

Reinventing An/Other Anti-Capitalism in Mexico

The Sixth Declaration of the EZLN and the “Other Campaign”

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Well, then, in Mexico what we want to create is an agreement with people and organizations that are decidedly of the left, because we believe that it is on the political left where the idea of resisting against neoliberal globalisation really lives, and the struggle to make justice, democracy, and freedom in any country wherever it would be, where there is only freedom for big business and there is only democracy to put up election campaign signs. And because we believe that only the left can come up with a plan for struggle so that our country, Mexico, does not die. And, then, what we believe is that, with these people and organizations of the left, we will chart a course to go to every corner of Mexico where there are humble and simple people like ourselves.

(The Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, 2005)

The struggles of dignity tear open the fabric of capitalist domination.

(John Holloway, 2003)

1 Originally published in Werner Bonefeld (ed) *Subverting The Present-Imagining The Future: Insurrection, Movement, Commons*, New York, Autonomedia, 2007. The author is a sociology lecturer and researcher at the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Email: pgcuninghame@yahoo.co.uk; Fax: (+52) 656-6883812.

Preface

This paper seeks to draw some lessons at a global level from the ongoing “Other Campaign” (so-called in mock reference to the 2006 presidential electoral campaigns), catalysed by the Zapatistas with their call for a renewed anti-capitalist resistance movement “from below and to the left” against neoliberal capitalism in Mexico and internationally, in the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle (the Sixth) in July 2005. The paper also focuses on how the organization and mobilization of the Other Campaign is evolving in the trans-border region of Chihuahua-Texas-New Mexico in Northern Mexico-Southern USA (where the author is based) around the attempted horizontal coordination of autonomists, anarchists, Zapatistas, socialists, indigenous and peasant movements, and the efforts to include independent trade unions and the more radical NGO campaigns against the femicide of some 450 working class women and girls in Ciudad Juarez since 1993, as well as other issues based around migration, the US-Mexico border, the hegemonic maquiladora (corporate assembly plant for export) hyper-exploitation model and the social violence and urban degradation produced by “savage capitalism”. This “other” organizational paradigm, which includes the “Other on the other side” (of the border), will be also be connected with the May Day Latino boycott movement in the US against the criminalisation of undocumented migrants. The broader socio-political context is framed by the events surrounding the July 2006 presidential elections, which proved to be particularly “dirty” and fraudulent, despite the consensus among the three candidates of the main parties on the need to consolidate through “institutional reforms” the neo-liberal model (constructed on the 1994 NAFTA agreement), which seeks to extend a deepened US economic hegemony over Latin America through the 2001 Puebla-Panama Plan, the 2005 Central Americas Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and the recently shelved Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) proposal. The desperate, cynical capitulation of the “vertical” left², both parliamentary and extra-

2 By “vertical” Left I mean those organizational traditions within the historical Left that favour a centralist, hierarchical, organizational structure (a mirror image of the capitalist firm) and that practice dogmatic, vanguardist, statist and “top-down” politics, i.e. all their political initiatives either stem from or have to be approved by the leadership, while rigid discipline and obedience is enforced on the membership by threat of expulsion. Their political ideology is usually based on an orthodox “scientific socialist” interpretation of the Marxist-Leninist canon. Left political traditions considered to be “verticalist” would be social democrats, Leninists and Trotskyists, but in the context of alterglobalism would also include (ex-) national liberation movements like Sinn Fein. A Mexican example would be the Trotskyist PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores/Workers Revolutionary Party), which split in the early 90s over

parliamentary (including some ex-Zapatista supporters and much of the post-1968 New Left) to the populist, demagogic presidential campaign of the centre-left PRD candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), some on the basis of keeping the corrupt mafia-linked PRI and Christian right-ultra neoliberal PAN out of power, others in the hope of benefiting personally from future presidential largesse, mirrors a deeper crisis as a divided global anti-capitalism seeks to intensify resistance against an increasingly fragmented and degenerate “global war capitalism”. This helps to explain why the EZLN and its global network, under the title of the “Zeza Internacional”, are also organizing a third “Intergalactic Encuentro” in late 2006-early 2007, faced with the perceived neo-reformist inefficacy of the now verticalist-controlled and Chavez-dependent World Social Forum (WSF)³. The paper also examines the impact of the particularly brutal repression of the Atenco movement, the Oaxaca teachers’ strike and APPO movement and AMLO’s orchestrated but massive anti-fraud movement on the Other, before reaching some conclusions on the present state of anti-capitalism (autonomist, Zapatista and other/wise) in Mexico, and the implications for “the slow and laborious process of consolidating the new Latin American revolutionary left” (Cuban Libertarian Movement/CLM 2005: 1) and global anti-capitalist and alterglobalist movements.

Introduction

Mexico, as the USA’s southern neighbour, is the Latin American country most directly prone to North American influence and pressure, now being virtually hard-wired into its economy through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) since 1994. However, that year also saw the birth of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas in

entryism into the PRD, a path the majority chose to follow, while a minority became close allies of the EZLN and now edit the monthly magazine, *Rebeldia*, the main Zapatista publication. In fact, this is a simplification as there is a certain amount of “crossover” particularly between the leaderships of the two factions, which tends to muddy the waters of radical left politics in Mexico. An English example would be the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In recent years the “verticalists” have increasingly clashed with the “horizontalists” (autonomists, anarchists, ecofeminists, environmentalists, independent social movements in general) over the control and future direction of the World and European Social Forums in particular and global anti-capitalism/alterglobalism in general. For a discussion of verticalist-horizontalist politics, see Levidow (2004).

- 3 “(...) what seems to be happening in Caracas – the apparent complete dependence by the local civil organisations (those who the WSF International Council has appointed to organise the particular edition of the world Forum) on Hugo Chávez and his government for organising the Forum - seems to directly contradict the spirit and soul of the Forum” (Jai Sen 2006).

opposition to NAFTA, neoliberalism and 500 years of the racist discrimination and exclusion of the Mexican indigenous population, composed of over 50 ethnic groups each with its own language and culture, accounting for about 15% of its 110 million population. Twelve years on and the remarkably resilient and unceasingly creative Zapatistas have bounced back yet again into the centre of national political life and international mobilisation through the Other Campaign, launched by the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle in July 2005, which marked a definitive rupture with the PRD and the liberal urban intelligentsia, once united in their opposition to the PRI dictatorship 10 years previously. The new “enemy” was identified as AMLO, the moderate PRD (Partido de la Revolucion Democratica/Party of the Democratic Revolution) presidential candidate, at that time clear favourite to win the 2006 elections. His party had betrayed the Zapatistas and the indigenous peoples in 2001 when they broke their word and supported the enactment of an unrecognisably diluted PAN (Partido de la Accion Nacional/National Action Party) government version of the San Andres Accord on Indigenous Autonomy, reached with the then PRI (Partido de la Revolucion Institucional/Party of the Institutional Revolution) government in 1996. Furthermore, as Mayor of Mexico City he had shown a preference for pharaonic building projects, zero-tolerance policing against the vendors of the “informal economy”, the main source of income for many of the city’s 18 million population, and attempts to expel rooted proletarian communities and gentrify the historic centre in association with Mexico’s richest entrepreneur Carlos Slim. The result has been a bitter division with the peasant and urban working class grassroots of the PRD, where some wanted to support both AMLO and the Other Campaign, while many, including some former Zapatista intellectual sympathisers, considered the Zapatistas to have become the unwitting stooges of the right, as part of its plot against AMLO. The suspicion of both technologically sophisticated cybernetic fraud and cruder old-fashioned ballot stuffing has hung over the elections of July 2, which favoured the ultra neoliberal, Christian right PAN candidate Felipe Calderon by 0.5% or just over 240,000 of the total vote of 41 million (Burbach 2006 & Palast 2006 for example). The brutal repression in May of the Peoples Front for the Defence of the Land (FPDT), and Other Campaign activists in Atenco caused a global wave of revulsion against the Fox “government of change”, as brutal and fraudulent as its PRI predecessors.

The Other Campaign - the first attempt in Mexican history to create a coordinated anti-capitalist network “below and to the left” among the splintered groups, movements and unaffiliated individuals to the left of the PRD - in the space of a few weeks in May transformed

itself from a support network for the caravan of "Delegate Zero" (Subcomandante Marcos) and the Sixth Commission into a cohesive national and transnational (thanks to the "Otra en el Otro Lado" [Other Campaign in the USA]) movement with strong links to the anti-capitalist alterglobal movements. Nevertheless, compared to AMLO's multitudinous marches of a million and a half on July 16 and over two million on the 30th, hundreds of thousands of whom still remain camped in Mexico City's main square, central avenues and business district in protest against the electoral fraud, the Other's national march against repression of 15,000 in late May and only 5,000 on July 2nd seem tiny in comparison. The AMLO anti-fraud movement allegedly is financed by the local construction industry that benefited so handsomely under his mayorship, as well as by the PRD through its various state governors, senators and deputies and is – at least for the moment – directly orchestrated by AMLO and the PRD leadership, who have promised the increasingly worried press, international investors and Mexican business class to send everyone home as soon as a total recount is agreed. The Other or "Otra" has established itself as a consolidated transnational movement in less than a year, while AMLO's chances of turning the tables on the neoliberal right and its support from Bush, thanks to an impressive popular mobilization which exceeds the electoral base of the PRD, seem however ever slimmer.

Since the publication of the Sixth last year, a feud has raged among left intellectuals as to whether the Other is part of a rightist plot to frustrate the centre-left yet again, as happened in 1988 when fraud permitted the PRI's Carlos Salinas, later the architect of NAFTA and still seen as the *eminence grise* of Mexican politics, to steal the election from Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, son of the PRI president and "national revolutionary" General Lazaro Cardenas who expropriated and nationalized the oil industry in the 1930s. Former Zapatista sympathisers like Araujo, Poniatowska and Monsivais are now part of AMLO's entourage, which has constantly attacked the Other in the press, accusing it of naivety and opportunism over Atenco and of complicity with the right. Others like Almeyra (2006a, b & c; Olivares Alonso 2006) and Ross (2006) have attempted to remain critically detached from both camps, claiming more sympathy with the broader Zapatista movement, while heavily criticising Marcos and the EZLN's "sectarianism", "voluntarism" and "disrespect" for the autonomy of the Zapatista communities which have been "forced" to cut themselves off from the outside world once again by the "red alert" since May. These accusations have led Marcos to criticise some intellectuals as fence-sitting cowards (Bellingshausen 2006c) and to a storm of disagreement with Ross in particular from the Other (Barrios

Cabrera 2006). Others like Lopez y Rivas (2006) and Gonzalez Casanova (Bellinghausen 2006) defend the Other Campaign, while seeking to reopen relations with AMLO and the PRD. In contrast, Subcomandante Marcos has been relentless in his criticism of AMLO and the PRD as the real enemy of both the OTRA and the Mexican working class, since their “alternative national project” will breathe new life and legitimacy into the notoriously corrupt Mexican political system and the orthodox neoliberal model it serves, and will inevitably break their promises to put “the poor first for the benefit of all” (AMLO’s electoral slogan). Other academics close to the Zapatista movement like Harvey (2005) and Holloway (2002b, 2003) seek to defend the Zapatistas from their detractors within the global revolutionary left, while analysing the EZLN’s paradoxical inability to capitalise on its enormous global political capital to help foment lasting social, economic and democratic change from below, as has happened in Ecuador and Bolivia where strong indigenous movements have helped to topple unpopular neoliberal governments.

Having established the political basis for the rupture of the EZLN with the institutional and much of the historical Mexican left as the backdrop to the Other Campaign, the following section will explore in greater detail the proposals outlined in the Sixth Declaration and how they have panned out in the trajectory of the Other and its international sister campaign, the “Zezta” or Intergalactic Commission of the EZLN.

“The Sixth”, “The Other” and the “Zezta”

In common with the first five Declarations, the Sixth as event marks a turning point in the Zapatista struggle and as text communicates to national and international “civil society”⁴ the decisions of the Zapatista assemblies through the EZLN and Marcos. The Sixth was initially greeted with positive statements by the Mexican political and intellectual classes as a sign of the EZLN’s further move away from armed struggle and towards non-violent democratic politics. In fact non-violence is stressed throughout the document as the basis for direct action, in common with most of the alterglobalist movement but

4 I use inverted commas since there is so much disagreement over the term, although the Gramscian, more social movement-based interpretation tends to predominate within Zapatista and movement discourse, while the Hegelian version, based on all individuals and groups outside the state, including entrepreneurs, religious institutions and rightist interest groups, predominates in both NGO and academic discourse in Mexico. On the question of what is “civil” in “civil society” see Cleaver (in this volume) and Bonefeld(2006).

in continued rupture with the history, ideology and praxis of both Mexican and Latin American vanguardist guerrilla movements:

“The EZLN continues its commitment toward an offensive cease-fire and will not attack any governmental force nor carry out offensive military manoeuvres; the EZLN continues, still, its commitment to insisting on the path of political struggle with this peaceful proposal that we now make. As such, the EZLN will continue in its belief in not making any secret alliance with national politico-military organizations nor those of other countries; the EZLN reiterates its commitment to defend, support, and obey the Zapatista indigenous communities that create it and that are its supreme command, and, without interfering in their internal democratic processes and in the measurement of its possibilities, to contribute to the strengthening of their autonomy, good government, and improvement of living conditions. That is to say, what we are going to create in Mexico and in the world we will create without weapons, through a peaceful civil movement, yet without ignoring or abandoning our communities.” (EZLN 2005: 3-4)

The right was particularly happy about the severe criticisms made of AMLO and the PRD, which seemed to promise a divided “left”. The Zapatistas and the Other, however, do not consider the PRD to be any longer a party of the “left”, or at least only of the top-down variety. In fact, the Sixth has reinvigorated the debate over the meaning of this historically ambiguous political category and identity, born during the French Revolution of 1789, which anarchist, autonomist and libertarian groups in the Other generally reject as obsolete and meaningless, given the objectively pro-capitalist position of most of the historical left, whether social-democrat, institutional socialist or (ex-)communist. Another reflection on the meaning of “left” within the Sixth as “utopia” is provided by the Cuban Libertarian Movement (2005: 1-2):

“(…) left is the one that has not renounced utopia neither by word or deed, and that, in spite of everything, finds its main encouragement in a utopia that could be generally defined as a thick web of relationships among free, equal and mutually supportive beings; a utopia capable of identifying its distant and venerable beginnings and of reclaiming them for their much needed actualisation. (...) This is the left that has learned to recognize and look askance at the narrow, dry road left in the wake of the guerrilla vanguards later become some exclusive and excluding party, civil or military populism and social-democratic reformism; this is the left that doesn't feel represented by any authority and even questions the meaning of 'representation', that seeks itself among the cries of 'let them all go!' ["Que se vayan todos!"], the slogan of the December 2001 revolts in Argentina] and the whispering promise to “change the world without taking power” [Holloway 2002a]; the left that depends on the non-negotiable autonomy of grassroots social movements as the template for a new world and that in self-management and direct action

finds its truest expression. A left that surely the EZLN wants to belong to and that, in open reciprocity, finds in it one of its most visible manifestations.”

However, the initial enthusiasm of Fox et al for the Sixth added grist to the mill of the Zapatistas’ critics in academic left and PRD circles. Adopting a neo-Stalinist version of the theory of the “extremes that touch”, critics like Almeyra (op. cit.) have ranted against the Sixth and the Other in their columns in *La Jornada*, the only leftist national daily newspaper and close to the PRD, as evidence that the Other is, wittingly or not, part of the Fox-Salinas anti-AMLO plot, and therefore objectively a reactionary movement, unless it corrects itself and allies itself with AMLO. However, since the repression of the movement at Atenco in May, such conspiracy-theory charges have lost the illusory credence they may initially have had.

The organization of the Other campaign began in August 2005 with a series of meetings between the different sectors of what the Zapatistas continue to refer to as “civil society” convoked by the Sixth and the EZLN in the “Caracol” of La Realidad, the traditional meeting place, in the Lacandona jungle near to the border with Guatemala, of the EZLN and its allies. Through these meetings with core organizations and groups prepared to coordinate the Other throughout the various federal entities of Mexico, the Other’s strategy was discussed and decided through the direct democracy of the assembly. All groups, movements and individuals who accept the organizational principles of forming an anti-capitalist alliance “below and to the left” could become “adherents” to the Sixth and participants in the Other. “Below” implies bottom-up, grassroots self-organization among the rural and urban working class and poor, eschewing relations with more privileged strata like intellectuals, small entrepreneurs etc. whose support the EZLN once sought 10 years previously. “To the left” signifies that the Other is both theoretically and practically anti-capitalist, to distinguish it from the ambiguous and opportunist left, particularly the PRD, which in the past used an anti-capitalist discourse in the form of orthodox Marxism and socialist politics, mainly as a rhetorical window-dressing exercise and always subordinated to the discourses of “patriotism” and “national sovereignty”, i.e. the interests of those sectors of the national bourgeoisie opposed to global capitalism. As for the Other’s plan of action in Mexico, guidelines had already been set out in the Sexta:

“In Mexico...

1. We will continue fighting for the Indian peoples of Mexico but not only for them nor only with them, but, rather, for all the exploited and dispossessed in Mexico (...) And when we speak of all the exploited of Mexico we are also speaking of

the brothers and sisters who have had to go to the United States to seek work in order to survive.

2. We are going to listen to and speak directly, without middlemen nor mediations, to the simple and humble Mexican people, and depending on what we hear and learn, we will construct, together with these people who are like us, humble and simple, a national plan for struggle, but a plan that will, clearly, be of the left, which is to say anti-capitalist, or anti-neoliberal, or which is also to say in favour of justice, democracy and freedom for the Mexican people.

3. We will try to construct or reconstruct another way of practicing politics, in the spirit of serving others, without material interests, with sacrifice, with dedication, with honesty, a way that keeps it word, or, that is to say, in the same way that militants of the left – who were not stopped by violence, jail or death, and much less with offers of dollar bills – have done so.

4. We will also keep looking at ways to rise up; a fight to demand that we create a new Constitution, (...) new laws that take our demands, those of the Mexican people, into account, which are: housing, land, work, food, health, education, information, culture, independence, democracy, justice, freedom and peace. A new Constitution that recognizes the rights and liberties of the people, and that defends the weak against the powerful.” (EZLN 2005: 5)

Point four has been particularly controversial for the autonomist-anarchist-libertarian groups within or sympathetic to the Other, who reject constitutionalism as the gateway to institutional politics and the bourgeois “political game” of partial, retractable “human rights” and “individual liberties”, always dependent on the fundamental “duty” of obedience to the “democratic” capitalist state (CLM 2005). Nevertheless, perhaps this is too narrow a reading of the word “constitution”, which after all figures centrally in the thought of one of autonomism’s most important thinkers, Toni Negri (1992), whose theory of “constituent power” recognises how the counter-power of historical and actual movements tends to constitute a new set of social relations, which either breaks with previous ones or forces them to negotiate a new “constituted power”, following which the antagonistic force of the movement tends to be institutionalised and co-opted under the terms of the new “constitution” and its “institutions”, so catalysing a new cycle of antagonist movements to struggle against the former antagonists. One needs to look no further than the history of the incessant struggle between the revolutionary and reformist left during the 20th century. Thus the Other, if it becomes the hegemonic antagonist force in Mexican politics, will have to “constitute” new social relations and political balances as one of its unwritten tasks.

The organizational principles of the Other are assembleist, horizontal, anti-electoral, anti-delegatory and directly democratic, but to what extent these principles are consistently practiced, given the overwhelming prestige of the EZLN and Marcos within the Other, remains to be seen:

“We also announce that the EZLN will establish a policy of having alliances with non-electoral movements and organizations that define themselves, in theory and practice, as of the left, according to the following conditions:

- No making of agreements from above to impose upon those below, but rather, they should make agreements to advance together and to listen and to organize indignation;
- No to beginning movements that will be later negotiated away behind the backs of those who made them, but, rather, they should take into account, always, the opinions of those who participate in them;
- No to seeking little gifts, jobs, advantages, patronage, of Power or of those who aspire to it, but, rather, they should go farther than the electoral calendars allow;
- No to trying to resolve from above the problems of our Nation, but rather, they must construct FROM BELOW AND FOR BELOW an alternative to neoliberal destruction, an alternative of the left for Mexico.
- Yes to mutual respect for autonomy and independence of organizations, of their ways of fighting, of their way of organizing themselves, of their internal decision-making processes, of their legitimate representatives, of their aspirations and demands;
- And, yes, to mutual respect and autonomy and independence and yes to a clear commitment of mutual and coordinated defence of national sovereignty, and with intransigent opposition to the attempts to privatise electricity, oil, water and natural resources.” (Ibid.: 6-7)

It is evident that these conditions exclude the instrumental politics of the institutional left, but also of the “revolutionary left” that seeks state power. The second “no” is particularly topical, given the manipulation of popular outrage over the electoral fraud of July 2nd by the PRD leadership to create a “designer revolt” (Gibler 2006b), which now faces not only imminent violent repression by the protofascist Mexican state, but also the perpetual danger of betrayal through backroom negotiations by its “leaders”. At the same time these organisational conditions present problems for the left-wing of the Other, uncomfortable with traditional anti-imperialist politics and notions of “national sovereignty” that do not problematise its basis in the dominance of the national bourgeois classes and its use of nationalist ideology to manipulate and divide the global working class, even when nationalism may appear to have a “progressive”, “anti-Yankee” face in Mexico. It remains to be seen, therefore, to what extent the EZLN and other more historical left groups within the Other can go beyond the limitations of Guevarist “left nationalism”, still the dominant ideology within the Mexican and Latin American radical left, although increasingly criticised by the growth of autonomism and anarchism in recent years.

The Other also seeks to separate itself from the verticalist traditions of Marxist-Leninist vanguardism, rejecting both the pyramid model of organization and its historical objective, the seizing of state power as the means to constitute a socialist society, organized as a mirror image of hierarchical capitalist society. From the start the EZLN made it clear that it would not be forming the “leadership” of the Other, much to the chagrin of the verticalists, democratic centralists, propagators of the Marcos personality cult and believers in “charismatic leaders” among the orthodox left:

And we don't come to you to tell you what you should do nor to give you orders. Nor are we going to ask you to vote for a candidate, since we already know that the only candidates are neoliberals. Nor are we going to tell you to do what we do, nor that you should rise up in arms. What we are going to do is ask you how your lives are going, your struggles, your thoughts about how our country is doing and about what we can do so that they don't defeat us (...) And maybe (...) together, we will organize throughout the entire country and come to an agreement between our struggles that, right now, fight alone, separated from one another, and we will come up with a plan about how we will continue with this program that includes what we all want, and a plan for how we are going to achieve this program, that is named 'the national plan for struggle' (...) (EZLN 2005: 2-3)

Nevertheless, Delegate Zero is without doubt the *primus inter pares* of the Other, as could be observed at the First National Assembly on May

29, when he informed the Assembly, supposedly the highest decisionary body of the Other, of the EZLN's "National Plan for Struggle" up to and including election day on July 2nd to free the Atenco prisoners, leaving the Assembly to rubberstamp it, rather than debate, discuss and if necessary criticise and amend it, given the lack of time to do so (only 15 minutes of discussion time remained for each set of state and regional delegates to give their opinion on the proposal as the independent cinema where the Assembly was held was about to shut for the night).

In keeping with most of the global anti-capitalist movement, many within the Other are diffident about such "grand narratives" as socialism, communism, autonomism and anarchism or any preordained blueprint to change society "from above", although within its ranks are some of the most dogmatic Marxist-Leninists in Mexico, the Maoist "Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist Leninist)" whose huge banners of Marx, Lenin, Engels, Stalin and Mao have adorned every meeting and march of the Other's caravan, to the consternation of many within the Other and the derision of its critics (Almeyra 2006a; Sanchez Ramirez 2006)⁵. In probably unintentional accordance with the autonomist theory of "multitude" (Hardt & Negri: 2000, 2004; Virno: 2004), these archaic images, once the icons of organized working class centrality, are accepted along with the hammer and sickle, anarchist and autonomist symbols, images of Zapata, Villa, Magon and Che Guevara, and perhaps even the Virgin of Guadalupe, a religious image used in the past by Zapatista indigenous women on their International Women's Day marches through San Cristobal, Chiapas, and an integral part of revived popular Latino identity in the US, as one more part of the Other's baggage, which above all contains the history of class struggle in Mexico.

The Zapatista slogan of "walking by asking" (*caminando preguntando*), i.e. moving forward in the struggle against and beyond capitalism by constantly questioning and criticizing both our own ideological and organizational assumptions, and the constantly changing and amorphous political and social environment produced by the clash between capitalist high-tech and human globalisations, has returned to Mexico in the cycles of global struggle to reinfuse the Other, via the absorption of that slogan by the alterglobalist movement since the "Battle of Seattle".

5 These same banners are now to be seen in the Zocalo, Mexico City's huge central square, adorning AMLO's bi-weekly "report assemblies", a sign that part of the Other is involved in the PRD-controlled anti-fraud movement, while the rest of the Other focuses on the increasingly violent repression of the teachers and APPO movements in Oaxaca and continuing efforts to free the 27 Atenco prisoners.

The Other Campaign officially began on January 1st 2006, exactly 12 years after the uprising against NAFTA, when Delegate Zero left La Realidad, Chiapas, on the back of a motorbike headed for the first of four months of daily meetings, speeches, protests and marches as he, the Sixth Commission and the Other Campaign caravan, made up of the groups in the Other and the Zetza close to the EZLN, like the “Disobedient” (ex-White Overalls) now global movement for example, wound their way through the southern and central states of Mexico. The Other has catalysed the organization of previously non-existent anti-capitalist movement networks, involving previously disparate struggles and rival groups, and the intensification of those already in place. It has also provoked a growing chorus of criticisms from pro-AMLO quarters, although AMLO himself has been careful to abstain from directly criticising Delegate Zero or the Other. However, the general tone of the Other had been intentionally low-key and focused on organization rather than propaganda, with Delegate Zero refusing to give interviews and the Other barring the mainstream press from its meetings and events, ignoring the total media coverage of the choreographed presidential campaigns⁶. The events of May 3 and 4 in and around Atenco, a small town near Mexico City where in 2002 the local population had mobilized to defend their communally-owned “ejido”⁷ land and prevent the construction of a multi-billion dollar international airport, inflicting a stinging defeat on Fox and his international backers, pushed both Marcos and the Other back into the national and international limelight. By that time the Other had already reached Mexico City, its stronghold outside Chiapas due to the presence of the UNAM students’ movement and the dozens of social movements and grassroots organizations spawned by the daily struggles of life in the “Monster”. Since those events, Delegate Zero has remained in Mexico City to coordinate the Other’s efforts to free the political prisoners remaining from the Atenco mass arrests, declared “red alert” in the Chiapas Zapatista communities and

6 The Other caravan was accompanied however by members of the “Other journalism”, including Hermann Bellinghausen of *La Jornada*, Indymedia, Narco News, ZNet and NACLA among others.

7 The ejidos were established throughout Mexico under the 1917 Constitution to formalize the widespread squatting by landless peasants that took place during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) and as a means of land redistribution, one of the principle demands of the Revolution, on the principle of common ownership. The revocation by the Salinas government in 1992 of the Constitution’s Article 27, which forbade the breaking up of ejidos into private lots or their sale to landowners, was both a forerunner of NAFTA and the spark for a series of land disputes and peasant uprisings, including that of the EZLN, as corporate agribusiness, Mexican landowners and tourism projects have conducted illegal land grabs and enforced sales, with the instigation and support of the state and federal governments. This kind of struggle forms the backbone of the Other in the rural areas of Southern Mexico (Ballvé 2006).

suspended indefinitely the rest of the Other Campaign's tour around northern Mexico, where both the institutional left and grassroots movements are fewer and weaker.

The organization of the "Zezta Internacional" (in mock reference, perhaps, to both Inter Milan's acceptance of Marcos' invitation last year to play a series of matches with the Zapatista football team, and to the idea of forming a "Sixth International", the "Fifth" being the centralist tendency within the WSF), also called for in the Sixth, has been conducted through meetings in Latin American and European countries, especially Spain, where the Second Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and against Neoliberalism, or "Encuentro Intergalactico", happened in 1997, the first having been organized by the EZLN in Chiapas the year before. Both "encuentros" can be seen as among the most important steps in setting up Peoples Global Action, a global alliance of autonomous movements, in 1997 and the global justice "movement of movements" since 1999.

The final part of the Sixth Declaration begins by identifying the Zapatista movement, more as students who listen than teachers who talk, with the popular, socialist and autonomous movements of contemporary Latin America in particular, but also with the global anti-war movement:

And we want to say to you, to the Latin American peoples, that, for us, we are proud to be part of you, although we are a small part. We remember well when years ago the continent was lit up by a light named Che Guevara, just as that light was named Bolívar beforehand, because, at times, the peoples take up a name in order to show that they carry a flag. And we want to say to the people of Cuba, who already have spent years in your path of resistance, that you are not alone and that we do not agree with the blockade against you and that we are going to look for the way to send you something, even if it is just corn, to support your resistance. And we want to say to the people of the United States that we don't confuse you with the evil governments that you have and that harm the whole world, and that we know that there are North Americans who fight in your country and work in solidarity with the struggles of other peoples. And we want to say to our Mapuche brothers and sisters in Chile that we see and we learn from your struggles. And to the Venezuelan people, that we watch very carefully your way of defending your sovereignty and your right to be a nation and to decide where you will go. And to the indigenous brothers and sisters of Ecuador and Bolivia we say to you that you are giving an excellent history lesson to all of Latin America because right now you are putting a stop to neoliberal globalisation. And to the piqueteros and the youth of Argentina we want to say that we love you. And to those in Uruguay who want a better country, we admire you. And to the landless of Brazil we respect you. And to all the youths of Latin America, it's so great that you are doing what you are doing and you give us great hope. And we want to say to the brothers and sisters of

Social Europe, that is to say the Europe that is rebellious and has dignity, that you are not alone. Your large movements against neoliberal wars make us very happy. We watch, attentively, your ways of organizing yourselves and your styles of fighting so that perhaps we can learn something.” (EZLN 2005: 1)

As for the programme of the Zezta, the Sixth, perhaps to distinguish the horizontalism of the Zezta from the incipient verticalism of the WSF, proposed through characteristically tongue-in-check language that:

“In the world...

1. We will build more relationships of respect and mutual aid with people and organizations that resist and fight against neoliberalism and for humankind.

2. In accordance with our abilities we will send material support such as food and crafts to those brothers and sisters who struggle throughout the world. (...)

3. And to everyone throughout the world who resists we say that there have to be other intercontinental gatherings (...) We don't want to give an exact date, or place, or decide who comes or how it is done, because this is about making horizontal agreements among us all. But we don't want it with a stage from where just a few speak and everyone else listens, but, rather, that there not be a stage, that it all be at ground-level, but well ordered because if not well organized there will just be a lot of noise and no one will understand the word. And with a good organization, everyone can listen, and they can write down in their notebooks the words of resistance that others tell so that later each participant can talk it over with their colleagues in their worlds. And we think that it ought to be in a place where there is a very big prison, because it could be that they repress us and jail us, and that way we will not all be piled one on top of another but, rather, well organized though we be prisoners. And from there in jail we can continue the intercontinental gathering for humankind and against neoliberalism.” (EZLN2005: 4-5)

The Zezta's participants are from horizontalist movements, probably disillusioned by their experience in the now verticalist-controlled WSF, from which the EZLN as an armed organization was constitutionally excluded, and the hijacking of the European Social Forum by the old orthodox left and its anti-democratic methods and obsolete political style. The Zezta is due to take place by January 2007 and the decision to organize the Zezta globally in tandem with the Other is a sign both of the continuing strength of Zapatista-instigated “new

internationalism" (Dinerstein 2002) and of the presently fractured state of the alterglobalist movement⁸.

Atenco, Oaxaca and the Other

On the morning of May 3 in the town of Texcoco, a few miles from Atenco and about 15 miles north-west of Mexico City, the PRD local mayor sent riot police to evict a group of flower sellers, typical members of the informal economy, from their established pitch. The scuffle that followed quickly developed into a major conflict as members of the Peoples Front in Defence of the Land (Frente de Pueblos en Defensa de la Tierra / FPDT) from Atenco, also known as the "macheteros", (they carry machetes on demonstrations as a symbol of the peasantry in struggle) came to the flower sellers aid and blocked the main highway to Mexico City for the rest of the day, repelling various charges by riot police. During the arrest of the leader of the FPDT that day a 14-year-old boy was shot dead at close range by a police officer. Hundreds of Other activists, human rights observers, doctors, media activists and others immediately gathered in Atenco to support the people of Atenco and Texcoco. The rightist Televisa and Teleazteca media duopoly bayed for protestor blood, repeatedly showing images of a riot policeman being kicked, while filtering out images of police brutality. Early in the morning of the next day, 3,000 armed riot police from various local, state and federal forces invaded the town of Atenco in retaliation for their defeat the day before and for the political humiliation inflicted on the Fox government four years earlier over the new Mexico City airport. The centre of the town was smothered in tear gas as gangs of riot police viciously attacked, clubbed and kicked men and women, the elderly and the young, FPDT, Other activists and bystanders, photographers and human rights observers, all were badly beaten before being dragged to jeeps where the beatings continued and the sexual abuse of the arrested women began. One 50-year-old woman out shopping was forced to have oral sex with three riot policemen in the street, under threat of beating and arrest (Ballinas 2006). A UNAM student activist Alexis Benumea was shot in the head with a tear gas canister and died a month later from his wounds. Some 20 houses, identified by an informer as belonging to FPDT activists, were broken into without warrants and the occupants and others who had taken shelter there beaten and arrested and their belongings stolen or destroyed. 280 were arrested and taken by bus to

8 See for example the recent split within ATTAC France along verticalist-horizontalist lines (Callinicos 2006).

a high security prison in the State of Mexico. During the 8-hour journey most of the women, including three foreigners, and some of the men were sexually tortured and 30 women and at least one man were raped by the police. At present, 27 people remain imprisoned in a high security jail reserved for terrorists and drug traffickers on charges of obstructing the highway and kidnapping police officers (eight police were captured – a common practice in social conflicts in Mexico - during the clashes of May 3, and were well treated before being discovered in a safe house by their colleagues during the police operation of the following day). There have been two hunger strikes by the imprisoned. Some are not members of the FPDT or from Atenco, while others are human rights observers and doctors who were voluntarily aiding the injured from the day before. A permanent vigil was established outside the prison where they are being held to demand their release. At the Other's first national assembly on May 29th, Marcos formalized the decision to suspend the caravan until all the remaining imprisoned are released. He proposed a campaign of artistic and political actions, including a demonstration for the release of *all* political prisoners and the presentation of the disappeared from the Seventies, as well as a second National Assembly, until and including election day on July 2nd which the assembly unanimously approved. As a result of the national and international outcry over the exceptional police brutality, the Other's profile was raised significantly, a 15,000 strong national demonstration against the repression in Atenco and for the release of the prisoners took place in Mexico City on May 30th, with smaller marches, pickets and protest actions throughout the country, in the USA and internationally during May and June. Marcos broke his boycott of the mainstream media and gave press and television interviews in which he intensified his attack on AMLO, whose response to the Atenco events was a studied silence, and on the destruction of any notion of legal order and human rights in Mexico by the political class, since all three of the main parties were involved in the repression.⁹ The repression of the Atenco and Other movements in May launched the other Campaign into the Mexican and international public realms, dramatically intensifying the organization and networking of struggles. However, since election day on July 2, the decision to remain in Mexico City until the liberation of the imprisoned

9 The data and incidents mentioned here were taken from reports in *La Jornada* and *Indymedia Mexico*, and have since been confirmed by the *preliminary report of the ongoing investigation by the International Civil Commission on the Observance of Human Rights* (Comisión Civil Internacional de Observación por los Derechos Humanos) into the events in Atenco and Texcoco on May 3rd and 4th this year: <http://cciodh.pangea.org>; accessed 11th August 2006.

and suspend the rest of the Other Campaign's tour of Mexico, while humanly and ethically unquestionable, have nevertheless led to the Other's perceived stagnation and "swamping" by the media coverage given to AMLO's anti-fraud movement.

Since July 2nd, the focus of the movement has switched to the teachers and popular movements in Oaxaca City, the capital of Oaxaca state, one of the most impoverished and historically combative regions of Mexico, along with Chiapas, Guerrero and Puebla, the states with the main concentrations of autochthonous peoples, among the most antagonist social subjects in recent years in Mexico and Latin America. The Oaxaca movement started on May 22 as the annual strike and occupation of the city's main square for a meaningful salary raise by the dissident section of the SNTE (National Educational Workers Union), Latin America's largest union and the fiefdom of Elba Esther Gordillo, the pro-Fox PRI leader widely suspected of using her union members to carry out the more traditional fraudulent activities on July 2. The movement rapidly spread throughout the middle and working classes of Oaxaca, disgusted by the despotic style of the PRI governor, Ulisses Ruiz, whose removal from power became the movement's minimum demand. The crude attempts to baton the teachers off the street on June 14th led to a battle in the city centre resulting in the main square being retaken by the striking teachers, now supported actively by ample sections of the general population, and the formation of APPO (Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca). The occupation of the main square has spread to the building of barricades throughout the city and the occupation of most of the public and government buildings in the city, as well as all the TV and radio stations, rendering the state ungovernable. Ruiz survives only due to the pro-fraud post-electoral PRI-PAN pact against the anti-fraud and Oaxaca movements. The use of "state terrorist" tactics by the repressive apparatus, reminiscent of the "dirty war" fought against the guerrilla movements of the 70s, includes the murder of 5 APPO activists, the wounding of several others and the kidnapping of four APPO leaders by plain clothes police and paramilitary gunmen, who now launch nightly armed attacks against the pickets outside government buildings and radio stations (Gibler 2006a). The violence of the now totally discredited governor's response and the non-intervention of the Fox government has only increased the growing sense of political vacuum, destabilization and polarization evident throughout the country, but most notable in Mexico City and Oaxaca, as the lines for a generalised conflict begin to harden.

The “Other on the Border” and the “Other on the Other Side”

One of the most innovative aspects of the Other has been the attempt to depart from national Mexican politics and transcend the crumbling boundaries of the nation state to include those (non-)Mexicans who live and struggle in one of the most extreme borderlands, where “First” and “Third” Worlds meet, clash and intermingle, creating a transnational space, sometimes called “Amexica”. This is the land of *maquiladoras* (corporate assembly plants for export, compared by Bowden [1998] with Nazi slave factories for their salaries, too low to permit worker reproduction, guaranteed instead by a constant stream of internal migrants, and for appalling work and health and safety conditions), *narco* executions (drug trafficker cartels, now the most powerful in Latin America, engaged in an increasingly deadly turf war), *coyotes* (immigrant traffickers, who will be among the main beneficiaries of the Sensenbrenner anti-immigration bill), Mara Salvatrucha/MS13 (a counter-cultural gang movement and organised crime cartel from El Salvador now present throughout the US), the *Migra* (US Border Patrol), child sex tourism and the black on pink crosses to remember the femicides (some 450 mainly working class-indigenous-internal migrant women and girls murdered in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua City since 1993, 130 of whom were raped, tortured and mutilated, over 1,000 “disappeared”, only 30 cases investigated to the victims’ families’ satisfaction¹⁰), but also of neofascist Minutemen militia and the militarisation of “America’s” soft underbelly in the “war against terrorism”. Ciudad Juarez is the region’s most emblematic city and is about to host the first Border Social Forum in October, being strategically positioned in the very centre of the 1,500-mile long border and the twin city of El Paso, Texas, containing the CIA’s headquarters for the border and global south. Bowden (1998) despairingly calls Juarez “a laboratory of our future”, a place where the now relatively low level of worker resistance allows capital to create a “posthuman” society (Berardi 2003). Beyond the borderlands lies “Atzlan”, the Chicano term for “occupied Mexico” (the south-western states of the US ceded by Mexico after the 1847 invasion), where the Latino population has grown vertiginously in the last 25 years, as some 30 million Mexicans and Central Americans have crossed the border, most without documents, one of the great exoduses of recent history. Hundreds have perished from heat exhaustion in the Arizona desert,

10 See the constantly updated bilingual website of Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa (Our daughters back home), the most radical NGO working on the femicides in Juarez and Chihuahua:

one of the hottest places on earth and where US anti-immigration policies deliberately funnel migrants with walls, border patrols, pilotless spy planes and now with armed militias and the armoured vehicles of the National Guard. But Aztlan now also includes Los Angeles, Chicago and New York, which have become dependent on the cheap labour of Mexican migrants, whose remittances to their home communities are now Mexico's third largest source of foreign exchange after oil sales and tourism, making organized migrant communities in Chicago and elsewhere among the most significant investors in Mexican rural communities, so much so that the Bush government now wants to tax them. The growing dependence of the US economy on migrant "prosumers" was laid bare by the May Day "Si se puede" movement's huge demonstrations and boycott of US businesses against the proposed criminalization of undocumented migrants as "potential terrorists" by the Sensenbrenner bill. This mass movement of millions of previously subordinated migrants, together with the increasingly powerful social movements of Latin America, which have forced their national oligarchies to abandon or modify their slavish obedience of the Washington Consensus, has been described as the most important generalised anti-capitalist struggle in the Americas since the Civil Rights, black nationalist, students, counter-cultural and anti-war movements of the 60s (Midnight Noters 2006).

So where and how has the Other tried to connect with these movements both in the US and on its borders? Starting with the "Other on the Border", an attempted transnational zonification and networking of struggles in Chihuahua in Mexico, with west Texas and New Mexico, activists from the autonomist Kasa de la Cultura para Tod@s (House of Culture for All), the Trotskyist LUS (United Socialist League), ejiditarios from the Valle de Juarez (the last remaining agricultural area near the Juarez-El Paso border), the indigenous movement of the Raramuri people, the FAT (Authentic Labour Front, the only independent trade union active among maquiladora workers), students, teachers and NGOs campaigning for justice for the victims of the femicides, have met weekly with a Chicano rural farmworkers union in El Paso campaigning to save their homes in the Segundo Barrio in the downtown from gentrification as part of the San Jeronimo Project, which will lead to the diversion of water, the construction of social housing and other scarce resources away from the fast growing but almost completely unplanned and unserved urban sprawl of Juarez, and with trade unionists, migrant rights activists and teachers from El Paso and Las Cruces in the US; altogether some 50 groups as well as many unaffiliated individuals. However, the Other on the Border has been dogged from the start by a sectarian war of words carried out

on its email list and aimed at the Kasa, the core movement, which had bilateral meetings with the EZLN in Chiapas at the beginning of the Other and is responsible for coordinating the Other on the Border: yet another example of the horizontal-vertical conflict within global anti-capitalism, which has resulted in a considerable waste of time, energy and motivation. As a result the actions taken in solidarity with the Atenco movement in May were very limited compared to south and central Mexico, where sizeable demonstrations and roadblocks were organized throughout May. When the Kasa was attacked by armed, masked "state terrorists" the same month and for the second time in six months (an example of the now commonplace state intimidation tactics used against the Other throughout Mexico), its computers destroyed and a member kidnapped for several hours, the response by the rest of the Other in Juarez was well below what the Kasa had hoped for in terms of solidarity and support. Once the decision was taken by Marcos, who was due to visit the borderlands in June, to suspend the rest of the Other Campaign until the Atenco imprisoned were freed, enthusiasm has gradually dropped off and the once packed weekly organizational meetings have now ceased. Even though the focus in the Other on the visits of Marcos was criticised in some quarters as reinforcing his de facto leadership, nevertheless the "Zapatour" had important organizational and mobilisational impacts, especially on areas of relatively low militant activism such as Juarez where intermovement relations were minimal or non-existent. While some voluntaristically welcome this as a necessary self-depuration of the less committed members of the Other, others have criticised Marcos' decision to "imprison" himself in Mexico City, which has led to a sense of stagnation since the July 2 elections, concomitant with the spectacular (in all senses of that word) rise of the AMLO anti-fraud movement. Nevertheless, the Zapatistas credibility as a core movement, not only in Mexico but globally, depends on their insistence on political coherence. Thus their commitment to the Atenco imprisoned will be kept even if the remainder of the Other Campaign has to be postponed to next year and the opportunity to "shadow" the presidential campaigns in order to reveal the falsities of official politics has been lost for another six years. This is also a sign of the Zapatistas patience and different conception of political time from the more urgent, but perhaps more opportunist and capitalistically integrated political rhythms of some urban social movement activists.

The Other on the Other Side participated in the "Si se puede" movement and has coordinated with the local struggles of the Latino community, for example the attempt to save a community urban farm and park in South Central Los Angeles from being repossessed for

development. This struggle brought together activists from all the communities in LA in defence of an occupied green space, one of the few left in a highly polluted and alienated urban environment. It has also organised “free radio” workshops and alternative media skill sharing with the less-resourced Tijuana and Juarez Others. The Other on the Other Side is a vital conduit between the Other Campaign in Mexico and the increasingly powerful struggles of the Latino migrant communities in the US.

Old Lefts and New Foes: AMLO, the PRD and the Other after the July 2nd Electoral Fraud

It should be apparent by now that the contemporary political cleavages in Mexico are not only left-right, as personified by the bitter personal feud between Fox and AMLO, but also the growing conflict between the revolutionary/anti-capitalist left represented by the Other Campaign and the substantially pro-capitalist/ “reformist” (in reality, “reformism without reforms”, typical of the Latin American post-insurreccional institutional left) PRD. Taking both the political elites and the broader left parties and movements by surprise, the EZLN first attacked the presidential aspirations of AMLO and the PRD, the main centre-left party, as neoliberal and even “fascist”, causing considerable consternation among the PRD’s generally pro-Zapatista base. The confused resentment and outrage expressed in the letters that flooded into *La Jornada* in July and August 2005, following the publication of the Sixth, were born of the fact that most within the party view AMLO as a messianic figure, the PRD’s best chance to win the presidency since its foundation in 1989, following the electoral fraud of 1988. AMLO’s elevation to virtual political sainthood has been greatly aided by the clumsy conspiracy of Fox and Salinas to remove him from contention through spurious legal actions and media vilification. AMLO’s right-hand man when Mayor of Mexico City, Rene Bejerano, was caught on video in 2004 receiving bribes in return for city contracts from a businessman subsequently linked to Salinas, so provoking a far-reaching scandal which showed that the PRD was very much part of the endemically corrupt, clientalist political class, although AMLO’s reputation as an “honest” politician remained unscathed. The conspiracy was momentarily frustrated by a huge demonstration of over one million mainly but not exclusively PRD supporters in April 2005, forcing Fox to back down and reinstate AMLO’s legal immunity

as Mayor, so permitting him to continue as the PRD's presidential candidate¹¹.

Marcos has since clarified the reasons for the now intense antagonism between the Zapatistas and the PRD, which in many ways had been simmering since 1994:

- the 2001 betrayal by the PRD of the 1996 San Andres Accords on indigenous autonomy and rights, signed by the EZLN and the then PRI Mexican government as well as various independent indigenous organizations and which the PRD had always verbally supported (and the enactment of which AMLO made the first of the "51 promises" in his 2006 electoral manifesto), but which it unexpectedly dropped when the majority of its senators supported a diluted PAN counterproposal which substantially maintains the racist status quo and denies autonomy.
- The armed attack in April 2004 by PRD members on a Zapatista march in Zinacantán, a community in Chiapas where the local PRD government had cut off water and electricity to Zapatista families in an attempt to force them to join the PRD. Nearby Zapatistas organized a march to reconnect the services, which local PRD members then ambushed with gunfire, wounding several of the marchers. Although the PRD national leadership promised a full investigation into the incident, it has yet to happen and the local PRD leader responsible for the attack is now one of the main organizers of AMLO's non-party "Citizens Support Network" in Chiapas.

Other reasons for the breakdown of relations between the EZLN and the PRD would be:

- The EZLN's unconditional support for the UNAM students movement's strike and occupation in 1999-2000 against the hiking of fees as the first step in the privatisation of Latin America's largest state university, was a watershed in the radicalisation of the Zapatista movement, leading to rupture with Cardenas, the then PRD Mayor of Mexico City, and the radical liberal urban intelligentsia, led by Carlos Monsivais and Elena Poniatowska, once so fascinated by the EZLN. Relations also became tense with *La Jornada*, which reported the

¹¹ Under Mexican law, a person accused of a crime or involved in a court case cannot stand for election as president.

occupation objectively but whose cartoonists and editorialists joined the general media demonization of the autonomous students' movement as violent, anachronistic "Stalinist monsters", after they expelled the PRD "colonels" (official student leaders) to stop them manipulating the movement. The CGH (General Strike Council) movement was repressed in February 2000 when the Zedillo government sent riot police onto the campus of an autonomous university and hundreds of students were imprisoned or expelled, although UNAM dropped the fee hike and the movement's nerve centre, the Aula Magna Che Guevara, remains occupied and is now one of the Other's main organizational hubs.

- The Chiapas state government has been under PRD control since 2000, and while the army and PRI-linked paramilitary groups no longer harass Zapatista communities to the same extent (although no action has been taken against those responsible for the 1997 Acteal massacre and hundreds of other extra judicial summary executions), the state's counter-insurgency effort has continued through discrimination against Zapatista families and communities over government aid, often administered through PRD-linked NGOs, forcing some to join the PRD and leading to conflicts over squatted land with the Zapatista autonomous "Caracoles" and "Good Government Councils"¹² in an attempt to divide and weaken the Zapatistas in their heartland. The Zapatistas ended relations with most Mexican NGOs, some of which are both PRD-linked and financed by the US State Department¹³, in 2003 when the "Aguascalientes" meeting places with "civil society" were shut down and replaced by the present "Caracoles" (seashell, an important symbol in Mayan culture and more defence-oriented), which maintain more guarded relations with a few carefully vetted NGOs and with "civil society" in general. The Zapatista autonomous communities, taking advantage of the probably only temporary lull in hostilities, have since embarked on a dual strategy of local consolidation and gradual inter/national expansion of the movement, of which the Sixth and the Other are the results.

12 Juntas de Buen Gobierno, set up to self-govern the autonomous municipalities on collective leadership-revocable delegate principles and drawn from ordinary citizens, who then return to their former occupations, so avoiding the re-emergence of the corruption and clientalism characteristic of a professional political class with its own interests and agenda.

13 According to Eligio Calderon, an academic of the UAM-Xochimilco, Mexico City, and former advisor to the EZLN during its 1995-96 negotiations with the PRI government.

Relations with the PRD have worsened still with the choice of Juan Sabines, formerly of the PRI, as their candidate for the Chiapas governorship elections on August 20, which he seems to have won. Sabines has included in his team of advisors the ex-PRI governor Albores, responsible for the Acteal massacre and the 1998 military offensive against the Zapatista communities that left several dead, hundreds imprisoned and thousands displaced.

- The failure of AMLO's Mexico City government to properly investigate the 2001 assassination of Digna Ochoa, an indigenous woman and radical human rights lawyer close to the Zapatistas, and of the UNAM student activist Pavel Gonzalez in 2004. Many suspect the involvement of the *Yunque* (anvil), a semi-clandestine neofascist group linked to the PAN, some of whose main leaders are former members, and/or CISEN, the Mexican secret service. However, the judicial arm of AMLO's government, despite hard evidence to the contrary (both were shot more than once and Gonzalez' body was found crucified in a forest outside the city) persists with the "suicide" theorem, typical of one of the worst aspects of the PRI's 70-year dictatorship when political dissidents were regularly "suicided". Given the lack of judicial independence at any level, this would seem to indicate AMLO's reluctance, as a prospective presidential candidate, to confront the Mexican "secret state", which ill bodes any prospect of justice under his hypothetical presidency for the victims of the 1968 and 1971 massacres of students and teachers, the thousands of disappearances and summary executions of the "dirty war" in the 1970s, and of the more recent massacres of peasant and indigenous movements at Aguas Blancas (1995), Acteal (1997) and El Charco (1998), the full investigation and punishment of which are the main demands of Mexican social justice and human rights movements, supported by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.
- A disturbing tendency by both AMLO, a former member of the PRI, and of the PRD to accept into their ranks and leadership, and now in leading positions in the presidential electoral team, some of the worst PRI authoritarian "dinosaurs" such as Manuel Bartlett, one of the architects of the 1988 fraud, Leonel Cota, formerly an orthodox neoliberal on the right-wing of the PRI and now PRD party secretary, Adolfo Uribe and Socorro Diaz, close advisors to former President Zedillo and implicated in the Acteal massacre, as well as opportunists like

Munoz Ledo and Camacho Solis, both former PRI leaders who have flirted with the PAN, and are now among AMLO's closest advisors.

- AMLO's close relationship with top Mexican capitalists like Carlos Slim, the third richest man on the planet according to Forbes Magazine (2006), with whom he shares a project to gentrify the historical centre of Mexico City, involving the expulsion of its working class population and the repression of the street vendors of the "informal economy", through the introduction of former New York mayor Giuliani's "zero tolerance" policy, while leaving organized crime rackets untouched. As Mayor (2000-2005) AMLO had a mixed, populist style, providing social security top up payments to impoverished pensioners and single mothers and founding a much-needed new state university with an adult education mission, the UACM, while favouring the middle class consumerist, car and construction lobbies by building the pharaonic "Second Floor" of the city's heavily congested ring road, instead of investing in improved public transport, housing and social services, all desperate needs in one of the world's most socially polarized, congested and polluted cities.
- The PRD, a coalition of competing "political tribes" brought together by PRI "democratisers", the reformed ex-Stalinists of the Mexican Communist Party and the defeated remnants of the New Left vanguardist parties in 1989, has made persistent attempts to co-opt the Zapatista movement since 1994, as part of its clientalist galaxy of ex-social movements now converted into internal party factions or NGOs, as happened to the more traditionally socialist Asamblea de Barrios of Superbarrio fame and much of the once autonomous "Colono" (community squatters) movement, enticed by the offer of parliamentary seats and organizational funding, thanks to the PRD's enhanced finances following its historical victory in 1997 when Cardenas became the first elected Mayor of Mexico City, now the party's electoral stronghold.

So gone are the days back in 1996 when Marcos, Cardenas and AMLO met in San Cristobal to discuss common strategy in the "transition to democracy", as part of the Peace Dialogue between the PRI regime and the EZLN. The EZLN's evolution as an autonomous movement has led it to break with most of its broad left and democratic allies, including the small "liberation theology" component, represented by

the ex-bishop of San Cristobal Samuel Ruiz, of the otherwise deeply traditional and hard right Mexican Catholic Church.

The evidence for electoral fraud against AMLO and the PRD on the July 2nd presidential, congressional and senate elections is accumulating by the day, despite the right's pretence that nothing untoward happened and that everything is the product of AMLO's feverish imagination. The growing body of evidence for both cybernetic and traditional fraud shows that the foreign observers provided by the European Union and other organizations singularly failed in their task and that Bush, Blair and Zapatero rubberstamped fraud in one of the most important "emerging democracies" by precipitously recognising Calderon, the PAN candidate, as the winner. Although the fabulously paid judges of the TEPJF, the final court for electoral disputes, are about to make their unappealable ruling, predictably, that the elections were fair, AMLO and his "Planton" (picket) tent city, which has covered much of the city centre since July 30th, completely disrupting traffic flows and tourism (Mexico's second source of foreign revenue), will continue at least until September 15th. Under the pretext of needing to clear the central square for an army Independence Day parade, the "planton" may well be violently dislodged, given President Fox's threatening language and the creation of a militarised no-go area around the Congress building, reminiscent of the "red zone" at the G8 Summit in Genoa in 2001, in preparation for his final September 1st "Report to the nation". Such repressive action will only worsen the already profound systemic crisis caused by the fraud and the Oaxaca conflict, possibly precipitating generalised conflict throughout Mexico.

Conclusions: An/Other Anti-Capitalism is Possible?

The Sixth and the Other represent the constitution of a potentially revolutionary autonomous "left", organized for the first time in Mexican history as an officially "leaderless", (although Marcos is for the moment at least its unofficial leader and spokesperson) and transnational (since it includes the "Otra en el otro lado" in the USA) grassroots network of social movements, extra-parliamentary political parties, independent trade union branches, community groups, radical NGOs and unaffiliated individuals, all linked to the networks of the anti-capitalist alterglobalist "movement of movements". However, at the present conjuncture the Other and indeed the Zapatista communities in Chiapas find themselves facing repression by an authoritarian ultra-neoliberal president, imposed through an electoral fraud which is tantamount to a fascist coup d'etat and which slams Mexico's 18-year-

old “transition to democracy” into reverse. The challenge to build a mass autonomous anti-capitalist alternative “below and to the left” at this moment seems huge and much will depend on developing close ties with the global networks of anti-capitalism both to defend the new movement from repression and to increase its counter-power within the Mexican political scenario. It will also be important for the Other to avoid the pitfalls that allowed President Kirchner to co-opt important elements of the Piquetero movement in Argentina (see Dinerstein in this volume), a similar fate befalling parts of the indigenous movements in Ecuador and Bolivia, although the Sem Terra landless peasants movement (Latin America’s largest and one of its most autonomous) has successfully resisted Lula’s attempts to divide and co-opt it (Fernandes 2006). So along with avoiding cooption by the greatly expanded PRD, which won 35% of the senate and congress seats and is only slightly smaller than the PAN, with the PRI facing major internal splits and possible disintegration, the Other will need to build strong links with Latin America’s growing number of autonomous anti-capitalist movements. It will also be necessary for the Other to strengthen its links with the Oaxaca and Atenco movements and join forces with those potentially autonomous elements within the anti-fraud movement, disillusioned with the prospects for radical change through electoral politics and prepared to continue the struggle for participative democracy “from below and for below” long after AMLO and the PRD have made their peace with Fox and Calderon. All these movements will need to go beyond the region’s historical tendency towards left nationalism and “popular patriotism”, which view all forms of globalisation as a calamity, not just the neoliberal economic variety: an ideology which finally only legitimates the return to power of the national bourgeoisie vis-à-vis transnational capital. For the first time an autonomous, alterglobal, anti-capitalist movement is emerging in Mexico, aided by the eclipse of neoliberalism in the region and the depth of the systemic political crisis, but its immediate fate now hangs in the balance.

Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, 28 August 2006.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to Carolina Ballesteros and Werner Bonefeld for their helpful comments on the first drafts of this paper. My thanks also to Eligio Calderon, Ernesto Montes, Hector Pedraza, Carlos Morales and Claudio Albertani for the information and insights they provided in

conversations and correspondence. The opinions expressed here are entirely my own and for which, of course, I take full responsibility.

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