

Them and Us VII. The Smallest of Them All 6: Resistance

THEM AND US VII.

The Smallest of Them All 6.

The Resistance.

March of 2013.

NOTE: The following fragments talk about the resistance of the zap... wait! There's a Zapatista Airforce?! The Zapatista health system is better than the health system of the bad government?! For over 20 years, the Zapatista communities have resisted, with their own ingenuity, creativity, and intelligence, all of the various counter-insurgency efforts waged against them. The so-called "Crusade against Hunger"^[i] of the current *Priista* overseers does nothing but reiterate the fallacy that all that indigenous people want is a hand-out rather than Democracy, Liberty, and Justice. This counter-insurgency campaign does not come alone, but is accompanied by a media campaign (the same type of media campaign that today in Venezuela once again shows its desire for a coup against a people that will know how to gain strength from their pain), the complicity of the political class as a whole (in what should be called the "Pact *against* Mexico,"^[ii]) and, of course, a military and police escalation: in Zapatista territories the paramilitaries are emboldened (with the consent of the state government), federal troops intensify their provocations during patrols "to locate the Zapatista leadership," the "intelligence" agencies are reactivated, and the justice system reiterates its ridiculousness (which rhymes with *Cassez*^[iii]) in denying freedom to teacher *Alberto Pathistán Gómez*, thus condemning him for being indigenous in Mexico in the 21st century. But the teacher resists, not to mention the Zapatista indigenous communities...

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Good morning compañeros, good morning compañeras. My name is Ana, from the current Junta de Buen Gobierno [Good Government Council], fourth generation 2011-2014, from Caracol^[iv] I in La Realidad. I am going to talk to you a bit about ideological resistance, the subtheme that the two of us—the compañero and I—are to talk about. I am first going to talk about the ideology of the bad government. The bad government uses the mass media to control and misinform the people, for example via television, radio, soap operas, cellphones, newspapers, magazines, even sports. They insert commercials on television and on the radio to distract people, and soap operas to hook people and make them think that what happens on television is going to happen to us. In the bad government's education system, those who aren't Zapatistas are ideologically managed so that their kids are in school, properly uniformed, every day, but just for the sake of appearances, it doesn't matter if they learn how to read or write. They also get them scholarships for school, but in the end this just benefits the companies that sell supplies or uniforms. How do we resist all of the bad government's ideological wrongs in our Caracol? Our principal weapon is autonomous education. There in our Caracol the education promoters are taught the true history of the people, so that this knowledge can be conveyed to the children, along with the knowledge of our [Zapatista] demands. We also began giving political talks to our young people so that they are awake and aware and don't fall easily into government ideologies. We are also giving talks to the people on the 13 [Zapatista] demands, via the local

authorities in each village. That is the little I can explain to you, next the *compañero* will talk to you.

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There are also programs, part of the government projects. The government began to bring in projects so that our brothers and sisters would accept these projects and believe they are good and forget about their own work; so that these brothers and sisters now don't depend on themselves but rather on the bad government.

What do we do to resist these things? We began to organize ourselves to do collective work, as some of the *compas* have already said, we do collective work at the village, region, municipal, and zone levels. We do this work to satisfy our own needs, different types of work, it is how we resist falling into the bad government's projects and how we work to depend on ourselves, not on the bad government.

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There [in our zone] there is a huge hospital in a community called Guadalupe Tepeyac, and right now a children's hospital is being constructed very close by, about a half hour or an hour away, in the center of La Realidad. But what is happening, what have we seen in that hospital in Guadalupe Tepeyac? In spite of the fact that the government has a lot of equipment, people arrive from different communities, from different municipalities, and what happens? Let's say they need to do an ultrasound, for example, or a lab analysis. As the doctors there know, our hospital is very close by, our Hospital-School "**The Faceless of San Pedro.**" The doctors at the government hospital know that they can't do the analysis there because they don't have the trained staff to do it, they have the machine but not the staff. So what they do is give the consultation there and send the patient to our hospital, to the Zapatista hospital-school. So [the patient] goes [to the Zapatista hospital] to do the analysis—just look at the level we're reaching, *compañeros*— and of course there are rules in this hospital to charge this person a fee, and they do the analysis for them.

Then people begin to realize, begin to admire, that while in the official hospital there isn't a solution to their problems as many would expect, when they come to our hospital, although humble, as we say, they are told what problems are detected with the ultrasound or in the laboratory analysis. The hospital of Guadalupe is there but there is just one lab analyst and there are many things that that lab analyst can't do, so they send the patient to our hospital-school. There we have a *compañero* who is trained and who has now trained various other *compañeros*, so he does the different analyses. But not just that, this *compañero* has an advantage over the lab analyst in the official hospital, who just does the lab test and that's it, and then sends the patient to another doctor to receive treatment. What the *compañero* in our hospital does when people are sent from the hospital in Guadalupe is perform the lab analysis and at the same time provide the prescription and the treatment for the illness, because our *compañero* has a lot of knowledge in that area of lab work.

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To explain a little more about the rural city [constructed, with media applause, by the "left" government of the corrupt Juan Sabines Guerrero], at the beginning houses were constructed. According to what the *compañeros* have told us, the materials that they used in construction were those things called **triplay** [3-ply, or plywood], very thin boards, not like the planks that we have here. Currently the constructions are inflated like balloons; when there are strong winds and when it is the hot and in the rainy season the materials with which the houses are built are essentially rubbish. That's

the way it is. So in some communities in that municipality, families went to live [in the rural city] for a few days, and according to the media there's a kitchen that was constructed with the dimensions of 3×3, really small, and a little room, a living room on the side. But it's not possible to do anything because if they made their hearth there, well how would they put their hearth or its fire there? They couldn't.

Currently it is not functioning, the families went for a few days, but what we know is that they had to return to their community. Some families are still there but the conditions are very bad conditions. They say that on a little hill above where the houses are, they made water tanks but these are not working, compañeros, they're not working. They say that there is a bank there to invest money—I don't know if it's a world bank, or a state or municipal bank, I don't know, but it's not working. There are just empty shells, already rubbish. It's not, like they say, a "rural city," which is a very pretty name but really there's nothing there. That's why the compañeros say, why should we believe in these projects and such things? They're all lies.

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As the compañeros say, it's part of the enemy's war, that's why if some compañeros in this zone have let themselves be convinced by these ideas it's because the war has gotten this far, not because now they're going to have a more dignified life. In many places there are those who leave the organization or those who are now in political parties, but the compañeros who are bases of support have had a better life. The rural city—everything they have said and all that they are doing there—is clearly pure lies.

To help you understand the ideological manipulation enacted by the bad government in Santiago El Pinar, they promised the women there that they would give them egg-laying hen farms. So you know these hen farms use chicken feed, and when they gave them the farms they gave them a lot of chickens to lay eggs, and it was great in the beginning because the hens laid a lot of eggs, but the government didn't seek out a market where they could sell their eggs. The hens laid a lot of eggs but then what were they supposed to do? They couldn't compete with the big grocery stores that sell eggs. So what they tell us is that they divided up the hens, but then the government stopped providing the feed, and the chickens became sickly and they stopped laying eggs. And so the women asked "now what do we do? We have to cooperate. But how can I cooperate if I already ate the eggs? Where will I find money?" And the hens died; what the bad government says doesn't bring results. They do all of this just so that the cameramen come and film the inauguration [of the rural city], that everything looks nice or whatever. But this all lasts one month, two months, by three months it's all over.

So among other things is the problem, as the compa was saying, that the houses are worthless because they inflate, as they say, like a toad. The women are accustomed to making their tortillas either on a hearth or over a fire on the floor, but an earthen floor, and in this case the houses have wooden floors, plywood, and you can't have a fire there. And so they gave people gas cylinders that no one knows how to use and the gas doesn't even last a month, and so now you have the cylinders tossed out as garbage and stoves that don't work. Also, we know that the life of peasants, of the indigenous, is such that behind one's house there are vegetables, sugarcane, pineapple, plantains, whatever there may be, as is our way of life, but [in the rural city] there is nothing, simply a house and that's it. So the people don't know what to do, because now their lands are far away and they need to go there to work, but it is another expense to come and go.

The politics of the bad government is to put an end to life in common, to community life, so that you leave your land, or you sell it, and if you sell it you're screwed. It is a politics of injustice, it creates more poverty. All of the millions that they receive from the UN, which is the Organization of United Nations, is kept by the bad government – state, municipal, and federal – and used to organize those groups that provoke problems in the communities, above all for those of us who are the Zapatista bases

of support.

It is the continuation of the much-touted policy, which now they don't want to hear mentioned, and which we no longer hear about in the media, the Puebla-Panama Plan.^[v] Now it has different name because the Puebla-Panama Plan was highly criticized, but it is the same thing, they only changed the name so that they could go on individualizing the communities, to put an end to the life in common that still exists.

his is more or less how we are doing our work in the resistance, because we are talking about resistance. And in this work, our compañeros who work in the cornfield or the coffee groves, or who have some cattle, sometimes they sell their animal and so they have a little bit of money left. And the bad government is attacking us with their projects for cement floors, for housing, for housing improvement, and the other things that these PRIista brothers receive in other communities.

But the PRIistas are getting accustomed to the money, their gaze is set on the government and they look to the government to give them more money and projects. So the same thing that some of our compañeros from Garrucha described is happening in the Caracol in Morelia. Sometimes these [PRIista] brothers sell the corrugated metal, and because it is a government project, the government thinks that its party is growing, but the reverse is happening, we compañeros who are in resistance are using some of the fruits of our labor to buy these things that party supporters are selling.

We'll give you an example: to buy a sheet of corrugated metal in the hardware store costs about 180 pesos, but [the PRIistas] come and sell them for 100 pesos, or 80 pesos; and they also have cement blocks from the government, which might be 5, 6, or 7 pesos in the hardware store, but they sell them for 3 pesos, or 2 pesos. Our compañeros, who are in the resistance and aren't accustomed to spending the fruit of our labor, buy these and it may be that one day you will see that in some new population centers there are colored corrugated metal roofs,^[vi] but really it came from the work of the [Zapatista] compañeros. That is what is happening there.

But the government has realized where its project is heading. It isn't benefiting the party followers, the PRIistas, but rather is being taken advantage of by the Zapatistas, that is where their housing materials are ending up. Now it's not just the materials, but also the mason. When the material arrives, the mason is already there because they already realized that the Zapatistas were working on their houses. That is why [the government] is changing the project again, the bad governments have tried many things from 94 up to today.

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All right compas, let's explain again the resistance to the military, for example what the compañera already explained. It's my job to explain what happened in 1999 in the ejido of Amador Hernández in the municipality of General Emiliano Zapata.

*At that time, on August 11, the military arrived and we compañeras and compañeros resisted their entrance into our community. The military wanted to take over the community, but when the soldiers arrived at a dance hall the compañeras confronted them; they kicked them out of that community and made them retreat to a place outside of it. But we didn't stop there, we made an encampment. And everyone in the zone participated, which is the Caracol of La Realidad. People from civil society came also and all of those in the resistance had to endure a lot, because it was the season of **chaquistes** [tiny biting insects] and of mud, as is the rainy season. And through all of this we didn't yield to their provocations, we didn't confront them militarily, but rather we came peacefully.*

And during this encampment, we organized dances; we danced in front of the soldiers. And the people had religious ceremonies, the compas organized event programs, and sometimes spontaneously we gave talks about the politics of struggle.

What did the soldiers do? It seems we began to convince them, because we were face to face with them, and so what the military commanders did was put out speakers so that the soldiers couldn't hear our words and withdraw them to a place a little bit further out.

What happened then? The compañeros invented new ideas, I think you have probably heard about the little paper airplanes: we wrote why we were having the encampment on the paper airplanes and threw them at the soldiers and the soldiers picked them up. That was the Zapatista Army's first air force, in Amador Hernández, but it was pure paper.

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All of this, compas, happened during the resistance to the military incursion, and once we got into a shoving confrontation with the soldiers—there were compañeros and compañeras standing opposite the soldiers who were in two lines. There was one compa—a short little compa—and as the military pushed us with their shields, they had clubs also, this compa stepped on a soldier's foot, and then the soldier stepped on the compa's foot. There was another, much bigger, soldier there, and he curiously began to laugh because the compa was stepping on soldiers' feet and they were stepping on his. So this big soldier starts to laugh and the little compa said to this jerk "what are you laughing at little guy?" even though the soldier was much bigger and the compa much smaller.

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This is what I have seen and what we are seeing. There you have the results. We didn't eat tostadas in vain in order to carry out the encampment, tostadas give strength and wisdom. We depended on collectivism a lot. Why do I speak this way compañeros? Excuse the word, compañeras. We learned there with many compañeros in each community, in each municipality, how to face the fucking soldiers that come into our communities to harass us. There the compañeras learned to defend themselves, with I don't know what, with sticks they kicked out the soldiers, however they had to do it, with rocks, or with shouts and insults, but they did it. That's how the compañeras organized themselves, I saw it and I remember clearly that the compañeras were convinced that they must confront [the military]; they demonstrated what they are capable of.

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The authorities also began to take turns and to hear the needs that we presented to them in each community, in each region, and in each municipal seat. And so we worked, and little by little we advanced. Once the organization was in place, we began to create more, to begin the work of health and education, and now as the compañera mentioned, we already have a health clinic in our municipality, called the "Compañera María Luisa" [the nom de guerre of Dení Prieto Stock, fallen in combat on February 14th, 1974, in Nepantla, Mexico State, Mexico], and one in the ejido of San Jerónimo Tulijá, called "Compañera Murcia-Elisa Irina Sáenz Garza," named for a compañera who struggled and who died in combat at the El Chilar ranch [in the Lacandón Jungle, Chiapas, Mexico, February 1974], there close to where we are, where they died just borders where we are, that is how we named the clinic.



Dení Prieto Stock



Elisa Irina Sáenz Garza “Murcia”

(To be continued...)

I testify.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

Mexico, March 2013.

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TOP SECRET [English in the original]: Training of the Zapatista Air Force (FAZ by its Spanish Acronym – *Fuerza Aérea Zapatista*), somewhere in the mountains of Southeastern Mexico.

Another example of the warrior spirit passed on to the boys and girls in the indigenous Zapatista communities in resistance: here they are reading “The Ingenious Gentlemen Don Quijote of La Mancha” by one Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, who must be a foreign soviet military advisor... wait, there isn’t a USSR anymore? I’m telling you, this is just more proof that these indigenous are hopelessly pre-modern: they read books! They must do it to be subversive because with Peña Nieto, reading books is a crime.

A song of suffering and rage by a Mapuche mother upon losing her son who was assassinated by the Chilean armed police.

A song for the EZLN Caracoles, by Erick de Jesús. At the beginning of the video: words of the Zapatista Women.

[i] Soon after assuming the Mexican presidency, Enrique Peña Nieto announced what he calls his “National Crusade Against Hunger,” inaugurated in Las Margaritas, Chiapas, area of Zapatista influence. See the EZLN’s previous mentions of the Crusade in “Them and US III: The Overseers” and “Ali Baba and his 40 thieves.”

[ii] Refers to the “Pact for Mexico,” a political agreement regarding national political priorities made immediately after Enrique Peña Nietos’s inauguration between all three principal political parties, the PAN, PRI, and PRD.

[iii] Refers to Florence Cassez, French citizen accused of participating in a gang-related kidnapping in Mexico in a highly controversial case. She was incarcerated 7 years of a 60-year sentence, before her case was thrown out for breaches of legal procedure. She was released on January 23, 2013 and returned to Paris.

[iv] The Caracoles, literally “shells” or “spirals” were announced in 2003 as the homes of the *Juntas de Buen Gobierno*, or Good Government Councils. When the EZLN first announced their existence they were described, in addition to being the seats of the self-government system, as “doors to enter into the communities” and “windows to see in and out.”

[v] The Plan Puebla Panama (PPP) was a multi-billion dollar development program launched in 2001 by then president of Mexico Vicente Fox (PAN) “to promote regional integration and development” of Southern Mexico and Central America, and later extended to Colombia. The plan was highly criticized because it laid the groundwork for neoliberal free trade agreements and infrastructure at the expense of people of the region. Today, the “Mesoamerican Project” is basically a remake of the PPP with security elements added from the Mérida Initiative, itself a remake of the controversial drug-war oriented Plan México.

[vi] Government issued corrugated metal for house roofs is orange, so the colored roofs would seem to imply government support.