulation it represents and manifests, and there is no alternative to the way it prefigures social transformation.

The orthodox left celebrates the diversity of participants to a movement or to an "event" such as the Social Forum, but only to the extent that they are brought together through a process that is defined in a particular manner, vertical—and that is ordered by a certain discourse. In other words, one that is closed to the emer-

gence of *other ways of articulating*, and of producing, because it is a political culture that embeds a deeply-rooted belief in what the alternative is (or better, will be) and how to get there (obviously, various sects can differ in the details of this knowledge and vision, but they all share the conviction of their belief that they take for granted as being valid). Thus, when confronted by diverse social movements, that is those forces that are bearers of practices of social transformation in the here and now, they act in such a way to pull together the creative forces of diversity, to restrain them and channelling them into "events" that they can then use to feed on their fantasies of social transformation. The organisational effort of the orthodox left is thus managerial, event-focussed, culturally closed to democratic participation, to experimentation of practices of grassroots democracy that are necessary in the process of constitution of a new world in the here and now.

Unlike the approach of TINA under which there is no alternative to the market or the vertical flows of commands of a proto-state bureaucracy, the approach of TAMA voices the diversity of yeses, of needs and aspirations that heteronymous forces such as market or proto-state hierarchy leaves behind, or satisfies only to the extent that the livelihoods of others (markets) or integrity of others (the public smears of which the left is prone when it runs out of arguments) are threatened. While for the TINA discourse everything is possible to the extent it is brought to us by a *given* mode of doing (disciplinary markets for capital, or vertical "representative" decision-making for the orthodox left), for TAMA there are many alternative modes of doing, alternative both to disciplinary markets that pit one each against the other or to representative democracy that is the basis of power politics. Note that what is left open for the TAMA perspective is left closed from the perspective of TINA, namely the ways to articulate the many needs and desires across subjects, hence the many modes of doing. The fact that the mode of articulation of the many yeses in TAMA is open, presupposes the fact that, as noted in a previous section, the *emergence* of these mode(s) of articulation can only be a product of

continuous interactions and relations among those who practice these alternatives, based on the continuous need to exchange, learn and teach, create affects and trans-local communities, and so on; namely, it is the broad field of *democratic horizontal processes* that *(re)produce and reclaim commons.*

The problematic opened by TAMA therefore is the problematic of empowerment and de-fetishisation of social relations, the two basic "ingredients" for the constitution of a social force that moves beyond capital. But empowerment and de-fetishisation is nothing without the recognition of "the other." From within our movements the awareness must grow that the reclaiming of our many powers to do, to think, to dream, to imagine, to relate, and the turning them into a material force that creates a new world, is fundamentally a process in which we regard the other as a dignified subject. We learn this from the struggles of the subjects that most have been "devalorised" by capital's accumulation such as indigenous populations, migrants, women. The Zapatistas have, in recent times, voiced the problematic of dignity in the most coherent and articulated way. As we have seen, we learn from them that dignity is the *common* value we must recognise in all subjects, the gravitational centre around which the subjects find *modes of* articulating their diversity (in experience, in know-how, in imagery, in ideologies, in religious beliefs, in access to resources, in needs and aspirations). Through the recognition of dignity we de-fetishise our relations to the other, we recognise in others what we want others to recognise in us: human subjects. Dignity is the core value of a relational horizontality that articulates diversity.

Endnotes

[1] This movement is generally known by the media as "anti-globalisation." However, in the last few years activists within this movement have begun to suggest that "alter-globalisation" is a more appropriate label, since both in terms of organisational reach based on global networks, as well as aspirations, this movement is *for* alternative global processes. These are based on other values and forms of human exchange than the ones informing neoliberal globalisation.

[2] For a discussion of commodity fetishism, see De Angelis (1996).

[3] To my knowledge, Friederick Hayek's work represents the most comprehensive and intellectually sound defence of the market as a social order. The preoccupations of his writings emerge out of the same historical contexts of John Maynard Keynes's writing. This is a context informed by the threat to capitalism represented by the Soviet Revolution and widespread social struggles throughout the world and the global crisis of the 1930s. After the demise of Keynesianism in the late 1970s, Hayek's work begun to gain prominence and has been associated to the emergence of neoliberalism, providing policy circles with intellectual arguments for the promotion of markets and rolling back of Keynesian policies. The rumour has it that Margaret Thatcher used to sleep with a copy of Hayek's classic *Road to Serfdom* (Hayek 1986) on her bed table. For a more detailed analysis and a critique of Hayek's "market order" see De Angelis (2002).

[4] For a discussion of people's power exercised in their commons, see for example the discussion of radical democracy by Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash (1998), especially chapter five.

[5] The first gathering of the World Social Forum was in 2001 in Porto Alegre and the last one at the time of writing , the 4th, was in Mumbai in 2004. Continental social forums such as the European social forum and the Asia social forum among others are also periodically held. Local social forums have also sprung up in a variety of cities across the globe or taken up particular themes. See for example http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.bt. For a broad surevy of this movement, as well as its problematisation, see Sen, Anand, Escobar and Waterman (2004).

[6] For the charter of principles, see http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/. For some background discussion, see Sen (2004b).

[7] See for example Marcos (1997a).

[8] The first tale of Don Durito, the beatle used by Marcos as the subject of his more analytical narratives met Marcos while sitting in front of "a small type-writer, reading some papers and smoking a diminutive pipe." Marcos asked him what was he studying, and Don Durito replied: "I'm studying neoliberalism and its *strategy* of domination for Latin America" (Zapatistas: 274. My emphasis). An example of this strategic reading of Capital's strategy of enclosures is in Marcos' theses on globalization (Marcos 1997b).

[9] "We don't have words. We don't have face. We don't have name. We don't have tomorrow. We do not exist... For power, what today is known in the world with the name of "neoliberalism," we do not count, we do not produce, we do not buy, we do not sell. We were a useless number for the accounting of big capital." Mayor Ana Maria (1996: 23).

[10] For a detailed analysis of the role played by Dignity in the Zapatista movement see John Holloway (1998).

[11] For a detailed analysis of this see De Angelis (2000).

[12] For a more detailed discussion see Midnight Notes (1998). The editors of this journal remind us that as explained to them by Gustavo Esteva, "the slogan 'One No, Many Yeses' originated in the Mexican anti-nuclear movement of the early 1980s. Apparently, this movement brought together a complex alliance of groups and interests, just as it did in the U.S. and Europe during the same period."

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DOR refers to first Declaration of la Realidad. The English version can be found visiting http://www.actlab.utexas.edu/~zapatistas/declaration.html.

ON THE HISTORY OF THE HISTORY OF PEOPLES *WITHOUT* HISTORY

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> In this account, both the people who claim history as their own and the people to whom history has been denied emerge as participants in the same historical trajectory.
>
> Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*

Nowhere does one find the singularity of the Zapatista insurrection better expressed than in their consideration of Indians as ends in themselves. The Zapatistas articulate a process of social transformation in which indigenous languages and cultures ground the communities' processes of autonomization. Indigenous knowledges and linguistics practices coexist and dialogue with life forms with radically different philosophical backgrounds that for reasons of expediency I will refer to as Western. I understand by *background* the absolute presupposition *against which* and *from which* the members of a given culture make sense of each other and the world (Ankersmith 1994). If inspired by the Zapatistas, I only pretend to provide a reflection that may dialogue with the multiple expressions of Zapatismo. In the process, I will discuss some of the proposals of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Multitude*. The objective is not to compare these two projects, rather to juxtapose them while resisting the impulse to subsume one to the other.

To my mind, the singularity of the Zapatista insurrection could not be more striking than when we juxtapose it to Antonio Gramsci's and Mao Zedong's call for the use and trans-

formation of peasant mentality. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have captured this move in Mao as "the Chinese revolution was really a revolution conducted *with* the peasantry, not a revolution *by* the peasantry" (Hardt and Negri 2004: 124). Further down they add, "*the final victory of the peasant revolution is the end of peasantry*" (ibid, emphasis in original). As for Gramsci, consider the following passage from the *Prison Notebooks*: "For the teacher, then, to know 'folklore' means to know what other conceptions of the world and of life are actually active in the intellectual and moral formation of young people, in order to uproot them and replace them with conceptions which are deemed to be superior [*per estirparli e sostituirle con concezioni ritenute superiori*]" (1985: 191; 1975: 3, 2314). If in the *Southern Question* Gramsci denounced the North's colonialist discourse on the South, for Gramsci the peasantry of the South would be hegemonized by the proletarian North. Even if, as Hardt and Negri remind us, the small-land holdings of the peasantry and its corresponding mode of production are bound to disappear, the denigration of and the use of folklore for the transformation of peasants into a modern mentality is manipulative and elitist. Indian life forms cannot be reduced to the economic structures of small-holding farmers characteristic of the European peasantry. Liberal projects in the nineteenth century sought to turn communal forms of property into individually owned holdings. This process reduced Indians to peons working in large *haciendas* given that very few Indians partook of the new structure of property. The Revolution of 1910 and the constitution of 1917 partially redressed this expropriation of communal lands with the creation of the *ejido* and the restitution of communal holdings.

Strictly speaking, Indians are not peasants, nor should Indians be exclusively identified with rural areas. This is not the place to discuss the long lasting prejudice against peasants that one can trace from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* to Hardt and Negri's *Multitude*, but also note the equally

long tradition that views peasant communes as having the capacity to proceed directly to communism.[1] Hardt and Negri, for their part, also appeal to Pierre Clastres's analysis of Amerindian "primitive" cultures as "societies against the state":

> The history of peoples with a history is, as they say, the history of class struggle; the history of peoples without history is, we should say at least with equal conviction, the history of their struggle against the state. We need to grasp the kind of struggles that Clastres sees and recognize the adequate form in our present age" (Hardt and Negri 2004: 90).

 Let's examine this paradoxical statement "the history of peoples without history…"

Peoples With and *Without* History

The binary that constitutes peoples with and without history, writing, and the state dates back to the Enlightenment. As such the binary manifests a particular form of the Europe and its others syndrome. This cultural malaise infects peoples who are constituted as lacking history and by extension the state with an internalization of the terms that leads to a desire to prove the contrary. Ranajit Guha's work on Indian historiography, in particular his essay, "An Indian Historiography of India," offers a most lucid articulation of how history in its post-Enlightenment disciplinary form posed a challenge to Bengali historians that led them to prove to the Imperial historians that Bangla was an appropriate language for history. Guha traces a series of moments in the writing of Indian history in the nineteenth century that go from the initial desire to prove the appropriateness of Bangla, which included a recognition of the gift of history by the English, to the denunciation of the British Empire and the circulation of pamphlets associated with terrorist groups in the 1920s that sought to destroy the Raj. In doing

this Bengali historians worked out the internalization of the colonialist denial of history and State to India. Notwithstanding this process of countering the reduction of India to a people without history and the supposed deficiencies of Bangla for the articulation of Western discourses, the practice of history as discipline continues undisturbed among Indian historians well into our days. Form the early *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* to *History at the Limits of World-History*, Guha has exposed the ways in which historiography subordinates and subsumes subaltern peoples in narratives of Empire, Nation, and Socialism. The exercise of power and State formation is inherent to the practice of history. Thus Ranajit Guja's *History at the Limits of World-History* provides an analysis of Hegel's philosophy of history at the root of the negation of history in India. Guha also underscores the formation of a discipline and its exclusion of Indian texts as the *Mahabharata* as history. Guha has no qualms in accepting a narrow definition of history but also traces the colonialist impulse in historical writing. Following Rabindranath Tagore, Guha calls for re-imagining forms of memory that would capture historicality. When Guha presented his ideas at Columbia University he was attacked by many in the audience, including Gayatri Spivak and Partha Chaterjee, but as far as I know the only published statement is a translation into Spanish of the Persian historian Hamid Dabashi's intervention, "*No soy un suabalternista*" (Dabashi 2001). Dabashi criticizes Guha for his ignorance of Persian sources (a subject that I am completely ignorant, hence will abstain from discussing) and for launching a frontal attack on Hegel instead of pursuing a guerrilla tactic that would target Hegel, Modernity, Eurocentrism, and Globalization from plurivocal and plurifocal perspectives. This turn from frontal attack to guerrilla provides elements for the critique of metanarratives. Dabashi, however, finds a transparency of terms when he invokes "history or *itihasa*" in one breath (Dabashi 50). One should wonder if this

gesture subsumes *itihasa* under history, thereby privileging the latter term as a universal concept.

As I have said, I ignore the nature of the Persian libraries Dabashi mentions, but the universality and self-evidence of the term history remains problematic. The rebuttal of Guha's frontal attack on Hegel entails a statement in the line that "we" Indians and Persians have always read the *Mahabarata* as history. I cannot assess the full meanings of *itihasa*, often translated as "thus verily happened" or as "so it was." Nor can I evaluate the equivalence one can draw with errors incurred when one defines the Old Testament as mythology, but it seems to me that the specifics of *itihasa* are lost when paired with history. As if history (and for that matter mythology) were a transparent category and a transhistorical reading/writing practice. To my mind one should attend to the fact that history is a Western invention that dates back to the Greeks of the fifth century B.C., in particular to Herodotus, and the self-conscious differentiation from myth, which was in fact constituted in the process. The ambivalence surrounding the status of *itihasa* as combining myth and history suggests that we should proceed more cautiously in approximating the meanings of this Sanskrit term. Otherwise, the rescue of the *Mahabarhata* will assume the universality of Greco-Abrahamic life forms, rather than understanding the process as the globalatinization of all natural and cultural phenomena.[2] Even if the Persian libraries contained many texts that one could consider history (and for that matter philosophy and literature) because of an importation of these literary practices from Greek culture, the disciplinary form of history entails a break from pre-enlightenment historical writings, which I gather was Guha's main point in speaking of Ramram Basu as a first Indian historian in the disciplinary mode. If Dabashi at first agreed in principle with Guha positioning of *marvel* against *experience*, of *civil society* against the *State*, and the *poetics* of resistance against the *prose* of power, he ends up chastising Guha for pairing the *marvel* of the *Mahabarhata*, with the

experience of Hegel. But Dabashi chooses to ignore that Guha was targeting the practice of history among Indians today (not really Hegel), as it becomes evident when Guha introduces Tagore's critique of the poverty of historiography. It all seems to come down to a disciplinary squabble—with implications beyond the academy. Dabashi's insistence on guerrilla warfare remains purely academic as long as "good" history— Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) has insisted on this in his critiques of Guha—contributes to the formation of responsible citizens for representative democracies. The world of subaltern insurrections is a world ruled by the imagination, marvel, civil society, and poetics, which the prose of counter-insurgency, i.e., history has sought to neutralize in its pursuit of the causes and effects of rebellions.

In addressing the denial of history and state I have emphasized the Enlightenment because the descriptions of Amerindian peoples without States during the sixteenth century limited themselves to societies that in fact did not have States. The complex urban structures of the Andes and Mexico were always understood as societies with States, indeed, with States to conquer and expropriate. These urban civilizations were also conceived as laden with layers of history that had to be understood (indeed, invented as historical) in order to administer them. As such the binary peoples with history vs. peoples without history as formulated by the Enlightenment constitutes a particular form of the Europe and its others syndrome. Pierre Clastres has no qualms in using the term *Savage* or *Primitive* as a descriptive category for societies without States.[3] In fact, his objective is to understand the singular spatial and temporal forms of peoples without State and history. If they are coeval with modernity (to borrow Johannes Fabian's [1983] term), with the time of anthropologists and other observers who communicate with them in a shared present (even if they do not understand each other), the fact remains that their sense of space and time often radically differs from those of moder-

nity. Clastres specifies that the definition of society without a State does not apply to the Andes and Mexico, but we may ask if after the destruction of Andean and Mesoamerican States we don't find societies who, having been stripped of their indigenous States, have resisted the colonial and the national States of the last five hundred years.[4] If it strikes one as dissonant to pair *Savage* dwellers of the tropical forests with settled peoples from the highlands, indigenous organizations today have taken significant steps in overcoming the internal disparaging of the *Primitive*.[5] The destruction of the indigenous states led to forms of collaboration that proved indispensable for the efficacy of colonial and national rule (from the *jueces* and *gobernadores* of the colonial period to the *caciques* of today). In spite of these privileged sectors, Indians have been systematically excluded from the State and history. Exclusionary practices carry an ambivalence that we should not rush to erase by calling for the full integration of Indians into the nation. The "without" may be interpreted as peoples who exist *without* (outside) history and the State, and consequently who define themselves against the State and history.

In this regard the Zapatistas maxim of "*mandar obedeciendo*" (command obeying) and the constant alternation of representatives in the Juntas de Buen Gobierno manifests the conviction not only that their struggles no longer aspire to take over the State, but also that the State must be avoided from within.[6] The paradox of speaking of "the history of peoples without history" would convey the existence of histories of oppression and revolt, of forms of resistance, and of the strategies of survival of the last five hundred years. The objective would not be to have the State recognize these histories and include them into its account of the nation and its pasts, rather to teach these histories to future generations of autonomous peoples who have and will continue to exist *without* history and the State. But this clearly has little to do with the history of peoples with State, with the history of class struggle, as Hardt

and Negri characterized it. Here again we find a paradox in that the oppression of Indians is none other than their oppression as a class even if defined along ethnic and racial terms, but ambivalence surfaces when we posit their struggle not from within the State and the desire for recognition, but as a struggle for autonomization from the desires that seek the recognition of the State. The only recognition sought would correspond to the right to keep the (European) standards of the State from defining the worth of their own life forms. The "Europe and its others" syndrome manifests a cultural malaise that infects those peoples *without* history and the State by an internalization of the negation that leads to a desire to prove the contrary rather than to assert their singularity.

Singularity

In one of his recent communiqués, "*En* (auto) *defensa de las jirafas*," Marcos draws on the giraffe as a trope to speak of those forms of life, of difference, of singularity that the market targets for extinction (Subcomandante Marcos, 2004b). It is no longer a question of the individual being threatened by the communal but of those singular forms that challenge the constitution of homogenous individual(istic) subjects of neo-liberalism. The communiqué extends the struggles of the Zapatistas beyond Chiapas to the rural and urban dwellers in Mexico and the world. This is the kind of cultural politics that enables us to link the Zapatista struggle, as Manuel Callahan asks us to consider, with the "serial protests that gained prominence since Seattle." In his call for contributions to this volume, Callahan speaks of "broader movements struggling with direct or radical democracy applied towards liberatory politics," also a staple in the Zapatista communiqués since 1994. My insistence on suspending the outrage of the denial of history, on interrogating the desire to prove "Europe's others" as historical societies is predicated on the invocation of singular life forms that may challenge the hegemony of *globalatinization*.

For if it is true that neo-liberalism only supports forms of artistic expression that subject themselves to the hegemony of the market, as Marcos underscores in his praise of giraffes (read: singular forms of life that are targeted by economic and military war), it uses a language of love and benevolence that expropriates discourses of freedom. For it is part of the logic of neo-liberalism to recognize only forms of life that conform to the parameters of the West. In this regard, efforts to prove that "Eurpoe's others" have writing, history, science, and State reiterate the globalatinization that only recognizes forms that it can subsume under its categories. The "history of the history of peoples *without* history" would, then, correspond to the singularity of struggles that the State and its history cannot *recognize* because the discourses that resistance articulates remains unintelligible to those who presume that their categories are universal. The articulation of singularity would resonate with Dabashi's call for plurivocal and plurifocal guerrilla warfare against Hegel, Modernity, Eurocentrism, Globalization—but we should add history and the State. But in order that this guerrilla not be contained within Academic discourse (regardless of how important it might seem to us academics) it must trace connections and articulations that inform protests, strategies for the expropriation of means of production, direct action, and the autonomization of life. Thus, this guerrilla will create space for knowledge production that invent practices for confronting the State and furthering the *without* history. Autonomization would now be understood as process rather than as claims that privilege institutionalized spaces, viz., the political, the aesthetic, the ethical, the universities, and what not, from economic determinism. As such, the singular partakes of a process and manifests a site of struggle. It is not enough, and in fact, it is contrary to the emphasis on the singular to unveil, to expose the hegemony of post-modernism and post-Fordism, of globalization as the new hegemonic historical moment as if there were no *without* history and the State.

Modern, Post-Modern, Not Modern

In our efforts to upturn the hegemony of the West, we have recently insisted on the fact that modernity is not exclusively an Euro-American invention. As such modernity is diluted of any claim to newness in history. The effort to undermine the West's exclusive claims to science or democracy leads to a subsumption of all singular forms—such as the process of desiring the recognition of history and the State. This entails a logic that excludes practices and knowledges that do not meet the standards of science by confining them to magic, superstition, or obscurantism. Thus, our ancestors end up embodying the values of the Enlightenment and our contemporaries readied—by means of stereotype—for persecution, minimally, for epistemological violence.[7]

In anthropology, Hardt and Negri remind us, the old categories of the savage and the primitive were first displaced by the peasant and more recently by global anthropology: "The task of global anthropology, as many contemporary anthropologists formulate it, is to abandon the traditional structure of otherness altogether and discover instead a concept of cultural difference based on singularity" (Hardt and Negri 2004: 125). This abandonment of otherness, of the primitive and the savage, as object of study, leads to a generalized state of modernity that bears what to my ears rings as a slogan, "equally as modern as, yet different, from Europe" (ibid., 126). This generalized state of modernity conveys the notion that all peoples today, in the singularity of their societies, are contemporaneous. This gesture cannot but be welcomed in that it breaks from the "Europe and its others" cluster and the syndromes that accompany the internalization of its binaries. Yet, it might turn out to be disingenuous in that the values of modernity—the desires to be recognized as modern—remain hegemonic, not unlike the desire for history. Note their definition of the limits of the modern: "Some of the phenomena that pose the strongest challenge for this conception of African modernity and cosmo-

politanism are the forms of ritual and magic that continue to be integral element of contemporary life" (Hardt and Negri 2004: 126). So, "magic and ritual" remain "other," in fact, a challenge, within the new anthropologist's desire to trace modernity globally. Thus, certain forms of life would be excluded as pre-modern, as backward, as life forms that are incompatible with modernity. Subjects would under this logic be expected to police themselves and expel the pre-modern from their soul. Wouldn't the new anthropologist end up reinventing the applied anthropology of post-revolutionary Mexico that devised policies for the integration of Indians into the State (Bonfil Batalla 1996, 1987)? It does not occur to Hardt and Negri that multiple singular life forms may coexist within one subject and society without incurring in a contradiction as has been the case in Amerindian societies from first contact with Europe up to the Zapatistas today (see Rabasa 2003, 1998).

Why do Hardt and Negri fail to be consistent in their call for a multitude made of singularities? There might be modes of the occult that are not of their liking, as they might not be of mine, but to pose a generalization about "magic and ritual" as challenges to the anthropological enterprise, if not of the State, threatens the diversity of Indian forms of life. This positioning entails Enlightened epistemological privileges that inevitably smacks of vanguardism, of a top-down assessment of backwardness rather than a contribution to an horizontal assessment of strategies, debates, and struggles over the meaning of obscurantism that play out within the communities themselves. If Hardt and Negri's critique of the nostalgia for rural life that often accompanies discourses on the peasantry, and if their diagnosis of the eventual disappearance of the peasant forms of property seem inevitable, the transition from peasant to Indians (now rural and urban) entails a passage to communal forms of property and social organization, of which the Zapatista insurgency remains representative. If their efforts to

step out of Eurocentrism are noteworthy, the historical trajectory privileges changes in the European North:

> Contemporary capitalist production is characterized by a series of passages that name different faces of the same shift: from the hegemony of industrial labor to that of immaterial labor, from Fordism to post-Fordims, and from the modern to the post modern. Periodization frames the movement of history in terms of the passage from one relatively stable paradigm to another (Hardt and Negri 2004: 142).

The Multitude *Without* History

If the utterance "there is no longer an outside to capital" (Hardt and Negri 2004:102) rings true, it calls for the qualification: *except for all life forms that are constituted as backward, hence condemned to disappear*. In this regard, Capitalism always constitutes its *withouts*. The Zapatistas defined the processes of exclusion as integral to what they call the "*IV Guerra mundial", que se libra por el neoliberalismo contra la humanidad"* ["IV World War" exerted by neoliberalism against humanity] (Subcomandante Marcos 2004c). Capitalism affects all societies globally, but this does not mean that the history and periodization of the evolving tendencies in Western societies should be understood as an all-encompassing single history. Hardt and Negri, but also Paolo Virno, situate the emergence of the multitude as a most recent configuration of the future subject of "political action aimed at transformation and liberation" (Ibid.: 99). They oppose the diversity and plurality of singularities that make up the multitude to the people, which, they argue, always aims at the constitution of the one, of the State.

But let's turn to Paolo Virno's *A Grammar for the Multitude*, for a description of the multitude as a redefinition of the One: "It remains clear that the multitude does not rid itself of the *One*, of the universal, of the common/shared; rather it re-

defines the One. The One of the mutitude no longer has anything to do with the One constituted by the State, with the One towards which the people converge" (Virno 2004: 42). Virno's reasoning on what he calls the "*general intellect* or public intellect" that defines the One as a "*sharing* of linguistic and cognitive habits [that] is the constituent element of the post-Fordist process of labor. All the workers enter into production in as much as they are speaking-thinking" (ibid.: 41). This offers an impeccable assessment of the new hegemony of immaterial labor, one that would affect all Western societies (including the metropolitan centers in the Third World), but post-Fordism does not subsume the history nor the condition of all the singularities that comprise the multitude. Unless we want to turn the multitude into a synecdoche that stands for the whole, we ought to understand how this trope would erase the singularities of societies and cultures that never were part of Fordism. These singularities that comprise this minority, which actually corresponds to a majority numerically, would not be disposed to articulate their processes of autonomization in post-Fordist terms, even if the general intellect remains a possibility. In short, the post-Fordism trope does not travel well when taken outside the hegemony of immaterial labor, which in fact constitutes a very limited hegemony outside Western societies. In the context of indigenous struggles, the primacy of post-Fordism hardly qualifies as a form of consent, as hegemonic, rather as a violent coercion into submission when not a war for the extermination of all those others that are considered an error of humanity.

The iron-clad logic of historical tendencies that define the new historical epoch of Empire as the most advanced historical moment reiterates the hegemony of exclusion it seeks to expose. It runs the risk of constituting a vertical imposition that unwittingly may conspire against insurgencies of peoples that for centuries have existed *without* history and the State—in the words of the Zapatistas, "*los muertos de siempre*" [the dead of always], whose history of oppression and resistance informs

the creation of processes of autonomization (Subcomandante Marcos 1995: 2, 44). Our writings as intellectuals should remain vigilant of the epistemic violence we inflict with our slogans, generalizations, and desires to constitute a master model for interpreting the globalization that haunts us all but with different degrees of virulence. If the Zapatista definition of the multitude, of all those who are persecuted by neoliberalism for their singularity, travels well into the metropolitan centers of Europe, the US, Latin America, and elsewhere in the world, we should keep in mind the following assessment of the Zapatistas in Chiapas:

> *Este es un territorio rebelde, en resistencia, invadido por decenas de milres de soldados federales, policias, servicios de inteligencia, espías de las diversas naciones "desarrolladas," funcionarios en función de contrainsurgencia, y oportunistas de todo tipo. Un territorio compuesto por decenas de miles de indígnenas mexicanos acosados, perseguidos, hostigados, atacados por negarse a dejar de ser indígenas, mexicanos y seres humanos, es decir, ciudadanos del mundo* (Sucomandante Marcos 2004d). This is a rebel territory, in resistance, invaded by tens of thousands of federal soldiers, police, intelligence services, spies from the various "developed" nations, counterintelligence officials and opportunists of all types. A territory composed of tens of thousands of Mexican indigenous, harassed, persecuted, attacked for refusing to stop being indigenous, Mexican and human beings, that is, citizens of the world (Translated by irlandesa).

Endnotes

[1]Hardt and Negri cite Marx's letter of March 8, 1881, to Vera Zasulich (2004: 379-380). Also consider Lenin's view of the communes as a model for the Soviets in the *April Theses* and *The State and the Revolution*.

[2] As Derrida puts it: "*Globalatinization* (essentially Christian, to be sure), this word names a unique event to which a meta-language seems incapable of acceding, although such a language remains, all the same, of the greatest necessity here. For at the same time that we no longer perceive its limits, we know that such a globalization is finite and only projected. What is involved here is a Latinization and rather than globality, a globalization that is running out of breath [essouffée], however irresistible and imperial it may be" (Derrida 2002: 67). The undoing of the universal naming and categorization, hence erasure of indigenous concepts, of the world with a Latin-derived conceptual framework (note that Globalatinization absorbes Greco-Abrahamic cultures) could not merely consist of extending the concepts of history, modernity, and so forth to societies and cultures to which this life forms have been denied. I cannot go into any detail here, but a similar erasure of categories to Dabashi's occurs when scholars insist on proving that Mesoamerican pictorial codices are histories. For instance, Elizabeth Boone (2000) classifies the main genre of historical pictographic writing as annals, *res gestae*, and cartographic histories. Boone cites several entries from Alonso de Molina's 1571 *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana* where the Franciscan friar translates Nahuatl terms such as *veuetlatolli* as "'*historia antigua*' [old history], *o dichos de viejos* [sayings of elders]." In the section from Spanish to Nahuatl, Molina provides several entries for "*historia*," "*historia de lo presente*," "*historia de dia en dia*," "*historia de los tiempos antiguos*," but also "*historiador*" and "*historial cosa*," which suggests that for at least this missionary the denial of history was not really an issue. On the contrary, the reduction of all pictographic writing in the colonial period to "history" suggests the neutralization of forms of knowledge that would have threatened the imposition of Christianity as the sole version of the sacred. *Mere* history without myth would be first invented and then expropriated for the administration of the colonial state. This does not mean that the enterprise was successful, rather that we should develop strategies of reading that avoid the reduction of pictographic texts to just history, and go beyond merely recognizing mythic components. Boone also mentions that for Miguel León Portilla the Nahuatl word for history is *ihtloca*, which Boone translates as "what is said about something or someone" (76). No wonder Guha warns us about the poverty of historiography.

[3] Clastres's usage of the terms *Savages* and *Primitives* might strike the reader as dated categories of a former Anthropology that defined itself as the study of primitive forms of life, but his work seeks to debunk the prejudices and stereotypes. The primitive as "societies against the state," to paraphrase the title of his best known book, *La société contre l'état*, has many lessons to teach those of us who are in this volume reflecting on political action that no longer aspires to take over the State. Observe that if Hardt and Negri call our attention to this possibility, they don't develop it beyond this statement: "We need to grasp the kind of struggles that Clastres sees and recognize the adequate form in our present age" (Hardt and Negri 2004: 90). For a most lucid assessment of the new struggles that do not aspire to take over the State, see John Holloway (2002).

[4] Among the Spanish chroniclers of the sixteenth century, the clearest exposition of Amerindian societies with different degrees of social evolution is José de Acosta's classification in terms of savages (those who wonder through the forest with no pattern of settlement), *behetrías* (small cheifdoms), and empires (as in the case of the Mexica and the Inca). For a critique of the long history of the policies and hierarchies that have undermined *Savage* peoples in the Americas, see Verdesio (2001).

[5] Let's note, however, that Marcos reiterates commonplaces that convey the effects of an internalization of denial of history and the attribution of backwardness when he assesses the accomplishments and shortcomings of the first year of the Juntas de Buen Gobierno. In speaking of the schools in the Caracoles, Marcos tells us that "*'Mariya' ya sabe escribir su nombre y te puede contar que los antiguos mexicanos tenían una cultura muy avanzada*" ["Mariya" already knows how to write her name and she can tell that the ancient Mexicans had a very advanced culture] (Subcomandante Marcos, "Leer un video: sexta parte" 2004a). The language of progress, of "advanced culture" can actually backfire in two ways: one, it could lead to differentiating one's ancestors as advanced with respect to *Primitive* contemporary peoples; two, it could reintroduce the commonplace that today's Indians are shadows of the great civilization of yesterday whose knowledge was much like that of modern science, and, thereby invalidating indigenous knowledge today. Marcos furthers this commonplace when he praises those who "*levantan escuelas y conocimientos donde antes sólo había ignorancia*" [build schools and knowledge where there was only ignorance before] (ibid.). These inconsistencies in Marcos' generally generous evaluation of indigenous cultures *today* repeat the *indigenista* policies that the Mexican State implemented after the Mexican Revolution to integrate the Pre-Columbian past as integral component of the identity of the nation and to conduct literacy campaigns that would bring knowledge to ignorant Indians. Minimally, these statements contradict Marcos's insistence of the right Indians have to exist

as Indians. These are comments made in passing, perhaps, unimportant, but, perhaps, also indicative of a developmentalist mentality that undermines indigenous knowledges.

[6] Last August Marcos wrote an eight part communiqué titled "*Para leer un video*," in which he assesses the accomplishments and the shortcomings of the first year since the implementation of the Juntas de Buen Gobierno, also known as Caracoles. These communiqués and their translation into several languages can be accessed at: http://www.fzln.org.mx/. In this site, you will also find the communiqués that first instituted the Caracoles in August 2003. The term *caracol*, literally, snail, refers to the symbolic political, cognitive, spiritual, and epistemological meanings the structure of sea snails has had in Mesoamerica since precolonial times. Whereas representative democracies build their authority on a concept of the people that subordinates differences to unity, the Zapatista maxim of "*mandar obedeciendo*" calls forth the direct participation of all the members of a given community and thereby affirms the diversity of the multitude. If the first privileges *constituted* power, the latter insures the prevalence of *constituent* power (Rabasa 2003; Negri 1999)

[7] This effort to define the "challenge for this conception of African modernity" risks reproducing the elements characteristic of the persecutory society that, according to Robert I. Moore, emerged in Europe in the 11th century, and has been a continuous characteristic of European society (and others where it extended its colonial power) ever since. Moore argues that if there have been societies that persecute all over the world and history, Europe alone developed a persecutory society. He extends his argument to the differentiation between societies with slaves and (European) slave societies, societies with writing and (European) writing societies (Moore 1990).

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¡Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico, **By Lynn Stephen. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 460 pages. $24.95 paperback. ISBN: 0520230523**

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When one considers southern Mexico and the current social instability in the region, the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas automatically comes to mind. Chiapas and southern Mexico were regions ignored by most of the international community prior to the Zapatista rebellion in 1994. Now more and more scholars are writing books, articles, and other literature in an attempt to explain the many complex aspects and social and political situations occurring in southern Mexico.

Lynn Stephens makes this the focus of her new book, *Zapata Lives: Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico.* The result is an excellent addition to the literature of struggle and culture in southern Mexico. Stephens assess how Emiliano Zapata and his mythological character has been distinctly used as a rally figure by peasants in Oaxaca and in Chiapas. In addition, Stephens looks at the role of the government in portraying the legacy of Zapata and how some consider it as pure government hypocrisy - since the Mexican state has done the opposite in implementing Zapata's reforms. The politicalization of peasants in Chiapas and Oaxaca represents how people have organized themselves to struggle against Mexico's ruling party, the PRI, and struggle to carry out Zapata's reforms.

Stephens provides an in-depth analysis of the development of movements carried out by peasants in Mexico's poorest southern states, Oaxaca and Chiapas, by using significant oral history and interviews. Each chapter eloquently depicts the manner in which new movements in southern Mexico have

developed and challenged the current system's attempts to continually ignore and overlook indigenous and peasant rights. She assesses a variety of movements and points out the differences and commonalities between the Zapatistas and *ejidatarios* in Oaxaca, demonstrating that although they are from different parts of the country they have common interests and an icon, like Zapata. By bridging together past and present social movements, Stephens helps to create an understanding of how pre-Zapatista movements have influenced and developed the blueprints for the Zapatistas associated with the EZLN as well as current social movements in Oaxaca.

Three themes are fully developed and expanded and are necessary in fulfilling the goal of the book. The first theme discusses the Mexican government's attempt to institutionalize the goals of the Mexican Revolution. This attempt occurred from 1910-1921, by way of "socialist education" and the government's desire to formulate a concrete Mexican nationalism. The second theme explains the importance of glorified mythological leaders of the Mexican Revolution, such as Emiliano Zapata and Lázaro Cárdenas, and their roles as figures for articulating rebellion during post-revolutionary struggles. The third theme is an in-depth analysis of the current situation in Chiapas and Oaxaca, where organizations such as the EZLN, have continued the struggle for basic human rights by incorporating Zapatismo into their strategies. The Zapatistas and *ejidatarios* have responded by accusing the government of staining the name of Zapata by using him to make it seem the government is working to implement the reforms of the Revolution.

By providing the reader with an introduction to various social movements of peasants and farmers struggling against landowners, one can see how peasants and Indians were already organizing themselves into small groups under the same banner used by General Emiliano Zapata during the Mexican Revolution. Once the Mexican Revolution ended the new govern-

ment quickly put post-revolution reforms into effect. These reforms consisted of land reforms for peasants and the establishment of *ejidos, or* communal lands, that were to be held by peasants.

What Stephens does well is examine the Mexican government's attempts to bring together the newly developed state after the revolution. As stated by Stephens, government officials, in an attempt to unify and consolidate the Mexican population, quickly sought to educate citizens by mobilizing the figure of Emiliano Zapata and by using the distribution of land to rural communities. If the people noticed the government was working to fulfill the promises of Zapata through their new programs of land reform and distribution, the government could assure an alliance between *ejido* communities. This was also a strategical move by the PRI to guarantee votes and to remain in power.

The government failed because these states were excluded when it came to receiving land through reform. In addition, few Indians were able to bridge a connection with Zapata because he was unknown to many of the communities because the government's "socialist education" was limited to deeply rural villages; the Zapatistas made sure they did not make the same mistakes as the post-revolutionary government. The Zapatista adopted the ideologies of Emiliano Zapata and Lázaro Cárdenas while creating an interpretation that incorporated indigenous culture. This resulted in a local figure that became a new icon for the indigenous populace, a hybrid, Votán Zapata who was created by leaders of the Zapatistas. Stephens also explains the conflicts that nevertheless arose although these changes were accomplished. Internal problematic feuds persist and have created a gap between the leaders of organizations and their members.

Lynn Stephens has published a persuasive book that views social movements from a new, fresh perspective. Her way of depicting Zapata and his position in the rebellion challenges

the reader to analyze the myth behind Zapata and intimate connection he has not only with the Zapatistas, but also with other groups in southern Mexico. This path-finding book is extremely valuable to the development of perspective in the legacy of culture and mythology in southern Mexico.

Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local & Global Struggles of the Fourth World War, Midnight Notes Collective, (eds.), New York: Autonomedia, 2001. 262 pp. $14.00 paper. ISBN 1-57027-112-7.

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Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local & Global Struggles of the Fourth World War portrays the awakening and growth of a global struggle spreading its roots for the creation of a new world. The book's journey into the struggle of the Zapatistas and their impact on various global struggles explores the possibilities of a world where many worlds fit. The variety of struggles presented in the book are analyzed through the lens of Zapatismo. The book identifies Zapatismo as the approach the Zapatistas have followed to create change against the economic homogeneous models presented by capitalist patterns. Through the implementation of Zapatista concepts such as *caminando preguntando* (asking while walking) and *mandar obedeciendo* (governing by obeying), the EZLN places the importance on collective efforts to create change and to respond to the needs of the collective against neglect, exploitation, abuse, and injustice. Zapatismo is implemented in different ways depending on local needs and histories. What remains constant is that Zapatismo creates a collective process to identify the specific and local needs of the group and how to achieve them for instance, coffee growers in Oaxaca have implemented Zapatismo by redefining their cultivation process. They have focused their coffee production to organic in order to improve the marketability of their product. The indigenous struggles in Canada have mobilized different groups to demand land titles, access to natural resources, denunciation of police brutality against indigenous population, and the right to practice their cultural tradition.

Participants of these movements have identified their particular needs and defined their own path to follow for the betterment of their community with models that tend to fall outside capitalist patterns.

Subcomandante Marcos, the well-known spoke person of the ELZN, has stated that Zapatista supporters do not have to travel all the way to Chiapas to show their support. Support can be demonstrated through local struggles that encompass similar goals. Chapters two through four address the many spaces the Zapatistas have created such as the *encuentros* (gatherings) the Zapatistas have hosted in Chiapas. During these *encuentros*, activists from various parts of the world have convened in Zapatista territory to dialogue with each other about the directions of their struggles. Participants of these *encuentros* have returned home to create new groups or to solidify the work of their existing organization. Chapter six on "Zapata in Europe" identifies the influences of Zapatismo in social organizing. Through their support of the Zapatistas, organized groups began to articulate their local struggles to their mobilization efforts. The groups acknowledge that Zapatismo does not provide them with a model to follow, but rather with a process to reflect on their specific situation and identify ways to address change. Chapter seven, "Peoples' Global Action: Dreaming Up an Old Ghost," reflects on the birth of this organization after the 1996 Intercontinental Encounter against Neoliberalism and for Humanity in Chiapas, which was followed by the Second Encounter in Spain in 1997. People's Global Action members met during the *encuentros* and upon their return home they began organizing and mobilizing the protest against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle.

This journey also takes us to the struggles that activists have carried on in the past where solidarity work has crossed borders. Chapter eleven focuses on the life-long activist work of Shankar Guha Niyogi from India showing his vision to create solidarity work across the borders, unite struggles at a glo-

bal level, and address the specific needs across gender and class lines. Chapter fourteen focuses on the "Eulogy of Rod Thurton" and his solidarity work with the Dominican Republic as an immigrant in New York. Chapter fifteen focuses on the "Eulogy of Fernando Lopez Isunza" and his solidarity work as a Mexican immigrant in New York. These individuals identified the needs of those around them, traced a path to follow, and implemented it for the benefit of all, even at the cost of their own life. Their work shows Zapatismo in practice, prior to the emergence of the EZLN.

Solidarity work with the Zapatistas has inspired and strengthened mobilizations for a new world at the local, state, national and international level. The authors tie together a variety of global struggles under the influence of Zapatismo that are shaking the roots of capitalism. *Auroras of the Zapatistas* brings us a collection of movements that teaches us new ways to look at the world, new ways to organize and mobilize against the injustices in the world, and new ways to organize and unite against differences to create *un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos* (a world where many worlds fit).

A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible? **Tom Mertes. (ed.) 2004. New York: Verso. 288 pages, $19.00, Paperback, ISBN 1-85384-768-5.**

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Tom Mertes' edited collection *A Movement of Movements* provides a fresh and innovative collection of statements from grassroots intellectuals and academics—from both the "Global South and North"—about emergent alternatives to the crisis of capitalist social relations. Mertes' contribution examines the "rhizomatic" nature of what some refer to as the "movement of movements." Mertes explains his goal in putting the collection together as a necessary effort to "take measure" of the various movements represented in the movement in terms of membership, analyses offered, and the tendencies of their "internal structures." Throughout, Mertes and the contributors try not to lose sight of the common enemy—neoliberalism. Mertes tackles the key issues facing this decentralized networked movement by providing a venue for "leading figures from a variety of different struggles, North and South, [to] discuss their own radicalization, the history and development of their campaigns, the problems they face and the allies they have sought." A primary strength of the volume is the access it provides to an array of different voices representing "rhizomatically" linked autonomous groups including: the Zapatistas, the Sem Terra Movement, *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, the anti-privatization movement in South Africa, ATTAC, the Ruckus Society, Students Against Sweatshops, 50 Years is Enough, and participants in the World Social Forums.

In the first section, "Southern Voices," activist intellectuals from Mexico, Brazil, the Philippines, India, and Africa dis-

cuss their unique local struggles against neo-colonialism, impe-
rial war, and neoliberalism in the context of the changing con-
junctures specific to each of their locales. This section makes
clear that the "issues" of the "Global South" are not some dis-
tant occurrences happening in "exotic" places, underscoring the
dramatic impact of savage capitalism on increasingly interde-
pendent regions across the globe. Walden Bello notes that the
distinction between "the centre of the global capitalist economy
and its periphery" become blurred in the context of the expan-
sion of imperial war and neoliberalism. Bello admits that his
attraction to the "movement of movements" is due to "its strong
anti-bureaucratic impulses and its working through of the ideas
of direct democracy." Subcomandante Marcos' interview high-
lights the provocative challenge that Zapatismo has posed to
the international Left, forcing it to reconsider outdated dogmas
about "Revolution,"

> you cannot reconstruct the world or society, or rebuild
> national states now in ruins, on the basis of a quarrel
> over who will impose their hegemony on society. The
> world in general and Mexican society in particular, is
> composed of different kinds of people, and the rela-
> tions between them have to be founded on respect and
> tolerance.

Confirming the wisdom emerging from the South, Joao Pedro
Stedile explains that activists from the North can "help" the
Sem Terra Movement and "sister movements," by bringing
"down your neoliberal governments. Second, help us get rid
of foreign debt… Third, fight—build mass struggles."

In the second section, "Northern Voices," activists and
scholars analyze autonomous formations in the North, includ-
ing organizational tools, answers to misrepresentations by the
mass media, inspirations for future movements, and challenges
for future mobilizations. This section revisits the interconnected

nature of the current movements, including the political possibilities and responsibilities of transnational organizing efforts such as the anti-sweatshop campaigns, farmers' struggles, and the World Social Forums. David Graeber clears up any misconceptions some critics may have about this movement,

> This is a movement about reinventing democracy. It is not opposed to organization. It is about creating new forms of organization. It is not lacking in ideology. These new forms of organization are its ideology. It is about creating and enacting horizontal networks… based on principles of decentralized, non-hierarchical consensus democracy.

However, one weakness registered in the organizations from the North is the challenge that results from the overrepresentation of white middle class people in the ranks. Although some argue the participation of privileged sectors can dilute the militancy of movement agendas, several contributors recognize the important connections being made among activists across divides of race and class.

Part three, "Analytics," interrogates analytical dilemmas emerging from both inside and outside the academy that engage "the broader theoretical questions that confront those aiming to build global opposition to neoliberalism today." While there is some debate about which strategies are most effective for combating neoliberalism, intellectuals continue to seek theoretical clarity as part of the struggle. Certainly the contributors to this book make an important contribution in this regard, providing lucid descriptions of the historical, social, cultural, political, and economic impediments to radical alternatives, while pointing to some of the more promising elements of autonomous revolutionary mobilizations currently taking shape. This chapter is instructive in that it highlights that "the movement" must be diligent in our engagement with the theoretical and

practical insights coming from an array of voices, especially those from below. *A Movement of Movements* reminds the reader that social struggles do not occur in isolation, rather they reflect the larger social imaginary of an increasingly diverse radical internationalist Left. This movement arguably can be understood to have produced what some consider a new international, or as the Zapatistas say, an "international of hope."

A Movement of Movements will be widely read by scholars across disciplines and activists who claim the Left due to theoretical and practical insight from grassroots activist intellectuals, and academics on the ground in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States. By providing the reader access to the struggles, stories, strategies, political imaginaries, and theoretical reflections from "leading figures"—that have transformed the global political climate through innovative actions and theorizations against the common enemy, savage capitalism—the book highlights that the common thread is that this movement inspires hope for millions of people across the world that there are alternatives to neoliberalism. In conclusion, the book is a valuable addition to the literature, and clearly illustrates that revolution continues, from the Zapatista insurgency in Southern Mexico, to the *piqueteros* in Argentina, extending to the anti-privatization struggles in South Africa, and the alter-globalization and anti-war mobilizations—*in each node of the networked movement*— a myriad of different folks are screaming "another world is possible" while walking together towards her.