

Closing Words of the EZLN at the Intercontinental Encounter* 2nd Declaration of La Realidad

Brothers and sisters attending the First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism:

Welcome to the Zapatista R/reality. Welcome to this territory in struggle for humanity.

Welcome to this territory in rebellion against neoliberalism.

The Zapatistas greet all who attended this encounter. Here, in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast, when a collectivity greets whoever comes with good words, it is applauded. We ask that everyone greet each other and that everyone greet the delegations from: Italy, Brazil, Great Britain, Paraguay, Chile, Philippines, Germany, Peru, Argentina, Austria, Uruguay, Guatemala, Belgium, Venezuela, Iran, Denmark, Nicaragua, Zaire, France, Haiti, Ecuador, Greece, Japan, Kurdistan, Ireland, Costa Rica, Cuba, Sweden, The Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, The United States, The Basque Country, Turkey, Canada, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Australia, Mauritania, Mexico ["Norway!" and "Colombia!" were called out from the crowd].

Welcome, all men, women, children, and elders from the five continents who have responded to the invitation of the Zapatista indigenous to search for hope for humanity, against neoliberalism.

Brothers and sisters:

When this dream that today awakens in R/reality began to be dreamed by us, we thought it would be a failure. We thought that, maybe, we could gather here a few dozen persons from several countries. We were wrong. As always we were wrong. It wasn't a few dozen, but thousands of human beings, those who came from the five continents to find themselves in R/reality at the close of the twentieth century.

The word born within these mountains, these Zapatista mountains, found ears that gave it cover, that cared for and launched it anew, so that it might arrive far away and circle the world. The crazy insanity of a convocation of the five continents to reflect critically on our past, our present, and our future, found that it wasn't alone in its delirium, and soon insanities from the whole planet began to work on bringing the dream to rest in Reality, to bathe it in the mud, grow it under the rain, moisten it under the sun, speak it with the other, go drawing it, giving it form and body.

As to what happened in these days, much will be written later. Today we can say that we are certain of at least one thing. A dream dreamed in the five continents can come to make itself real in R/reality. Who now will be able to tell us that dreaming is lovely but futile? Who now will be able to argue that dreams, however many the dreamers, cannot become a reality?

How is joy dreamed in Africa? What marvels walk in the European dream? How many tomorrows does the dream enclose in Asia? To what music does the American dream dance? How does the heart speak that dreams in Oceania?

To whom does it matter how and what we dream here or in any part of the world? Who are they who dare to convene with their dream all the dreams of the world? What's happening in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast that finds echo and mirror in the streets of Europe, suburbs of Asia, rural areas of America, townships of Africa, and houses of Oceania? What's happening with the peoples of these five continents that, so we are all told, only encountered each other to make war or compete? Wasn't this turn of the century synonymous with despair, bitterness, and cynicism? From where and how did

all these dreams arrive at R/reality?

May Europe speak and recount the long bridge of its gaze that crossed the Atlantic and history in order to rediscover itself in R/reality.

May Asia speak and explain the gigantic leap of its heart to arrive and beat in R/reality.

May Africa speak and describe the lengthy sailing of its restless image to come to reflect upon itself in R/reality. May Oceania speak and tell of the multiple flight of its thought to go rebounding away until it rested in R/reality. May America speak and remember the increased feeling of its hope to arrive, remembering, to the point of renewing itself in R/reality.

May the five continents speak and everyone listen. May humanity suspend for a moment its silence of shame and anguish. May humanity speak. May humanity listen....

In the world of those who live in the Power and kill for the Power, the human being doesn't fit, there is no space for hope, no place for tomorrow. Slavery or death is the alternative that their world offers all worlds.

The world of money, their world, governs from the stock exchanges. Speculation is today the principal source of enrichment and, at the same time, the best demonstration of the atrophy of the human being's capacity to work. Work is no longer necessary in order to produce wealth; now all that's needed is speculation.

Crimes and wars are carried out so that the global stock exchanges may be pillaged by one or another.

Meanwhile, millions of women, millions of youths, millions of indigenous, millions of homosexuals, millions of human beings of all races and colors only participate in the financial markets as a devalued currency worth always less and less, the currency of their blood making profits.

The globalization of markets is erasing borders for speculation and crime and multiplying them for human beings. Countries are obligated to erase their national borders when it comes to the circulation of money but to multiply their internal borders.

Neoliberalism doesn't turn countries into only one country, it turns each one of them into many countries.

The lie of unipolarity and internationalisation turns itself into a nightmare of war, a fragmented war, again and again, so many times that nations are pulverised. In this world that the Power is globalizing in order to get around the obstacles to its war of conquest, national governments are turned into the military underlings of a new world war against humanity.

From the stupid career of nuclear armament, destined to annihilate humanity in one blow with nuclear weapons, it has gone to the absurd militarization of all aspects of the life of national societies, a militarization destined to annihilate humanity in many blows, in many places, and in many ways. What were formerly known as "national armies" are turning into simple units of a greater army, the one that neoliberalism arms and leads against humanity. The end of the so-called Cold War didn't stop the arming of the world, it only changed the model of this mortal merchandising: weapons of all sizes and for all kinds of criminal tastes. More and more, not only are the so-called "institutional" armies armed, but also the armies that drug trafficking builds up to assure its empire. More or less rapidly, national societies are being militarised and the armies supposedly created to protect their borders from foreign enemies are turning their cannons and rifles around and aiming them inward.

It is not possible for neoliberalism to become the world's reality without the argument of death served up by institutional and private armies, without the gag served up by prisons, without the blows and assassinations served up by the military and police. National repression is the necessary premise for the globalization that neoliberalism imposes.

The more neoliberalism advances as a global system, the more numerous grow the weapons and the ranks of the armies and national police. The numbers of the imprisoned, the disappeared, and the assassinated in different countries also grows. A world war: the

most brutal, the most complete, the most universal, the most effective.

Each country, each city, each rural area, each house, each person, everything is a large or small battleground. On the one side is neoliberalism with all its repressive power and all its machinery of death; on the other side is the human being.

There are those who resign themselves to being one more number in the huge bolsa--pouch/purse/exchange--of Power. There are those who resign themselves to being slaves. He who is also master to other slaves cynically walks the slave's horizontal ladder. In exchange for the bad life and the crumbs that Power hands out, there are those who sell themselves, resign themselves, surrender themselves. In any part of the world, there are slaves who say they are happy being slaves. In any part of the world there are men and women who stop being human and take their place in the gigantic market that trades in dignities.

But there are those who do not resign themselves, there are those who decide to be uncomfortable, there are those who do not sell themselves, there are those who do not surrender themselves. There are, around the world, those who resist being annihilated in this war. There are those who decide to fight.

In any place in the world, anytime, any man or woman rebels to the point of tearing off the clothes that resignation has woven for them and that cynicism has dyed grey. Any man, any woman, of whatever colour in whatever tongue, says and says to himself, to herself, "Enough already"--Ya Basta!

Enough already of lies. Enough already of crime. Enough already of death. "Enough already of war," any man, any woman, says and says to himself, to herself.

In whatever part of any of the five continents any man, any woman, eagerly resists the Power and constructs his own, her own, road that doesn't imply the loss of dignity and hope.

Any man or any woman decides to live and struggle for his part, her part, in history. No longer does the Power dictate his steps, her steps; no longer does the Power administer life and decide death.

Any man or any woman responds to death with life. And responds to the nightmare by dreaming and struggling against war, against neoliberalism, for humanity....

For struggling for a better world all of us are fenced in, threatened with death. The fence is reproduced globally. In every continent, every city, every rural area, every house, the Power's fence of war closes in on the rebels whom humanity always thanks.

But fences are broken. In every house, in every rural area, in every city, in every state, in every country, on every continent the rebels, that the history of humanity repeats along its entire course to assure itself of hope, struggle and the fence shakes.

The rebels search each other out. They walk towards one another. They find each other and together break other fences. In the rural areas and cities, in the states, in the nations, on the continents, the rebels begin to recognise themselves, to know themselves to be equal and different. They continue on their fatiguing walk, walking as it is now necessary to walk, that is to say, struggling....

A R/reality spoke to them then. Rebels from the five continents heard it and set off walking.

To arrive at the intercontinental R/reality, each one has had to make his own, her own, road. From the five arms of the star of the world, the step of men and women, whose dignified word searched for the place to be spoken and heard, has arrived at R/reality, the place of the encounter.

It was necessary to break through many fences to arrive to break through the fence around R/reality. There are different fences. In ours, one must get past the police, customs officials, tanks, cannons, trenches, planes, helicopters, rain, mud, insects. Each one of the rebels from the five continents has his own, her own, fence, own struggle, and a broken fence to add to the memory of other rebels.

So it was that this intercontinental encounter began. It was initiated on all the continents, in all the countries,

in all the places where any man or woman began to say and say to themselves, "Enough already!"

Who can say in what precise locale, and at what exact hour and date this intercontinental encounter for humanity and against neoliberalism began? We don't know. But we do know who initiated it. All the rebels around the world started it. Here, we are only a small part of those rebels, it's true. But to all the diverse fences that all the rebels of the world break every day, you have added one more rupture, that of the fence around the Zapatista R/reality.

In order to achieve that, you had to struggle against your respective governments and then confront the "fence" of papers and procedures with which the Mexican government thought to detain you. You are all fighters, men and women who break through fences of all kinds. That's why you made it to R/reality. Maybe you can't yet see the greatness of your achievement, but we do see it.

That is why we want to ask your forgiveness for the stupidity of the Mexican government that, by means of its immigration agents, has done everything possible to impede your arrival at these Zapatista lands. These agents of idiocy-made-government believe that passports and permits are still necessary in order to speak and listen to dignity. We are sure that all of you will know how to comprehend why this imbecility believes that nationality divides human beings. We ask that you pardon them. After all, we have to thank the Mexican government that has reminded us that we are all different, even though it has done so with this poor exhibition. But we also have to thank the indigenous communities who received us these days, they who have reminded us that we are all equal.

That is why we, the Zapatistas, have proposed to struggle for a better government here in Mexico. We are struggling to have a government that is even a little intelligent and that understands that dignity doesn't know about passports, visas, and other absurdities. This is what we are about now, and we will surely achieve it.

But while this is going on, we ask in the name of the indigenous communities, when you pass the immigration checkpoints on your way out that you do us the favour of congratulating the Mexican government on the success it achieved with the fence put up against an indigenous rebel movement that, it is plainly evident, only has any influence in four municipalities of the south-eastern Mexican state of Chiapas.

Some of the best rebels from the five continents arrived in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. All of them brought their ideas, their hearts, their worlds. To find themselves among other ideas, other reasons, other worlds, for that they arrived at R/reality.

A world made of many worlds found itself these days in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. A world made of many worlds opened a space and established its right to be possible, raised the banner of being necessary, fastened to the middle of the earth's R/reality to announce a better future. A world of all the worlds that rebel and resist the Power, a world of all the worlds that inhabit this world opposing cynicism, a world that struggles for humanity and against neoliberalism. This was the world that we lived these days;

this is the world that we found here....

This encounter doesn't end in R/reality. It just so happens that now it must search for a place to continue on.

But what next?

A new number in the useless enumeration of the numerous international orders?

A new scheme that calms and alleviates the anguish of a lack of recipes?

A global program for world revolution?

A theorisation of Utopia so that it can continue to maintain a prudent distance from the reality that anguishes us?

An "organigram" that assures all of us a position, a task, a title, and no work?

The echo continues, the reflected image of the possible and forgotten: the possibility and

necessity of speaking and listening.

Not the echo that peters out or the force that decreases after its highest apex.

Yes, the echo that breaks barriers and continues.

The echo of small distinction, the local and particular, reverberating in the echo of great distinction, the intercontinental and galactic.

The echo that recognises the existence of the other and does not overpower or attempt to silence the other.

The echo that takes its place and speaks its own voice and speaks the voice of the other.

The echo that reproduces its own sound and opens itself to the sound of the other.

The echo of this rebel voice transforming itself and renewing itself in other voices.

An echo that turns itself into many voices, into a network of voices that, before the deafness of the Power, opts to speak to itself, knowing itself to be one and many,

acknowledging itself to be equal in its desire to

listen and be listened to, recognising itself as different in the tonalities and levels of voices forming it.

A network of voices that resist the war that the Power wages on them.

A network of voices that not only speak, but also struggle and resist for humanity and against neoliberalism.

A network of voices that are born resisting, reproducing their resistance in other even quieter or lonelier voices.

A network that covers the five continents and helps to resist the death that the Power promises us.

The great pocket of voices, sounds that search for their place, fitting with others continues.

The great torn pocket, that keeps the best of itself and opens itself for what's better to be born and to grow continues.

The mirror-pocket of voices, the world in which sounds may be listened to separately, recognising their specificity, the world in which sounds may include themselves in one great sound continues.

The reproduction of resistance's, the "I am not resigned," the "I am a rebel" continues.

The world with the many worlds that the world needs continues.

Humanity, recognising itself to be plural, different, inclusive, tolerant of itself, with hope continues.

The human and rebel voice, consulted on the five continents in order to become a network of voices and of resistance's continues.

The voice of all the people we are, the voice that speaks this Second Declaration of Reality for Humanity and Against Neo liberalism continues.

Brothers and sisters of Africa, Asia, America, Europe, and Oceania:

Considering that we are:

Against the international order of death, against the globalization of war and armaments.

Against dictatorships, against authoritarianism, against repression.

Against the politics of economic liberalisation, against hunger, against poverty, against robbery, against corruption.

Against patriarchy, against xenophobia, against discrimination, against racism, against crime, against the destruction of the environment, against militarism.

Against stupidity, against lies, against ignorance.

Against slavery, against intolerance, against injustice, against marginalisation, against forgetfulness.

Against neoliberalism.

Considering that we are:

For the international order of hope, for a new, just, and dignified peace.

For a new politics, for democracy, for political liberties.

For justice, for life, and dignified work.

For civil society, for full rights for women in every aspect, for the respect of elders,

youth, and children, for the defence and protection of the environment.

For intelligence, for culture, for education, for truth.

For liberty, for tolerance, for inclusion, for having memory.

For humanity.

We declare:

First. That we will make a collective network of all our particular struggles and resistance's. An intercontinental network of resistance against neoliberalism, an intercontinental network of resistance for humanity.

This intercontinental network of resistance, recognising differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistance's around the world. This intercontinental network of resistance will be the medium in which distinct resistance's may support one another. This intercontinental network of resistance is not an organising structure; it doesn't have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist.

Second. That we will make a network of communication among all our struggles and resistance's. An intercontinental network of alternative communication against neoliberalism, an intercontinental network of alternative communication for humanity.

This intercontinental network of alternative communication will search to weave the channels so that words

may travel all the roads that resist. This intercontinental network of alternative communication will be the medium by which distinct resistance's communicate with one another.

This intercontinental network of alternative communication is not an organising structure, nor has a central head or decision maker, nor does it have a central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who speak and listen.

This we declare:

To speak and to listen for humanity and against neoliberalism. To resist and struggle for humanity and against neoliberalism.

For the whole world: Democracy! Liberty! Justice! From whatever reality of whichever continent!

Brothers and sisters:

We do not propose that those of us who are present here sign this declaration and that this encounter end today.

We propose that the intercontinental encounter for humanity and against neoliberalism continue on every continent, in every country, in each rural area and city, in each house, school or workplace where human beings live who want a better world.

The indigenous communities have taught us that to resolve a problem, no matter how great it may be, it is always good to consult all of the people we are. That is why we propose that this declaration be distributed around the world and that a consultation be carried out, at least in all the countries in attendance, on the following question:

Do you agree to subscribe to the Second Declaration of Reality for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism?

We propose that this "Intercontinental Consultation for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism" be realised on the five continents during the first two weeks of December, 1996.

We propose that we organise this consultation in the same way that this encounter was organised, that all of us who attended and those who couldn't attend but who accompanied us from afar in this encounter, organise and carry out the consultation. We propose that we make use of all the possible and impossible media in order to consult with the greatest number of human beings on the five continents. The intercontinental consultation is part of the resistance we are organising and one way of making contacts and encounters with other resistance's. Part of a new way of doing political work in the world, that is what the intercontinental consultation wants to be.

Not only that. We also propose that we already call people to the Second Intercontinental

Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism.

We propose that it be carried out in the second half of 1997 and that it be in the European continent. We propose that the exact date and place of the encuentro be defined by the brothers and sisters of Europe in a meeting they hold after this first encounter.

We all hope that there will be this second intercontinental encounter and that it be held, of course, on another continent. When this second encounter is held, we want to make it clear from this moment on that we will find the way to participate directly, wherever it is held.

Brothers and sisters:

We continue to be uncomfortable. What the theorists of neoliberalism tell us is false: that everything is under control, including everything that isn't under control.

We are not the escape valve for the rebellion that could destabilize neoliberalism. It is false that our rebel

existence legitimates the Power.

The Power fears us. That is why it pursues us and fences us in. That is why it jails and kills us.

In R/reality, we are the possibility that it can be defeated and made to disappear.

Maybe there are not so many of us, but we are men and women who struggle for humanity, who struggle against neoliberalism.

We are men and women who struggle around the world.

We are men and women who want for the five continents:

Democracy!

Liberty!

Justice!

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

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

La Realidad (Reality), planet Earth, August, 1996.

* [Text published in La Jornada (8/4/96:10-11) and translated by Chiapas Urgent Call for the NCDM. Throughout, wordplay on the community's name, La Realidad, and the concept of 'reality' has been written: "R/reality." All text in square brackets was added by translator.]