

The First "Other" Winds

Zapatista Army of National Liberation
Mexico

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In the name of the Zapatista System of Intergalactic Television, "the only television which is read," we would like to express our gratitude to this space for the presentation of a special program, sponsored by "*Huaraches Yepa, Yepa*. The only globalized huarache" and "*El Pozol Agrio*. A delight for the palate."

We would like to take the opportunity to report that the channels on which SZTVI is broadcasting are for the exclusive and preferential access by the alternative media, and for all honest and principled persons on any part of Planet Earth. As an alternative to the tiresome (and inefficient) PPV system, the SZTVI is offering the NPPL (No Pay Per View) system as a gesture of courtesy for our compañeros and compañeras.

The following program will be rebroadcast by the frequency of below to the left by methods which range from pirate radio to the very sophisticated (and practically impossible to jam) bathroom gossip. With you, the program...

The First "Other" Winds

Part One

(Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Yucata'n, Campeche)

*"We want them to lend wind to our words,
that they fly quite high and go very far."*

Words of a Mayan indigenous, spoken in the Other Cancún,
in the Other Quintana Roo, in the Other southeast,
in the Other Campaign, in the Other Mexico.

Walking over itself, with the excuse of a ski-mask, the Other Campaign started the year by noting, from its first steps, what the response would be from above. The march which joint forces of the Other Campaign held in San Cristóbal de Las Casas on the first day of January of 2006 saw how the street lights went out as they made their way. Almost simultaneously, step by step, the mass media's microphones, cameras, tape recorders and notebooks were being turned off. The Otra's first victory: more than indifference, the silence of above reflects fear, much fear. The joint steps of the Otra is not just a challenge to the economic and social system (and to the political class which lives off and with it), it is also another step, the change of pace and direction of those who have, up until now, been on the defensive, resisting, surviving, weaving history so they won't fall. The Otra is now a step to the offense. And so a sound, which is still small, is rising up from the Mexico of below. And it rises up to then make itself a murmur, next a shout and, finally, movement. With its journey, the Otra has a message for those of above: "*Ya basta*. No longer. Now we're going after you." A shiver runs down the system's spine: instead of listening to those of above, those of below have chosen to listen to each other.

Chiapas

Above, a traveling stage set. Below, a yet incomplete heart and a growing indignation, seeking a way, a path, a direction and a destination.

The stations of the Other Campaign follow each other, one by one, but the indigenous voice is repeated. From the first day, the Other Campaign has demonstrated that it is more, much more, than the EZLN. San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Palenque, Chiapa de Corzo, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the Amate jail, Tonalá, Joaquín Amaro, San Isidro, Huixtla, Ejido Nuevo Villa Flores. Indigenous, most especially indigenous, and, along

with them, those who accompany their sorrows and rebellions: non-governmental organizations, groups, collectives, families, individuals who work in the defense of human rights, gender struggle, economic projects, education, culture, defense of the environment, alternative communication, analysis and theoretical debate. Mostly women, mostly young people. There they are, there they always were, even before 1994.

But something has changed: their voice no longer carries just solidarity and support for *zapatismo*, now it speaks their history, their resistance, their struggle. The "this is what I am" with which the Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona started up is now beginning to recount other histories and to name the other through their own voices. Indigenous organizations and Indian peoples, they are not Zapatistas but neither are they anti-Zapatistas, are demonstrating that their unfinished business is not just with those who rose up in arms in 1994, but also with the very root of the Mexican nation.

The reappearance of the evangelical indigenous on the outskirts of San Cristóbal de Las Casas put an end to the illusion that the Otra Jovel is mestiza. In Palenque something is emerging which may look like a symptom but is, in reality, a movement that is growing as the Otra moves through the Mexican southeast: resistance against the high costs of electricity and against privatization. The first voices against the onslaught by the government which is attempting to privatize the electrical industry are dark of color and speak indigenous language.

In Chiapa de Corzo and Tuxtla Gutiérrez, new voices appear with their own sound: market tenants, teachers, students, residents, non-indigenous *campesinos*. The tension line which joins the southeast with the north surfaces in the first steps: David Meza, *chiapaneco*, who is used as a scapegoat in order to conceal the inefficiency of officials in the femicide which set up camp in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. The young man (26) is accused of murdering his cousin, Neyra Azucena Cervantes (19). Through torture he is forced to sign a confession. He or the real murderers (without videos or tape recordings having yet been discovered) are still free and adding more deaths to the list of sorrow in the Mexican north.

The young students point out a truth: education is bad and moving towards privatization, and when they leave there's no work. Injustice in Chiapas has face and name of indigenous, *campesino*, teacher, journalist. But also rebel dignity: Section VII of the SNTE of the National Farm Workers Union is contributing not only prisoners, but also mobilizations. In Tonalá, in Joaquín Amaro, in San Isidro and in Huixtla, the civil resistance movement against the high cost of electric energy is appearing once again, but now they know they're not alone.

And throughout the coast of Chiapas one can see the combined work of officials and companies in the destruction of nature. Work is now a luxury which you have to pay for, and poverty is a crime. Criticism is growing against the political class and the PRD as a renamed PRI, its corruption improved and magnified. Water is in short supply here, schools don't even have chalkboards and Fox's messages about "educational excellence" sound like a bad joke. Old people are protesting against being treated like non-recyclable products. All along the coast, the sierra is an open wound which is far from being healed. Going up, we arrive at the Nuevo Villa Flores *ejido* and the Otra's most combative event, with the OCEZ-UNOPII as host.

Half-way along, a blow to the heart forces the silence with which we grieve those in the struggle whom we love. Comandanta Ramona has gone, leaving a multi-colored piece of embroidery as a Zapatista proposal for the Otra throughout the country. In the mountains of the Mexican southeast we Zapatistas tear off a piece of the clothing we're wearing and, with this sorrowful tatter on our left shoulder, we name the one who we now miss beyond all measure.

Meanwhile, as the Otra's journey progresses, the state government is moving the stage set of "Everything is calm in Chiapas," but just for the consumption of those who have accepted the *ley mordaza*. For the photograph: equipment working on the highway. For the shadow: the scandal of the "disappearance" of the funds and aid earmarked for victims of the storms. The government of Chiapas - when it can find time from its work as real estate consultant and public image advisor to the "king of denim" (and emperor of pederasty and child pornography) - is persecuting and imprisoning dissidents and journalists, and, in

addition, is building monuments in praise of themselves and of Fox. The Otra's journey is forcing them to redouble...their publicity expenditures.

Too late. It does not matter if they close their eyes and ears up above, below they have listened and seen. Now a wind lifts up and, from below and to the left, heads towards...

Quintana Roo

Above, a country of hoteliers. Below, Chan Santa Cruz speaks once again.

Chetumal, Carrillo Puerto, Playa del Carmen, Cancún. Names which refer to tourist destinations, to large hotel companies and to natural disasters. But the history of below recounts that the latter have been brought about by pro-business governments. The privatization of large stretches of land and water were achieved through underhanded laws, seizures of *ejidal* and communal lands and through the destruction of nature. The *campesino* voice denounces seizure of lands and privatization of beaches with Procede as spearhead. In Majahual, while the North American government is building a wall on the northern border, another is being raised by foreign companies in order to prevent access to a beach. The countryside no longer suffers from government inattention under these skies. Now it has an exceptional commitment, but in order to conquer-destroy it: high interest rates, low prices for what is produced, turning *ejiditarios* and *comuneros* into small landowners under Procede. The result is indebtedness, attachment or buying and selling. And where before there was farming land, now there is, or will be, a shopping or tourism center, a residential area or an airport.

Adding insult to injury: After Hurricane Wilma, wasn't the priority of Fox's PAN government to bring aid to the big hotel owners instead of to the humble people? Fear of the Otra up above distributed blankets to the Maya of Nicolás Bravo so they wouldn't go to the meetings, while lumber is being looted by big companies with government permits, and the *selva* is being destroyed with legal backing.

But nature and history have their guardians. Individually or in organizations, the defense of nature and of heritage supports their strongholds throughout Quintana Roo. Men and women are meeting, analyzing, discussing, agreeing to not remain silent or immobilized. They are thus undertaking a two-fold struggle: one for the legal defense of nature and of history, and the other for creating awareness among the people of below and to the left. Hand in hand with these efforts, another artistic and cultural work is on the march, running up against the tackiness of Fox's cultural programs and seeking other ears, other gazes, below.

In a corner of the corner that is the Mexican southeast, then appears the indigenous voice of the Union of Defense of the Mayan Race and of the Collective of Isla Mujeres. The dark word of the most small is the one which has best summarized the purpose of the first stage of the Otra: lending wind to word, that it might fly high, that it might go far. The faltering initial steps of the alternative media in the Karavan now have, from these distances, their own pace and firm definition: so that the ear can exist and increase, the word of the other is necessary. The direction of the other cameras and microphones have thus been reoriented, and, with these other men and women, now beginning to fly high are the voices of farmers, fishermen, construction workers, artisans, street vendors, indigenous, *campesinos* without land, residents, students, teachers, workers, researchers, men, women, young people, especially women and young people.

But, in addition to voices, whispers and shouts, the Otra hears silences. Here, in the Mayan lands of Quintana Roo, Chan Santa Cruz is taking back up the message of the *chiapaneco* mountains, echoing and so repeating: "May all the guardians of the land, the mother, awaken. May the watchkeepers awaken. May they awaken from the night of sorrow. The hour has come."

The wind then takes on new force, and, with the voice of the other as engine and fuel, reaches...

(Tomorrow, Yucata'n and Campeche, as this first part continues.)

From the Other Tlaxcala,

Sup Marcos

The First "Other" Winds First Part/II and Last

Yucatán

Above, a hacienda as political program. Below, Mayan dignity awakening the other.

On one side, that of above: the resistance of the powerful to losing privileges won through blood and fire since the times of the Conquest. On the other, that of below: ancient rebellion multiplying its colors.

The postmodern hacienda of the PAN's Yucatán is adding the establishment of maquiladoras to the tourism and oil. The weak scaffolding of government propaganda is being built on top of this: even though local economic powers are still thinking in the 16th century, Yucatán is exploiting these lands (and their people) using 21st century methods.

This is the National Action Party's [PAN] political program: an *encomendero* mentality running an industry. More is missing, this is the "government of change." The real results are at odds with the fragile PAN stage set: land seizures, privatization of the heritage, industrial exploitation, destruction of nature, migration. This truth is more visible in rural Yucatán: the destruction of the Mexican countryside is not the result of the governments' lack of skill, rather it is their primary objective. It has to do with a strategic plan that entails, in simple and straightforward terms, a war, a war of reconquest. But this war is not just one-sided, the resistance is also resounding from below.

And then the guardians appear who are making it quite clear that not in their name will the oblivion of the native persons of these lands be legislated. The Mayan artisans who are resisting the seizure of memory made stone of their ancestors. Chichen Itzá: the fishermen of Puerto Progreso, of the Camarón Vagabundo, who denounced that they are turned into criminals if they work because of a law. They have to pay them to get permission to work, and not even then. In addition, the inspectors steal their catch. The *ejiditarios* of Oxcum who note that they want to seize their lands for an airport. The *banda* that suffers persecution for making and promoting another culture.

And the fury and indignation looks around, and, with Mayan language, color and ways, they find the others who are also repeating, though separately, that "*ya basta!*" Also appearing here, along with residents, students, artisans and academics, homosexuals, their Oasis of San Juan de Dios and their threefold struggle against AIDS: against the virus, against the society which discriminates against them and segregates them and against the government which washes its hands of the problem. Others who join in with the struggle for respect for sexual diversity.

They all say, repeat, insist: we're not going to allow it, no longer, *ya basta*. And now it is not only pain which can be heard in the voices of below. Also the joy of someone who is beginning to realize that he or she is not alone, who, by being listened to and listening, finds the *compañero*, *compañera*.

But the rebel peninsular wind doesn't stop here, and it goes on to...

Campeche

Above, destruction as government program. Below, the rebellion of colors.

In Bekal, the first voices resound, and from here they are beginning to sound the alert about the greatness of raising a movement of the people throughout the country. The recounting is made: *ejiditarios* harassed by corrupt leaders, by the government and by the big owners. Now they have to pay to work their own land, pay to be poor. In the port of Campeche, the voice continues, and the listening is organized primarily by young people. The only point in common with injustice is the number two: 20 wealthy families, 200 courtiers and 200,000 poor families. The owners of the economy also own the political: a powerful family

stands candidates for the three parties: PRI, PAN and PRD. They appropriate large expanses of land and beaches, and the *campesinos* and fishermen go on to become employees of tourism centers, or they emigrate to the United States.

Hand in hand with wealthy locals, Pemex contributes to the destruction of nature. In Campeche a truth is made evident: nature is being destroyed by the selfsame officials who are in charge of protecting it. The pirates and corsairs who once ravaged the Campeche coasts now hold public and private offices and appear in the society pages while 180,000 residents are surviving in conditions of extreme poverty. The sorrow reaches to Xpujil (Calakmul) and Candelaria. The old PRI politics (sometimes with the flag of the PT, of Convergencia, of the PAN or of the PRD) is being repeated in the Mexican countryside: the buying of *campesino* leaders, division and confrontations between organizations, repression, persecution, imprisonment, death. Migration to the United States is the only door they find open. The situation isn't far different from what existed in the times of the *chicleros*. Injustice is christened in these lands by Carlos Salinas de Gortari as Calakmul (Edificios Gemelos) in order to emphasize the zeal of the neo-conquest of capital: these lands, with everything and the historical wealth they amass, will belong to the new lords of money.

And lies hold an important place in this war: the government social welfare programs do not arrive in full. Those monies remain somewhere else, but government progress is nonetheless announced with pomp and circumstance. The modern divestiture follows known paths: bank credits, increasing interest rates, the bank devouring all the work, and the debt somehow grows, Procede eliminates legal impediments and they are seized. Years of work and, in the end, without land or anything...only rage.

But in the Campeche of below there are rebels who are not just from here, but also from the majority of the states of the Republic. And so rebellion takes on many colors throughout the state. As injustices multiply, so, also, multiply intelligent and organized rebellions.

The Other Campeche joins together artisans, *campesinos*, cultural and theoretical analysis collectives, beekeepers, cooperative members, mostly indigenous. Many come from the ecclesiastical base communities and committed Christianity. And all of them are in agreement about their being fed-up, about their rage, indignation, rebellion. But they don't stop there, they form their organizations and educate in the struggle, and there they identify the enemy and the *compañero*, the opportunist and the momentary passenger.

The wind resounds in the Other Campaign and repeats: "No longer!," and the echo is so powerful it manages to reach the other country which, below and to the left, watches over the night in order to continue on its path, on another dawn, to Tabasco.

Intermission

Along its way and in its way, the Otra is beginning to turn into an option, into something else, into another alternative to despair. While up above the noise comes and goes (as does the money to simulate discussion and debate, where there are only e-spot ads), an echo sounds in the other voices of below, an echo which does not end, which is beginning to define itself in collective: the Otra is joining together struggles and thoughts. The "I am" is beginning to transform, step by step, into "we are."

Various points in common in the first winds:

- The brazen alliance between businesspersons and politicians from all parties.
- Seizure of lands.
- Privatization of the national heritage.
- Premeditated destruction of the environment.
- Repression, persecution and imprisonment of those who fight for social good.
- High cost of living, especially that of electricity.
- Migration to the United States.
- Educational crises at all levels and, in the end, the disaster of unemployment.

- Disgust with the political class and criticism of institutional political parties.

And so the bridges are beginning to be extended between those who below are who we are. The first of them, the struggle for our own: freedom for all political prisoners and the cancellation of all arrest warrants for social activists.

But that is not all. Proposals are also beginning to emerge: the general strike over payments to the Federal Commission of Electricity until fair rates are agreed according to the criteria that the rich pay more and the poor pay less or they don't pay. The generalized *campesino* rejection of Procede. The national blockade against the official policy of destroying the environment. The national defense of our heritage in the face of its growing privatization. The building of a new option for future migrants which consists of a cry: Stay and fight! Another 1st of May for the other workers. And the first signs of other realities and demands, which we will explain further along.

Video Click: The Week Above and Below

There are differences, above and below, in looking at how the week transpired. Up above it's always Monday, even for those who are running as the electoral alternative.

Time and again they tell us that we don't have to go quickly, we have to stop, walk so slowly that movement is barely feigned.

Ah! It's so nice up above! Entertainment suitable for a wallet full of plastic, high culture, highways and wide streets for vehicles, second floors in order to reaffirm that we are above, television as an instant stage set in every Mexican home. Ah! And once again those naughty ones of below, listening to each other, exchanging histories which look so nice in books and essays, but that way, being talked about, how they offend, my friend, that democracy of those words of below is in such bad taste. Then what are we for, the popular representatives, the opinion leaders, the columnists, the commentators, editors? Where do they get off dispensing with intermediaries and speaking among themselves? And then, in addition to talking and listening, they dare to agree to rise up. Better that you turn up the volume on the television, my friend! Come on, just like that! How are the polls going? Good, we're in the lead.

What? The Other Campaign? A murmur, nothing to worry about...Or yes? I don't know why they're infuriated and promising us a jail. But who is advising them to try and dispense with us? They themselves? Why don't they wait? We can go on leading them, teaching them the caution and prudence which we learned and which, you'll see, is so comfortable! Red and black weekend? Excuse me, no, my friend, that color isn't registered, it's worthless. What do you mean they don't want to be registered? Don't tell me another politics is possible? And we, the whitewashed tombs of unhurried, exceedingly slow change, take no notice, my friend, because then the investors will be frightened away from us. What is this about their not wanting investors? Or politicians? You see, my friend, they are so very pre-modern. Let's hope they don't affect the polls. What would happen to our democracy then?

Yes, they look so pretty when they're silent, stopped, attentive to our word, to our directions. Yes, ingrates. They don't know they can't do anything in such a hurry, so below, so to the left. Yes, little by little. Now, with the project for the Isthmus...What? The same as the Plan Puebla Panama? No, my friend, if this is from the left. Bah! There'll be a few indigenous peoples disappeared and a few effects on the land. But there will be jobs, maquiladoras and a glimpse of the service and tourism industry booms. Yes, modernity, but with a human face, our face.

That left - how can I say it - isn't it an ugly, poorly educated, vulgar left? Where is the high level of debate, our skill in dulling the edges of words and our all remaining friends, happy, immobile? Yes, we say what debate is and what it is not. For example, all discussion that ends up in principled commitments is not high-level debate, it's for ultras, the desperate, resentful. Bah! They can't take anything, a few indigenous shot, kidnapped, tortured, stripped. No, my friend, don't look down there. What for? Here is the mature, calm, prudent path. Do you see how we barely move? No, my friend, don't be distracted, look at me, listen to me,

sit down, wait, don't move, like that, very quiet. Look, what you have to do is to let me do. The rest are just that, the "rest," the "other."

Listen, my friend, and are there a lot of them? And you say they're coming for us? For everyone? Also for the left that's faithful and loyal to the system? And are they going to take a long time? You know, the academy, the café, the automobile, the position, the symposium, the stroking we give and receive, the invitation to eat with that so very important politician-businessman-leader.

Another communication? All right, tell me why if this one that we have is the one that rules, the one that counts in the polls, the democratic and modern one. As if there's anything more important to report on other than what concerns me? Another art? What? And the exquisite selection of our tastes? Another culture? That, yes. The *charrapastrosos* need their own things. They look so cute with all those things. What are they called? Yes, that, with their idiosyncrasies, their crafts, their piercings, their tattoos, their hair sticking up and painted in scandalous colors, their *chido-guey-varo-rola* things, their music. No, my friend, that's not rock. Real rock is neat and tidy, "nice," it's "your rock is voting," it's "better shut up," it's about that immobility that moves, jumps and applauds, but thinking...well, my friend, what for? If you're going to grow up and mature and you're going to be like us anyway...Or not?

What are you saying? An uprising? National? You mean it's not just a national mailbox of complaints? They're also joining together, organizing? But that's too fast, there should just be a few. What? They're growing? Listen, but is it true they're still going to be a while? My grant, my position, my editorial, my essay, my teaching post, my candidacy...

Unauthorized Interference

Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Yucatán, Campeche, Tabasco, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Puebla. Eight states and one single challenge: communication, another communication. Among the conclusions of this first third of the trip around the country is that "All Mexico is Telcel country" is a lie. Slim needs to be put in jail, not just for exploiting, but also for lying.

One of the challenges is that of communication with all those who are battling for this. Technology should also seek the path of below so that the weaving of this network can be made visible in the Other Campaign. Here is a job for now, for right now. The alternative media should not be satisfied with keeping the words of the "others" up to date on their current channels. They should, we believe, seek out the others who don't have the ways or means to learn about this "other" which is growing down and to the left.

Little by little, the alternative media is coming to understand that the Sixth Committee of the EZLN is just their "back stage," a support team (big-nosed and ill-tempered at this point) which is helping this part of the "other" a bit in the beginning: making the word grow from below and building a collective ear for it. But the science and technology is still lacking to link up the most distant *compas*.

Provisional Final (only for the broadminded)

Dawn has almost slipped away. The light from the sun is beginning to peek through the crevices, and we must return to the dim shadows which clothe us. The skin of desire and the tempest of her hair are still missing from my hands. A sigh still waits expectantly on lips. The gaze, and the cloud which envelops it, miss the light which is absent from them. Ah! The tricks of imagination: in the half-sleep dream, her thighs were moaning on cheeks and prison for the waist. Standing, the ride of desire ending, after a brief precipice, in a damp and mutual fall. And at the end there were no debts other than those one has with oneself. Ah, the longing to be drenched in her rain. To be sated by her and to make her desire increase.

Dawn breaks with the certainty that there could be no better photo than the one I take with my hands and lips, no better audio or video than that of awakening her gasps and moans, no better show or painting than that of skin joined together, no better meeting than that of our bodies...

Another communication? Another news report? Another art? Another culture? Another campaign? Who in the hell would embrace that nonsense?

They are knocking on the door of the day. The shadow laces up his boots and desires. We must continue walking, listening...

From the Other Tlaxcala,

Sup Marcos

Mexico, February of 2006

P.S. As of February 15 of this year, the Sixth Declaration and the Other Campaign has gained 1036 political, indigenous, social, non-governmental organizations, groups and collectives supporters, all of them from below and to the left. Without any ads other than their voices, nor any signatures traced other than those of their steps throughout the country, signed firmly and with a flourish. Here we are, we are the Otra, rebel dignity, the heart forgotten up till now by the Patria.

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