

EZLN: Them and Us Part IV: The Pains of Those Below

January 26, 2013

Them and Us Part IV: The Pains of Those Below

January of 2013.

“How many times have the police stopped us in the street for the crime of “carrying a face” [i] that looks suspicious, or a mohawk, and after beating and extorting us, they let us go?”

“Repression y Criminalization,” Cruz Negra Anarquista-Mexico. January 2013

“And the young person that now sees you as a hero and an example of someone who has been unjustly treated by a repressive system?”

“Hero, no. A hero is each of those young people that go outside everyday to organize themselves to change this unjust society and this economic and political system. And they do organize, they defend themselves... They shouldn't be afraid, because fear is about to change direction.

Alfonso Fernández, held in prison since N14, [ii] in Spain, interviewed by Shangay Lily, on Kaos en la Red. January 2013.

We need an enemy to give a people hope. [...]

But the meaning of identity is now based on hatred, on hatred for those who are not the same. Hatred has to be cultivated as a civic passion. The enemy is the friend of the people.

You always want someone to hate in order to feel justified in your own misery. Always.

Hatred is the true primordial passion.

Umberto Eco. *El Cementerio de Praga* (The Prague Cemetery).

When and where did the violence start?

Let's see.

In front of a mirror, on whatever calendar, in whatever geography...

Imagine you are different from most people.

Imagine you are something very different.

Imagine you have a particular color skin or hair.

Imagine that you are disrespected, humiliated, pursued, incarcerated, or killed for this, for being different.

Imagine that since you were born, the entire system tells you over and over that you are something odd, abnormal, sick, that you should repent from what you are, chalk it up to bad luck and/or divine justice, and do everything possible to modify this “manufacturing defect.”

*And of course for you, precisely, we have this product that is simply
m-a-r-v-e-l-o-u-s for genetic defects. This type of thinking
will relieve you of rebellion and that bothersome habit of complaining
about everything all the time. This cream will change your
skin color. This dye will give your hair a fashionable tint.
This class on “how to make friends and be popular in the network”
will give you everything necessary to be a modern individual.
This treatment will give you your youth back. This DVD will show you
how to behave at the table, in the street, at work, in bed,
in illegal assaults (by thieves), in legal assaults (by banks,
government, elections, and legally established businesses),
in social gatherings... what?
Oh, they don't invite you to social gatherings?... ok, well it
will also tell you what to do so that you get invited. Anyway,
here you will learn the secret of how to triumph in life.
Leave Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber behind in your
number of twitter followers! Include a mask of your choice.
We have everything! We even have that of CSG...[\[iii\]](#)
Okay, okay, okay, that was a bad example,
but we do have something for every need. Let them no longer look on you
with disgust! Let them not call you trash, indian, prole,
Black, region 4,[\[iv\]](#) zombie, Zapatista-lover!*

Imagine that you, despite all of your best efforts and intentions, don't manage to hide the color of your skin or your hair.

Now imagine that a campaign is launched to eliminate everyone who is like you.

It's not that there's an event to inaugurate the campaign, or a law to establish it, but you realize that the system in its entirety has begun to work against you, and those who are like you. The entire society has become a machine whose principal purpose is to annihilate you.

First there are disapproving glances, disgust, contempt. Later there are insults, aggressions. After that come detentions, deportations, imprisonment. Later deaths here and there, legally and illegally. Finally,

a true campaign, the machine at full force, to disappear you and all those who are like you. The identity of those who make up society is affirmed by the hate directed against you. Your sin? Being different.

-*-

You still don't see it?

Okay, imagine then that you are... (insert masculine, feminine, or other pronoun, whatever the case may be):

An Indigenous person in a country dominated by foreigners. A fleet of military helicopters is heading toward your lands. The press will say that the occupation of the wind power plant impeded the reduction in contamination, or that the jungle was being destroyed. "*Eviction was necessary in order to reduce planetary global warming,*" —Secretary of State

A Black person in a nation dominated by whites. A WASP [White Anglo Saxon Protestant] judge is about to sentence you. The jury has declared you guilty. Among the evidence presented by the district attorney is an analysis of your skin pigmentation.

A Jew in Nazi Germany. The Gestapo official stares at you steadily. The next day the report will say that they have purified the human race.

A Palestinian in today's Palestine. An Israeli army missile is aimed at your school, hospital, neighborhood, home. Tomorrow the press will say that they took out military targets.

An immigrant on the other side of whatever border. An immigration patrol approaches you. The next day nothing will appear in the press.

A priest, a monk, or a layman that has opted [to advocate] for the poor, in the midst of the opulence of the Vatican. The Cardinal's sermon is directed against those who interfere in earthly matters.

A street vendor in an exclusive commercial mall in an exclusive residential district. A truck full of riot police pulls up. "*We must defend free trade,*" the government representative will declare.

A woman alone, night or day, on some form of public transport full of men. A small increase in rates of "gender violence." The police officer will say: "*you know how some women are asking for it.*"

A gay person alone, night or day, on public transportation full of *machos*. A minimal increase in rates of "homophobic violence."

A sexworker on a strange street on an unfamiliar corner... the police pull up. "*The government efficiently combats sex trafficking*" the press will say.

A punk, a Rastafarian, a skater, a *cholo*, a metalhead, on the street, at night... another police patrol pulls up. "*We are preventing vandalism and antisocial behavior*" —Head of Government

A graffiti artist "tagging" the World Trade Center... another police patrol pulls up. "*We will do everything necessary to make our city beautiful and attractive for tourism,*" —any government official

A communist in a meeting of the fascist right-wing party. "*We are against the totalitarianism that has done so much damage in the world,*" —Party President.

An anarchist in a meeting of the Communist Party. "*We are against those petit-bourgeois deviationists that have done so much damage to world revolution,*" —Secretary General of the Party.

A "31 Minutes" news show on the CNN ticker. Tulio Triviño and Juan Carlos Bodoque look at each other, disconcerted, but don't say anything.[\[v\]](#)

An alternative music group trying to sell their CD at a concert featuring Lady Gaga, Madonna, Justin Bieber, or whoever will follow them. The police come up. The fans scream like mad.

An artist dancing outside a great cultural center where the *Bolshoi* Ballet is performing (yes-it's-a-gala-invitation-only-we're-sorry-miss-you're-in-the-way-here). Security proceeds to reestablish order.

An elderly person at a meeting presided over by the Japanese Minister of Finance Taró Asó (he studied at Stanford and recently asked elderly people "*to hurry up and die*" because their lives are getting very expensive). Social spending is cut further.

An *Anonymous* criticizing "copyright" in a meeting of Microsoft-Apple shareholders. "*A dangerous hacker behind bars,*" the press will say.

A young Mapuche who, in Chile, reclaims the land of his/her ancestors while watching the approach of the tanks and the offensive green of the soldiers. The bullet that mortally injures him/her will go unpunished.

A young person and/or student or unemployed person at an army-police-civil guard-carabineer checkpoint. The last they hear? "*Shoot!*"

A Nahua commoner in the offices of a transnational mining company. Uniformed men kidnap him. “*We’re investigating,*” —respective governments.

A dissident facing gray, raised metal walls, while on the other side, the Mexican political class swallows the bitter pill of yet another imposition. You are hit with the blow of a rubber bullet that takes out your eye or breaks your skull. “*Calls for unity for the good of the country. Time to leave bickering behind,*” —News headlines

A peasant facing an army of lawyers and police, hearing that the land where you work, where your parents were born and raised, as well as your grandparents, your great-grandparents, and so on back to where time becomes blurry, is now the property of a real estate developer and that you are robbing the poor businessmen of something that legally belongs to them. Jail.

An opponent of electoral fraud who sees the forty thieves[\[vi\]](#) and their boot-lickers exonerated. The mockery: “*one must turn the page and look ahead.*”

A man or a woman who comes to see what all the racket is about, and is suddenly “kettled” by the forces of order. While they push, hit, and kick him or her in taking them to the patrol, you can see the cameras from a well-known television channel pointing the other way.

An indigenous Zapatista who has been in a prison of the bad government (PRI-PAN-PRD-PT-MC) for many years. You read in the newspaper: “*Why has the EZLN reappeared now that the PRI has returned to power? Very Suspicious.*”

-*-

Do you follow?

Now...

Do you feel convinced that you are out of place?

Do you feel the fear of being ignored, insulted, beaten, mocked, humiliated, raped, incarcerated, or murdered, simply for being who you are?

Do you feel the impotence of not being able to do anything to avoid it, to defend yourself, to be heard?

Do you curse the moment that you came to this place, the day that you were born, the hour that you began to read this text?

-*-

Many of the examples above have a name, a calendar, and a geography:

Juan Francisco Kuykendall Leal. Compa Kuy, adherent of the Sixth Declaration, professor, playwright, theater director. Skull broken on December 1, 2012 by a bullet from the “forces of order.” He was planning to do a play about Enrique Peña Nieto.

José Uriel Sandoval Díaz. Young student from the Autonomous University of Mexico City, part of the Student Council of Struggle. He lost an eye in the repression of December 1, 2012 following the attack by the “forces of order.” He was planning resist the imposition of Enrique Peña Nieto.

Celedonio Prudencio Monroy. Indigenous Nahua. Kidnapped on October 23, 2012 by the “forces of order.” He was planning to resist the taking of Nahua lands by miners and loggers.

Adrián Javier González Villarreal. Young student at the School of Mechanical and Electric Engineering at the Autonomous University in Nuevo León, Mexico, murdered in January 2013 by the “forces of order.” He was planning to graduate and be a successful professional.

Cruz Morales Calderón and Juvencio Lascurain. Peasant farmers taken prisoner in Veracruz, 2010-2011, by the “forces of order”. They planned to resist the taking of their lands by real estate developers.

Matías Valentín Catrileo Quezada. Young indigenous Mapuche, assassinated on January 3, 2008, in Chile, Latin America, by the “forces of order.” He was planning to resist the taking of Mapuche land by the government, large landowners, and transnational businesses.

Francisco Sántiz López, indigenous Zapatista, taken prisoner unjustly by the “forces of order.” He planned to resist the governmental counterinsurgencies of Juan Sabines Guerrero and Felipe Calderón Hinojosa.

-*-

Now...don't despair, we are just about finished...

Now imagine you that you aren't scared, or that yes, you are, but you can control it.

Imagine that you go and, in front of the mirror, not only do you not hide nor cover up your difference, but you highlight it.

Imagine that you make of your difference a shield or a weapon, you defend yourself, meet others like you, organize, resist, fight, and without even noticing, you move from “I am different” to “we are different”.

Imagine that you don't hide behind "maturity" and "good judgment," behind the "now is not the time," or "there aren't the appropriate conditions," "we must wait," "it is useless," "there is no solution."

Imagine that you don't sell out, don't give in, and don't give up.

Could you imagine it?

Ok, well although neither you nor we know it yet, we are part of a "we" that is even larger and yet to be built.

(to be continued...)

From whatever corner, in whichever world.

SupMarcos.

Planet Earth.

January 2013.

See and listen to the video that accompanies this text.

M.I.A. "[Born Free](#)"

"Born Free" performed by M.I.A. (Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam). Video. Director: Romain Gavras (Son of Costa Gavras). Photography: André Chemetoff. Production: Mourad Belkeddar. Executive Production: Gaetan Rousseau / Paradoxal. This video was censored by YouTube due to its content.

Bob Marley, "[Burnin' and Lootin'](#)"

"Burnin' and Lootin'" by Bob Marley. Video from the beginning of "La Haine" ("Hate"), written and directed by Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995. Subtitles in Spanish.

[i] "Carrying a face" [*portación de cara*] is used here as a substitute for the usual Mexican legal phrase "carrying a weapon" [*portación de arma*] and is used in Mexico much the same way as the crimes of "Driving while Black" or "Flying while Arab" are used in the United States.

[ii] November 14, 2012 was the day of a massive general strike in Spain and Portugal, as well as other strikes across Europe, especially in Greece and Italy.

[iii] Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

[iv] Region 4 refers to Latin America on DVD coding. Referring to someone as "*región 4*" is a putdown, something like saying "oh, you're so third world."

[v] "*31 Minutos*" is a Chilean television show that parodies television newscast. Tulio Triviño and Juan

Carlos Bodoque are both puppet characters who parody real life figures.

[vi] “40 thieves” (as in Ali Baba and his 40 thieves) refers to the 30 governors and presidential cabinet members that assisted the launching of the “National Crusade Against Hunger” by Enrique Peña Nieto in Las Margaritas, Chiapas (a zone of heavy Zapatista influence), but is also used by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos and the Zapatistas as a way to refer to the Mexican political class in general.