

Remarks of the General Command of the EZLN in the opening ceremony of the First Intercontinental Meeting For Humanity and Against Neoliberalism

July 27, 1996

"Aguascalientes II",

Oventik, San Andrés Sacamchén of the Poor,

Chiapas, México.

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

Welcome to the mountains of Southeastern Mexico.

Let us introduce ourselves.

We are the Zapatista National Liberation Army..

For ten years, we lived in these mountains, preparing to fight a war.

In these mountains, we built an army.

Below, in the cities and plantations, we did not exist.

Our lives were worth less than machines and animals.

We were like stones, like weeds in the road.

We were silenced.

We were faceless.

We were nameless.

We had no future.

We did not exist.

To the powers that be, today known internationally by the word "neoliberalism", we did not count, we did not produce, we did not buy, we did not sell.

We were a useless figure in the accounts of big capital.

Then we went to the mountains to find ourselves and see if we could alleviate our pain in being forgotten stones and weeds.

Here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, our dead live on. Our dead that live in the mountains know many things.

They speak to us of their death, and we hear them.

Coffins speak and tell us another story that comes from yesterday and points toward tomorrow.

*The mountains spoke to us, the **Macehualob**, we common and ordinary people.*

We are simple people, like the powerful tell us.

*Every day and the following night, the powerful want us to dance the **X-tol** and repeat their brutal conquest.*

*The **Kaz-Dzul**, the false man, rules our lands and has giant war machines that, like the **Boob**, which is half puma and half horse, spread pain and death among us.*

*The trickster government sends us the **Aluxob**, the liars who fool our people and make them forgetful.*

This is why we became soldiers.

This is why we remain soldiers.

Because we want no more death and trickery for our people, because we want no more forgetting

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.

In the mountains, the dead live: our dead.

*With them live the **Votán** and the **Ik'al**, the light and the darkness, the wet and the dry, the earth and the wind, the rain and the fire.*

*The mountain is the home of the **Halach Uinic**, the real human, the big chief.*

Here we learned and remembered that we are what we are, the real men and women.

*So, with our voice arming our hands, with our face reborn, with our names renamed, our yesterday at the center of the four points of **Chan Santa Cruz** in **Balam Ná**, the star was born that defines humanity and recalls that there are five parts that make up the world.*

*In the season when the **Chaacob** ride, distributing the rain, we came down once more to speak with our own and prepare the storm that will signal the harvest.*

We brought forth the war in the year zero, and we began to walk this path that has brought us to your hearts and today brings you to ours.

This is what we are.

The Zapatista National Liberation Army.

The voice that arms itself to be heard.

The face that hides itself to be seen.

The name that hides itself to be named.

The red star that calls out to humanity and the world to be heard, to be seen, to be named.

The tomorrow that is harvested in the past.

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 that are repeated in all races, painted in all colors, speak in all languages and live in all places.

The same forgotten men and women.

The same excluded.

The same untolerated.

The same persecuted.

The same as you.

Behind this, we are you.

Behind our masks is the face of all excluded women.

Of all the forgotten native people.

Of all the persecuted homosexuals.

Of all the despised youth.

Of all the beaten migrants.

Of all those imprisoned for their words and thoughts.

Of all the humiliated workers.

Of all those dead from neglect.

Of all the simple and ordinary men and women who don't count, who aren't seen, who are nameless, who have no tomorrow.

Brothers and Sisters:

We have invited you to this meeting to seek and find yourselves and us.

You have all touched our heart, and can see we are not special.

You can see we are simple and ordinary men and women.

You can see we are the rebellious mirror that wants to be a pane of glass and break.

You can see we are what we are so we can stop being what we are and become the you that we are.

We are the Zapatistas.

We invited you for all of us to hear ourselves and speak to ourselves.

To see all that we are.

Brothers and Sisters:

In these mountains, the talking coffins spoke to us and told us ancient stories that recall our pains and our rebellions.

Our dreams will not end as long as we live.

We will not give up our banner.

Our death will live on forever.

So say the mountains that speak to us.

*So says the star that shines in **Chan Santa Cruz**.*

*It tells us that the **Cruzob**, the rebels, will not be defeated and will continue on their road along with all those in the human constellation.*

*The red star that will help the world be free tells us that the red people, the **Chachac-Mac**, will always come.*

The star that is the mountains tells us.

That a people is five peoples.

That a people who are a star are all people.

That the people who are humanity are all the world's people.

They will come to aid the worlds that become people in their struggle.

So the real man and woman live without pain and the hearts of stone are melted.

*You are all the **Chachac-Mac**, the people who come to help the man of five parts throughout the world, among all peoples, in all nations.*

You are all the red star that mirrors us.

We can continue on the right path if we, the you who are us, walk together.

Brothers and Sisters:

Among our peoples, the oldest sages have put a cross that is a star where the water, the giver of life, is born.

This marks the beginning of life in the mountains with a star.

*Thus are born the arroyos that come down from the mountain and raise the voice of the speaking star of our **Chan Santa Cruz** .*

The voice of the mountain has spoken, saying that the real men and women will live free when they are those who commit to the five-pointed star.

When the five peoples make themselves one in the star.

When the five parts of humanity which are the world find themselves and find the other.

When all the five find their place and the place of the other.

Today, thousands of different roads that come from the five continents meet here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, to join their steps.

Today, thousands of words from the five continents are silent here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, to hear each other and hear themselves.

Today, thousands of struggles from the five continents struggle here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, for life and against death.

Today, thousands of colors from the five continents are painted here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, to announce a future of inclusion and tolerance.

Today, thousands of hearts from the five continents are alive here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, for humanity and against neoliberalism.

Today, thousands of human beings from the five continents shout "enough" here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, enough of conformism, of doing nothing, of cynicism, of egoism, the modern god.

Today, thousands of small worlds from the five continents are attempting a beginning here, in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico, the beginning of the construction of a new and good world, that is, a world which admits all these worlds.

Today, thousands of men and women of the five continents begin here, in the mountains

of Southeastern Mexico, the First Intercontinental Meeting For Humanity and Against Neoliberalism.

Brothers and Sisters of the entire world:

Welcome to the mountains of Southeastern Mexico.

Welcome to this corner of the world where we are all the same because we are different.

Welcome to the search for life and the struggle against death.

Welcome to this First Intercontinental Meeting For Humanity and Against Neoliberalism.

¡Democracy!

¡Freedom!

¡Justice!

From the mountains of Southeastern Mexico.

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

Planet Earth, July, 1996.