

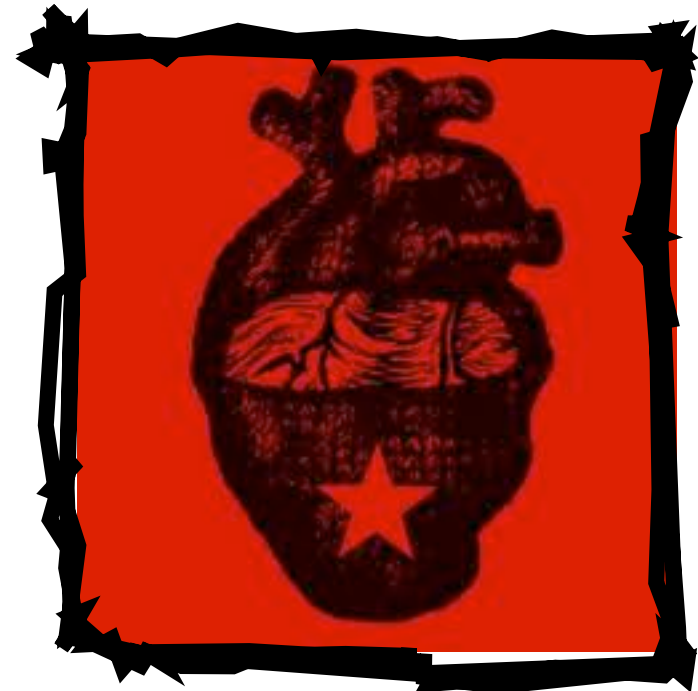
The Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle

Zapatista Army for National
Liberation(EZLN)



Z A P

ZAPATISTA AUTONOMY PROJECT



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

I. What We Are

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

lesson to all of Latin America, because you are indeed putting a halt to neoliberal globalization. And to the piqueteros and to the young people of Argentina, we want to tell you this, that we love you. And to those in Uruguay who want a better country, we admire you. And to the landless in Brazil, we respect you. And to all the young people of Latin America, what you are doing is good, and you give us great hope.

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

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

And we want to tell the world that we want to make you big, so big that all those worlds which are resisting will fit, because the neoliberals want to destroy them and because these worlds don't simply let them but keep fighting for humanity.

everything that is happening on our planet and remain quiet, as if only we are where we are.

We want is to tell all of those who are resisting and fighting all over the world in their own ways and in their own countries that you are not alone, that we, the zapatistas, though we are very small, support you and we are going to see how we can help you in your struggles and how speak to you in order to learn from you, because what we have learned, in fact, is to learn.

And we want to tell the Latin American peoples that we are proud to be a part of you, even if it is a small part. We remember quite well how the continent was illuminated some years ago, and there was a light that was called Che Guevara, just like before it was called Bolivar, because sometimes the people take up a name to show that they are taking up a flag.

And we want to tell the people of Cuba, who have now been on their path of resistance for many years, that you are not alone, and we do not agree with the blockade they are imposing, and we are going to see how to send you something, even if it is just maize, for your resistance. And we want to tell the North American people that we do not confuse things, we know that the bad governments you have and which spread harm throughout the world are one thing and that the North Americans who struggle in their country, and who are in solidarity with the struggles of other countries, are quite another. And we want to tell the Mapuche brothers and sisters in Chile that we are watching and learning from your struggles. And to the Venezuelans, we see how well you are defending your sovereignty, that is, your nation's right to decide where it is going. And to the indigenous brothers and sisters of Ecuador and Bolivia, we say you are giving a good history

from exploitation and thievery by the rich and their bad governments here, in our Mexico, and in other countries in the world.

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

And then the people from the cities went out into the streets and began shouting for an end to the war. And we stopped our war, and we listened to these brothers and sisters from the city who were telling us to try to reach an

arrangement or an accord with the bad governments, so that the problem could be resolved without a massacre. We paid attention to them, because they are what we call “the people,” that is the Mexican people. And so we set aside the fire and took up the word.

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

But it turned out that the bad governments did not want a good agreement, it was their underhanded trickery to say that they were going to talk and to reach agreements while all the while they were preparing attacks to eliminate us once and for all. And so then they attacked us several times, but they did not defeat us, because we resisted well, and many people throughout the world mobilized. So then the bad governments thought that the problem was that many people were seeing what was happening with the EZLN, and they started their plan of acting as if nothing were going on. Meanwhile they surrounded us, they laid siege to us in hopes that, since our mountains are indeed remote, people would forget about us, since zapatista lands were so far away. And every so often the bad governments would try to deceive

different. And there are priests and nuns and those they call lay people who are not with the rich and who are not resigned to merely reciting prayers, but who are organizing to accompany the struggles of the people. And there are those who are called social activists, men and women who have been fighting all their lives for exploited people, and they are the same ones who participated in the great strikes and workers’ actions, in the great citizens’ mobilizations, in the great campesino movements, and who suffer great repression, and who, even though some are old now, continue on without surrendering. They go everywhere looking to organize, seeking justice, and they create leftist organizations, non-governmental organizations, human rights organizations, organizations in defense of political prisoners and for the disappeared, leftist publications, organizations of teachers or students, social struggle, and even political-military organizations, and they are not quiet and they know so much because they have seen lived and struggled so much.

And so we see in general that in our country, which is called Mexico, there are many people who do not just put up with things, who don’t give up, who don’t sell out, that is, people with dignity. And that makes us very happy and content, because with all those people it’s not going to be so easy for the neoliberals to win, and perhaps it will be possible to save our Patria from the great thefts and destruction they are carrying out. And we hope that our “we” includes all these rebellions...

V. What We Want To Do

Now we are now going to tell you what we want to do in the world and in Mexico, because we cannot see

neoliberals, because they always rule in favor of them, and those who are not rich get injustice, jails, and cemeteries.

Well, even with all this mess the neoliberals are making, there are Mexican men and women who are organizing and making a struggle of resistance. And we discovered that there are indigenous, that their lands are far away from us here in Chiapas, and that they are creating their autonomy and defending their culture and caring for their land, forests, and water. And there are workers in the countryside, campesinos, who are organizing and holding marches and mobilizations in order to demand credits and aid for the countryside. And there are workers in the city who do not let their rights be taken away or their jobs privatized. They protest and demonstrate so the little they have isn't taken away from them and so that the country isn't robbed of what is its own, like electricity, oil, social security, and education. And there are students who don't let education be privatized and who are fighting for it to be free and public and scientific, that is, so it doesn't cost money to go, so that everyone can learn, and so they don't teach nonsense. And there are women who do not let themselves be treated as ornaments or be humiliated and despised just for being women, but who are organizing and fighting for the respect they deserve as the women they are. And there are young people who don't accept being brutalized with drugs or being persecuted for their way of being, but who make themselves aware with their music and their culture, their rebellion. And there are homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals, those of other ways who do not put up with being ridiculed, despised, mistreated, and even killed for having another way which is different, or with being treated as abnormal or criminal, but who make their own organizations in order to defend their right to be

us or to attack us, like in February of 1995 when they came at us with a huge number of soldiers, but they did not defeat us. Because, as it began to be said, we were not alone, and many people supported us, and we resisted well.

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

going on, we zapatistas were putting our all into trying to get the accords fulfilled and in resisting in the mountains of the Mexican southeast.

And so we began speaking with other Indian peoples of Mexico and their organizations, and we made an agreement with them that we were going to struggle together for the same thing, for the recognition of indigenous rights and culture. Now we were also being supported by many people all over the world and by persons who were well-respected and whose word was great because they were great intellectuals, artists, and scientists from Mexico and from all over the world. And we also held international encounters, that is, we got together with persons from America and from Asia and from Europe and from Africa and from Oceania to talk, and we learned of their struggles and their ways, and we said these were “intergalactic” encounters, just to be silly and because we had indeed invited those from other planets, but apparently they did not come, or perhaps they did come but they did not say so clearly.

But in any case the bad governments did not keep their word, and so we made a plan to talk with many Mexicans so they would support us. First, in 1997, we held a march to Mexico City called “of the 1,111,” because one compañero or compañera from each zapatista village went, but the bad government did not pay any attention. And then, in 1999, we held a referendum throughout the entire country, and there it was seen that the majority were indeed in agreement with the demands of the Indian peoples, but again the bad governments did not pay any attention. And finally, in 2001, we held what was called the “march for indigenous dignity,” which had much support from millions of Mexicans and people from other countries, and it arrived to where the senators and

they say, that they are without shame. And they are without shame because they do not, in fact, have a Patria. All they have are bank accounts.

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

Are we saying that politics serves no purpose? No, we are saying that THIS politics serves no purpose. It is useless because it does not take the people into account. It does not listen to them, it does not pay any attention to them, it just approaches them when there are elections. And they do not even come after votes anymore, the polls alone are enough to say who wins. And then it's all promises about they're going to do this and they're going to do that and then later goodbye, you don't see them again until they appear in the news for having stolen a lot of money and nothing is going to be done to them because the law – which those same politicians made – protects them.

Because that's another problem, the Constitution is all warped and changed now. It's no longer the one that had the rights and liberties of working people. Now it's about the rights and liberties of the neoliberals so they can have their huge profits. And the judges are there to serve those

companies don't work well and they need to be modernized, and it's better to sell them off. But instead of things getting better, the social rights which were won in the revolution of 1910 are now cause for pity... and outrage. And they also said that the borders must be opened so that foreign capital can enter, and that way all the Mexican businesses will catch up and things will be better. But now we see that there aren't even national businesses, that foreigners ate them all up, and what they sell is worse than what Mexico made.

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

So the neoliberals want to kill Mexico, our Mexican Patria. And the political parties not only do not defend it, they are the first to put themselves at the service of foreigners, especially those from the United States, and they are the ones who are in charge of deceiving us, making us look the other way while everything is sold, and they pocket the money. And that's all the political parties that exist right now, not just some of them. Think about whether anything has been done well, and you will see that no, it's nothing but theft and scams. And look how all the politicians always have their nice houses and their nice cars and their luxuries. And they still want us to thank them and to vote for them again. And it is obvious, as

representatives were, in the Congress of the Union, in order to demand the recognition of the Mexican indigenous.

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

So then we saw quite clearly that there was no point to dialogue and negotiation with the bad governments of Mexico. That it was a waste of time for us to be talking with the politicians, because neither their hearts nor their words were honest. They were crooked and they lied, saying that they would keep their word but they did not. In other words, on that day, when the politicians from the PRI, PAN, and PRD approved a law that was useless, they killed the dialogue once and for all and they made it clear that it does not matter what they had agreed to and sign, because their word is no good. So from then on we did not have any contact with the federal powers because we understood that dialogue and negotiation had failed as a result of those political parties. We saw that blood did not matter to them, nor did death, suffering, mobilizations, consultations, efforts, national and international pronouncements, encounters, accords, signatures, commitments. And so the political class not only closed,

one more time, the door to the Indian peoples, they also delivered a mortal blow to the peaceful resolution – through dialogue and negotiation – of the war. It can also no longer be believed that accords will be fulfilled with whomever they are made. Take note of that and learn from our experience.

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

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

II. Where We Are Now

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

Well, we then began putting a lot of effort into the Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities in Rebellion – which is how the peoples organized to govern themselves – in

city’s workers on street corners selling gum or telephone cards. In other words, there is absolute economic destruction in the cities as well.

And then what happens is that, with the people’s economy being totally screwed in the countryside as well as in the city, many Mexican men and women have to leave their Patria, Mexican lands, and go to seek work in another country, the United States. And there they do not treat them well, but rather they exploit them, persecute them, treat them with contempt, and even kill them. Under neoliberalism which is imposed on us by the bad governments, the economy has not improved. On the contrary, the countryside is in great need, and there is no work in the cities. What is happening is that Mexico is being turned into a place where people are working for the wealth of foreigners, mostly rich gringos, a place you are just born into for a little while, and in another little while you die. That is why we say that Mexico is dominated by the United States.

And its not only that. Neoliberalism has also changed the Mexican political class, the politicians, making them into something like employees in a store who have to do everything possible to sell everything and to sell it very cheap. You have already seen that they changed the laws in order to remove Article 27 from the Constitution so that ejidal and communal lands could be sold. That was Salinas de Gortari, and he and his gang said that it was for the good of the countryside and the campesino, and that was how they would prosper and live better. Has it been like that? The Mexican countryside is worse off than ever and the campesinos more screwed than under Porfirio Diaz. And they also say they are going to privatize—that is, sell to foreigners—the companies held by the State in order to help the well-being of the people, because the

countryside and industry and national commerce, are being destroyed, and just a bit of rubble remains, which they will surely sell off as well.

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

As for the worker in the city, well the factories close and they are left without work, or these things called maquiladoras [factory workplaces, often in border zones] are opened, which are foreign and which pay a pittance for many hours of work. And then the price of the goods the people need doesn't even matter, because whether they're expensive or cheap, there is no pay anyway. And if someone was working in a small or midsize business, now they are not, because it has been closed and bought by a big transnational. And if someone had a small business, it disappeared as well, or they had to start doing clandestine work for big businesses which exploit them terribly, and which even put young children to work. And if the worker belonged to a union in order to demand his legal rights, well now that same union tells him he will have to put up with his salary being lowered or his hours or his benefits being taken away, because, if not, the business will close and move to another country. And then there is the "microchangarro" [small business] which is something like the government's economic program for putting all the

order to make them stronger. This method of autonomous government was not simply invented by the EZLN, but rather comes from centuries of indigenous resistance and from the zapatistas' own experience. It is the self-governance of the communities. In other words, no one from outside comes to govern, but the people themselves decide, among themselves, who governs and how, and, if they do not obey, they are removed. That is, if the person who is supposed to govern does not obey the people, they pursue that person, that person is removed from authority, and another comes in.

But then we saw that the Autonomous Municipalities were not equal. There were some that were more advanced and which had more support from civil society, and others were neglected. We needed to organize things to make them more on a par with each other. And we also saw that the EZLN, with its political-military component, was involving itself in decisions that belonged to the democratic authorities, "civilians," as they say. And here the problem is that the political-military component of the EZLN is not democratic, because it is an army. And we saw that the military being above and the democratic below was not good, because what is democratic should not be decided militarily, it should be the reverse: the democratic-political governing above, and the military obeying below. Or perhaps it would be better with nothing below, with everything completely level, without any military, and that is why the zapatistas are soldiers, so that there will not have to be soldiers anymore. Anyway, what we did about this problem was to begin separating the political-military from the autonomous and democratic aspects of organization in the zapatista communities. And so, actions and decisions which had previously been handled by the EZLN were passed, little by little, to the democratically elected authorities in the

villages. It is easy to say, of course, but it was very difficult in practice, because many years had passed, first in the preparation for the war and then the war itself, and the political– military aspects had become customary. But, regardless, we managed to do it, because it is our way to do what we say we are going to do, because if not, why are we go around saying things and then not do them.

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

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

The EZLN, during these 4 years, also handed over to the Good Government Juntas and the Autonomous Municipalities the aid and contacts which they had attained throughout Mexico and the world during these years of war and resistance. The EZLN, during that time, had also been building economic and political support which gave the zapatista communities fewer difficulties as they advanced in the building of their autonomy and in improving their living conditions. It was not much, but it

groups who exist all over the world but who we do not see until they shout enough of being despised, and they rise up, and then we see them, we hear them, and we learn from them.

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

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

IV. How We See Our Country Which is Mexico

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

system, their political system, and it also destroys the ways in which those who live in that country relate to each other. So everything that makes a country a country is left destroyed.

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

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

But it is not so easy for neoliberal globalization, because the exploited of each country become discontented, and they do not say oh well, but rather they rebel. And those who are unnecessary and who are in the way resist, and they don't allow themselves to be eliminated. And that is why we see, all over the world, those who are being screwed over creating resistances, not letting it happen, in other words, they rebel, and not just in one country but wherever they abound. And so, just as there is a neoliberal globalization, there is a globalization of rebellion.

And it is not just the workers of the countryside and of the city who appear in this globalization of rebellion, but others appear who are persecuted and despised for the same reason, for not letting themselves be dominated, like women, young people, the indigenous, homosexuals, lesbians, transsexual persons, migrants, and many other

was far better than what they had prior to the beginning of the uprising in January of 1994. If you look at one of those studies the government makes, you will see that the only indigenous communities which have improved their living conditions – whether that be in health, education, food or housing – were those which are in zapatista territory, where our villages are. And all of that has been possible because of the progress made by the zapatista villages and because of all the support which has been received from good and noble persons, whom we call “civil societies,” and from their organizations throughout the world. It is as though all of these people have made “another world is possible” a reality, but through actions, not just words.

And the villages have made good progress. Now there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning to govern. And – little by little – there are more women going into this work, but there is still a lack of respect for the compañeras, and a lack of their participation in the work of the struggle. And, also through the Good Government Juntas, coordination has been improved between the Autonomous Municipalities and in the resolution of problems with other organizations and with the official authorities. There has also been much improvement in the projects in the communities, and the distribution of projects and aid given by civil society from all over the world has become more balanced. Health and education have improved, although there is still a good deal lacking for it to be what it should be. The same is true for housing and food, and in some areas there has been much improvement with the problem of land, because the lands recovered from the finqueros [large property owners] are being redistributed, though there are areas which continue to suffer from a lack of lands to cultivate. And there has been great improvement in the

support from national and international civil society, because previously everyone took aid wherever they wanted, and now the Good Government Juntas are directing them to where the greatest need exists. And, similarly, everywhere there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning to relate to persons from other parts of Mexico and of the world; they are learning to respect and to demand respect. They are learning that there are many worlds, and that everyone has their place, their time, and their way, and therefore there must be mutual respect between everyone.

We, the zapatistas of the EZLN, have devoted this time to our principal strength, to the people who support us. And the situation has in fact improved some. No one can say that the zapatista organization and struggle has been for nothing, but rather, even if they were to do away with us completely, our struggle has indeed been of some use.

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

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

Then the one which wages the conquest, capitalism, does as it wants, it destroys or changes what it does not like and eliminates what gets in its way, for example, those who do not produce or buy or sell modern merchandise, or those who rebel against that order. And they despise those who are of no use to them. That is why the indigenous get in the way of neoliberal capitalism, and that is why they despise them and want to eliminate them. And neoliberal capitalism also gets rid of the laws that do not allow them to exploit and to have a lot of profit. They demand that everything can be bought and sold, and, since capitalism has all the money, it buys everything. Capitalism destroys the countries it conquers with neoliberal globalization, but it also wants to rearrange everything, to make it over again, but in its own way, a way which benefits capitalism and which doesn't allow anything to get in its way. So neoliberal globalization, capitalism, destroys what exists in these countries, it destroys their culture, their language, their economic

or that they barely paid her a pittance of money, and that she lives far away from work and spends a lot on the trip, and, and that, in addition, she runs the risk of being kidnapped, raped, and killed as happens in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico.

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

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

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

Then, in neoliberal globalization, the big capitalists who live in the powerful countries, like the United States, want the entire world to be made into something like a big business where merchandise is produced, and into a big market, a world market for buying and selling the entire

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

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

To our way of thinking, and what we see in our heart, we have reached a point where we cannot go any further, and where in fact we could lose everything we have if we

remain as we are and do nothing more in order to move forward. The hour has come to take a risk once again and to take a step which is dangerous but worthwhile. Because, perhaps united with other social sectors who suffer the same needs as we do, it will be possible to achieve what we need and what we deserve. A new step forward in the indigenous struggle is only possible if the indigenous join together with workers, campesinos, students, teachers, employees... the workers of the city and the countryside.

III. How We See the World

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

So capitalism means that there a few who have great wealth, but it's not that they won a prize, or found a treasure, or inherited from a relative, but rather they obtained that wealth through the exploitation of the work of the many. So capitalism is based on the exploitation of the workers, which means they exploit the workers to extract all the profits they can. This is done unjustly, because they do not pay workers what their work is worth. Instead they give the worker a salary that barely allows

them eat a little and to rest for a bit, and the next day they goes back to work in exploitation machine, whether in the countryside or in the city.

And capitalism also makes its wealth from plunder, or theft, because it takes away from others whatever it wants – land, for example, and natural resources. So capitalism is a system where the thieves are free and admired and used as model examples.

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

Capitalism is most interested in merchandise, because buying or selling merchandise produces profits. So capitalism turns everything into merchandise, it makes merchandise of people, of nature, of culture, of history, of conscience. According to capitalism, everything must be able to be bought and sold. And it hides everything behind the merchandise so we don't see the exploitation that it carries out. And then the merchandise is bought and sold in a market. And the market, in addition to being used for buying and selling, is also used to hide the exploitation of the workers. In the market, for example, we see coffee in its little package or its pretty little jar, but we do not see the campesino who suffered in order to harvest the coffee, and we do not see the coyote who paid the campesino so cheaply for his work, and we do not see the workers in the large company working their hearts out to package the coffee. Or we see an appliance for listening to music like cumbias, rancheras, or corridos, or whatever, and we think that it is really good because it has a good sound, but we do not see the worker in the maquiladora who struggled for many hours hooking up the cables and putting the parts of the appliance together,