

# **Them and Us VII. The Smallest of them All, 7th and Final Part: On Doubts, Shadows, and a One-Word Summary**

March 16, 2013

**THEM AND US VII.**

**The Smallest of Them All, 7th and Final Part**

**7. On Doubts, Shadows, and A One-Word Summary**

March 2013

## **Doubts**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lets return to methodical doubt:

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

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

What if the autonomous schools don't actually exist?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## **Shadows.**

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

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

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

From all five continents arrived gazes that, from below and to the left, offered their respect and support. And with this respect and support not only schools and hospitals were built, but we also the indigenous

Zapatista heart that, through those gazes, through those windows, were able to look out to all of the corners of the world.

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

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

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

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

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

(....)

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

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

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

They come and go, they live, they struggle and die in silence, without making any fuss, and without anyone, besides ourselves, noticing them. They have no face and no life to themselves. Their names, their stories, may only come to mind after many calendars have come and gone. Maybe then around a fire, while the coffee is at a boil in an old pewter pot and the fire of the word has been ignited, someone or something will toast to their memory.

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

**“There Will Be a Time...”**

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

(this will not continue)

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

The Zapatista Army for National Liberation.

From the Mountains of Southeastern Mexico.

Subcomandante Insurgent Marcos.

Mexico, March 2013.

An Anticipatory P.S.: There will be more writings, don't get happy ahead of yourselves. They will be

primarily from Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés regarding the little school: the dates, the places, the invitations, the sign-up, the propaedeutics, the rules, the grade levels, the uniforms, the school supplies, the grades, the extra help, where you can find the exams with all the answers etc... But if you ask us how many grade levels there are [in our little school] and how much time it will take until graduation, we will answer: we (women and men) have been here for more than 500 years and we are still learning.

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

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

‘We came to learn.’

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

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

Learning, they stayed there for years and years.

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

‘I am another you.’

‘You are another me.’ “

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

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

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

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

*Vale de Nuez.*

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

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***A poem by Mario Benedetti** (which responds to the question of why, despite everything, we sing), put to music by Alberto Favero. Here performed by Silvana Garre, Juan Carlos Baglietto, Nito Mestre. ¡Ni perdón ni olvido!*

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***Camila Moreno performs “De la tierra,” dedicated to the Mapuche warrior of struggle, Jaime Mendoza Collio, shot in the back by police.***

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***Mercedes Sosa, ours, everyone’s, of all times, singing Rafael Amor’s “Corazón Libre.” The message is terrible and wonderful: never give up.***