

Durito on Liberty

Appealing for support from civil society, Marcos offers “definitions” of three words: *Liberty*, which Durito compares to daybreak; *Struggle*, which Old Antonio’s likens to a circle and *History*, which Marcos describes as scribbles in the sands of time. This communiqué was written during increasing repression against the EZLN and Zapatista communities in conjunction with the government’s sabotage of the March negotiations at San Andrés on Democracy and Justice. It also follows the EZLN’s convening of the First Continental Encounter in La Realidad in April.

To National and International Civil Society
May 18, 1996

Wherever You May Be Found:

Excuse me, Lady Civil Society, for distracting you from your numerous activities and countless anxieties. I am only writing to tell you that we are here, that we continue to be ourselves, that resistance is still our flag and that we still believe in you. Whatever may happen, we shall continue to believe. Because hope, my lady of many faces and great name, is now an addiction for us.

Thy grace will now know that the horizon is becoming overcast, with a gray fading to black with the same alacrity with which our history is being sold. Nonetheless, know that liberty is still there, ahead, that it continues to be necessary to struggle, and that history still waits for the one who shall complete the plans. That is how things are. Fearing that we shall not see you again, accept these three straightforward, simple definitions, which very much suit days as tragic as those which are awaiting us:

Liberty. Durito says liberty is like the morning. There are those who wait for it to arrive while sleeping, but there are also those who stay awake and walk throughout the night to reach it. I say that we Zapatistas are addicts of the insomnia of which history despairs.

Struggle. Old Antonio said struggle is like a circle. One can begin at any point, but never end.

History. History is no more than the scribbling that men and women write in the sands of time. The powers write their scribbles, they praise them as sublime scripture, and they worship them as the only truth. The mediocre are limited to merely reading the scribbles. He who struggles smudges the pages as he passes. The excluded do not know how to write . . . yet.

First published May 20, 1996. Originally translated by irlandesa. Source: *EZLN: Documentos y comunicados*, 3: 2 de octubre de 1995/24 de enero de 1997 (México D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1997).

Accept, my lady, these three flowers. The other four will arrive later . . . if they arrive at all.

Vale. Salud, and remember that wisdom consists in the art of discovering hope behind the pain.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

P.S. I forgot to warn you, my lady, to not be deceived by officials, columnists and etceteras that infinitely echo the lie. Nothing is resolved; everything is shattered. And there are, essentially, two gambits: theirs, that of war, which bets on your continuing to remain indifferent; and ours, that of peace, which bets on your dancing up a storm, which will make everything tremble, exactly as love trembles, when it is true.

P.S. that translates:

The translators in Paris are asking if, in the American Continental Encounter, I said, “zapatismo is an institution.” I said “zapatismo is an intuition,” but, if zapatismo ends up being an institution, then it is a bad intuition. The “*focador*,” *mon cherie*, comes from “*foco*” or flashlight, and not from “*foca*” or seal, whose wetness I shall not speak of, or else I will be in trouble with the feminists. Onward, then.

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