

The World: Seven Thoughts in May of 2003¹

Introduction

While the Power's calendars break down, and while the large media corporations vacillate between those absurdities and tragedies being staged and promoted by the world's political class, below, in the great and extensive basement of the tottering modern Tower of Babel, the movements are not ceasing and, even though they are still faltering, they are beginning to regain the word and their ability to act as mirror and lens. While the politics of discord are being decreed above, in the basement of the world, the others are finding each other and the other who, being different, is another below.

As part of this rebuilding of the word as mirror and lens, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation has reengaged in dialogues with social and political movements and organizations in the world. Initially — with brothers and sisters from Mexico, Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, the Spanish State, Argentina and the American Union — it has been about building a common Agenda for discussion.

It is not an attempt to establish political and programmatic agreements, nor to attempt a new version of the International. Nor does it have to do with unifying theoretical concepts or standardizing conceptions, but with finding, and or building, common points of discussion. Something like constructing theoretical and practical images which are seen and experienced from different places.

As part of this effort at *encuentro*, the EZLN is now presenting these 7 thoughts. Anchoring them in a space and time horizon means, for us, a recognition of our theoretical, practical and, above all universal, visionary limitations. This is our first contribution to the building of a world Agenda for discussion.

We are grateful to the Mexican magazine *Rebeldía* for having opened their pages for these thoughts. We are equally grateful to those publications in Italy, France, the Spanish State, the American Union and Latin American which do the same.

I. Theory

The position of theory (and of theoretical analysis) in political and social movements is usually obvious. However, everything obvious usually conceals a problem, in this case: that of the effects of a theory on practice and the theoretical “rebound” of the latter.

I am not equating the idea of “theoretician” or “theoretical analyst” with that of “intellectual.” The latter is more broad. The theoretician is an intellectual, but the intellectual is not always a theoretician.

The intellectual (and, therefore, the theoretician) feels that he has the right to express his opinion concerning movements. It is not his right, it is his duty. Some intellectuals go further and become the new “political commissars” of thought and of action, handing out titles of “good” and “bad.” Their “judgment” has to do with the position they are in and with the position which they aspire to be in.

We think that a movement should not “return” the judgments which it receives and classify intellectuals as “good” or “bad,” according to how those intellectuals characterize the movement.

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Anti-intellectualism is nothing more than a misunderstood self apologia and, as such, it marks a movement as being “adolescent.”

We believe that the word leaves traces, traces mark directions, directions entail definitions and commitments. Those who commit their word for or against a movement have a responsibility not only to talk about it, but also to “hone” it, keeping its objectives in mind. “For what?” and “Against what?” are questions which should accompany the word. Not in order to silence it or to lower its voice, but in order to complete it and to make it effective. In other words, so that what it speaks can be heard by the one who should hear it.

Producing theory from within a social or political movement is not the same as producing it from within academia. And I am not speaking of “academia” in the sense of sterility or (nonexistent) scientific “objectivity,” but only in order to note the place of reflection and intellectual production as being “outside” of a movement. And “outside” does not mean that there are no “sympathies” or “antipathies,” but that that intellectual production does not take place within the movement, rather above it. And so the academic analyst assesses and judges good and bad points, wise moves and errors, of past and present movements, and, in addition, ventures prophecies concerning directions and fates.

Sometimes it so happens that certain academic analysts aspire to lead a movement, that is, that the movement should follow his directives. And so the academic's basic reproach is that the movement is not “obeying” him. That all of the movement's errors are owing, fundamentally, to the fact that they are not clearly seeing what is obvious to the academic. Lack of memory and dishonesty are generally pervasive (not always, it's true) among these armchair analysts. One day they say one thing, and they predict something, on the other the opposite happens, but the analyst has lost his memory and goes back to theorizing while ignoring what he said previously. In addition to that, he is also being dishonest, because he does not bother to respect his readers or listeners. He will never say “yesterday I said this, and it didn't happen or the opposite happened, I was wrong.” Hooked on the “today” of the media, the armchair theoretician seizes the opportunity to “forget.” This academic produces the theoretical equivalent of junk food of the intellect. In other words, it does not nourish, it only distracts.

Other times, a movement replaces its spontaneity with the theoretical patronage of academia. The solution is usually more detrimental than the deficiency. If academia is wrong, it “forgets.” If the movement is wrong, it fails. Occasionally the leadership of a movement seeks a “theoretical alibi,” that is, something which backs it up and lends coherence to its practices. It then goes to academia in order to accumulate it. In these cases, theory is nothing more than an uncritical and somewhat rhetorical apologia.

We believe that a movement should produce its own theoretical reflection (note: not its apologia). There it can incorporate what is impossible in an armchair theory, that is, the transformative practices of that movement. We have preferred to listen and discuss with those who analyze and reflect theoretically in and with movements and organizations, and not outside them or, which is worse, at their expense. We have, nonetheless, made an effort to listen to all voices, paying attention not to who is speaking, but from where they are speaking.

In our theoretical reflections, we talk about what we see as tendencies, not consummated or inevitable acts. Tendencies which have not only not yet become homogeneous and hegemonic (yet), but which can (and should) be reverted to.

Our theoretical reflection as Zapatistas is not generally about ourselves, but about the reality in which we move. And its nature is approximate and limited in time, in space, in concepts and in the structure of those concepts. That is why we reject attempts at universality and eternity in what we say and do.

Answers to questions about Zapatismo are not in our theoretical reflections and analyses, but in our practice. And practice, in our case, carries a heavy moral, ethical burden. That is, we try to act (not always successfully) in accordance not only with a theoretical analysis, but also, and above

all, according to what we consider our duty to be. We try to be consistent, always. Perhaps that is why we are not pragmatic (another way of saying “action without theory and without principles”).

Vanguards feel the duty to direct something or someone (and in this sense they demonstrate many similarities with academic theoreticians). Vanguards set out to lead and they work for that. Some of them are even willing to pay the price for errors and deviations in their political work. Academics do not.

We believe that our duty is initiating, following, accompanying, finding and opening spaces for something and someone, including ourselves.

A tour, even if it is merely expository, of the different resistances in a nation or on the planet, is not just an inventory. There one can divine, even more than the present, the future.

Those who are part of that tour, and those who make the inventory, can discover things that those who add and subtract in the armchairs of the social sciences cannot manage to see. To wit, that the traveler and his path matter, yes, but what matters above all is the path, the direction, the tendency. In noting and analyzing, in discussing and arguing, we are doing so not only in order to know what is happening and to understand it, but also, and above all, in order to try and transform it.

II. The Nation State and the Polis

In the dying calendar of the Nation States, the political class was the one which had decision-making Power. A Power which did, in fact, take into consideration economic, ideological and social power, but which maintained a relative autonomy in relation to them. That relative autonomy gave it the ability to “see beyond” and to lead national societies to that future. In that future, economic power not only continued to be power, but it was the most powerful.

In the art of politics, the artist of the polis, the one who governs, was then a specialized conductor, knowledgeable in the sciences and the human arts, including military ones. The wisdom of governing consists in suitably managing the different resources for leading the State. Greater or lesser recourse to one or the other of these resources defines the style of government. Balanced administration, politics and repression, an advanced democracy. Much politics, little administration and hidden repression, a populist regime. Much repression and no politics or administration, a military dictatorship.

At that time, in the international division of labor, statesmen (and stateswomen) belonged to developed capitalism. Those countries with deformed capitalism had governments of thugs. Military dictatorships represented the true face of modernity: a bloodthirsty, animal face. The democracies were not just a mask which concealed that brutal essence. They were also preparing Nations for a new stage, where money would find better conditions for growth. Globalization, that is, making the world world-wide, is not marked by just the digital technological revolution. Money's ever-present internationalist designs found the means and conditions for destroying those obstacles which were preventing it from carrying out its vocation: conquering the entire planet with its logic. One of those obstacles, borders and Nation States, suffered and are suffering a world war (the 4th). Nation States are confronting this war without economic, political, military and ideological resources and also, as recent wars and free trade agreements have demonstrated, without legal defenses.

History did not end with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the defeat of the socialist camp. The New World Order is still an objective in the battle formation of money, but now the Nation State is lying in the field, in its death throes and waiting for help to arrive.

We call the management collective that has displaced the political class in basic decision making the “society of Power.” It is a group which does not just hold economic power, and it does not do so in just one nation. More than being organically drawn together (according to the “anonymous society” model), the “society of Power” is trying to fill the vacuum left by the Nation States and

their political classes. “The “society of Power” controls financial bodies (and, therefore, entire countries), the media, industrial and commercial corporations, centers of education, armies and public and private police. The “society of Power” desires a World State with a supranational government, but it is not engaged in building it.

Globalization has been a traumatic experience for humanity, yes, but especially for the society of Power. Weighed down by the effort to pass, without any mediation, from the *barrios* or communities to the Hyper-Polis, from the local to the global, and while the supranational government is being built, the society of Power has taken refuge once again in a fading Nation State. The Nation State of the society of Power only gives an impression of vigor, which is quite schizophrenic. A hologram, that is the Nation State in the metropolis.

Maintained for decades as the reference point for stability, the Nation State is ceasing to exist, but its hologram remains, fed by those dogmas which are fighting to fill the vacuum which has been not only produced by globalization, but also emphasized by it. The making the world world-wide in time and space is, for Power, something which still must be directed. The “others” are no longer somewhere else, but everywhere and all the time. And for the Power, the “other” is a threat. How is that threat to be confronted? Raising the hologram of the nation and denouncing the “other” as aggressor. Wasn't one of *Señor* Bush's arguments for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that both were threatening the North American “nation”? But, apart from the “reality” created by CNN, the flags which are waving in Kabul and Baghdad are not the stars and stripes, but those of the great multinational corporations.

In the hologram of the Nation State, the fallacy par excellence of modernity, *c'est a dire*, “individual liberty,” has been taken prisoner in a jail which is no less oppressive for the fact that it is global. The individual is so blurred that not even the images of yesterday's heroes can offer the most minimal hope of standing out. The “self made man” no longer exists, and, given that it is impossible to speak of a “self made corporation,” social expectations are adrift. What is the hope? Going back to fighting for the street, the barrio? Neither. The fragmentation has been so ruthless and reckless that not even those minimal units of identity have remained stable. The family home? Where and how? If television came in like a queen through the front door, the internet hacked its way in through the crack of cyberspace. Almost every house on the planet was recently invaded by the British and North American troops which occupied Iraq.

The Nation State which now appropriates the title “divine hand of God” (the United States of America) exists solely on television, on the radio, in some newspapers and magazines and in the movies. In the dream factories of the great media consortiums, presidents are intelligent and sympathetic, justice always triumphs. The community defeats the tyrant, rebellion in the face of the arbitrary is met quickly and effectively, and “happily ever after” is still the ending which the nation's society is promised. But things are, in reality, the complete opposite.

Where are the heroes of the invasion of Afghanistan? Where are the ones from the occupation of Iraq? What I mean is that September 11, 2001 had its heroes, the firefighters and residents of the city of New York, working to rescue the victims of the messianic madness. But those real heroes were not of any use to Power, that is why they were quickly forgotten. For Power, the “hero” is the one who conquers (that is, destroys), not the one who saves (that is, creates). The image of the firefighter covered in ashes, working amidst the rubble of the twin towers in New York, was replaced by the tank pulling down the statue of Hussein in Baghdad.

The only thing that the modern polis (I am using the term “polis” instead of “city” in order to emphasize that I am referring to an urban space of economic, ideological, cultural, religious and political relationships) shares with the classical one (Plato) is the superficial and frivolous image of the sheep (the people) and the shepherd (he who governs).

But modernity completely disrupted the platonic image. Now it is an industrial complex: some sheep are sheared, and others are sacrificed in order to obtain food. Some sheep, the “sick” ones, are isolated, eliminated and “burned” so they don't contaminate the rest.

Neoliberalism presented itself as the efficient administration for that mix of slaughterhouse/corral which is the polis, but pointed out that efficiency would only be possible by breaking down the borders of the polis and extending them (that is, invading) throughout the planet: the Hyper-Polis.

But it so happens that the “administrator” (the one who governs/shepherd) has gone crazy, and he has decided to sacrifice all the lambs, even though the owner can't eat them all, and even though there won't be any sheep left to shear, nor any to sacrifice tomorrow. The old politician, the one from before (and I'm not referring to “before Christ”, but to the end of the 20th century), specialized in maintaining the conditions for the growth of the flock and so there would be sheep for various things and, in addition, so that the sheep wouldn't rebel.

The neo-politician is no longer a “cultivated” shepherd. He is a foolish and ignorant wolf (who doesn't even hide behind a sheepskin), who is satisfied with eating the part of the flock which they give him, but who has abandoned his fundamental tasks. It will not be long before the flock disappears or rebels.

Might one think that it doesn't have to do with “humanizing” the corral/factory/slaughterhouse of the modern polis, but with destroying that logic? Pulling off the sheepskin and, without sheep, discovering that the “shepherd/butcher/shearer” is not only useless, but an obstacle?

The logic of the Nation States was (in broad strokes): a polis-city gathers in a territory (and not the reverse), a province gathers in a series of polis, a nation gathers in a series of provinces. Ergo, the polis-city was the basic cell of the Nation State, and the Polis-Capital imposed its logic on the rest of the polis.

Then there was a kind of common cause, one or several factors which brought that Polis together within itself, as there were factors which held together the Nation State (territory, language, currency, legal-political system, culture, history, etcetera). These factors have been eroded and dynamited (often not in the figurative sense) by globalization.

But what about the polis during the current decline (almost to the point of disappearance) of the Nation State? And which was first? The Polis or the Nation State? The decline of the one or the other? It doesn't matter, at least not in terms of what I'm speaking about now. If the fragmentation (and, therefore, the tendential disappearance) of the Nation State is owing to the fragmentation of the polis or vice versa is not the issue which I'm addressing.

The Polis, like the Nation State, has lost what held it together. Each Polis is nothing more than a disorderly and chaotic fragmentation, a superimposition of polis which are not only different among themselves, but are sometimes opposed.

The Power of Money demands a special space, which will not only be a mirror of its greatness and well-being, but which will additionally protect it from the “other” polis (those of the “others”) which surround it and threaten it. These “other” polis are not similar to the barbarian communities of yesteryear. The Polis of Money tries to incorporate them into their logic, and it needs them, but at the same time it fears them.

Where previously there was a Nation State (or they are still fighting with them for the space), today there is a disorderly accumulation of Polis. The Polis of Money in the world are the “houses” of the “society of Power.” However, where there previously was a legal and institutional system which regulated the internal life of the Nation States and the relationship between them (international legal structure), today there is nothing.

The international legal system is obsolete, and its place is being occupied by the spontaneous “legal” system of Capital: the brutal and merciless competition through any means, among them, war.

What are the public security programs of cities but the protection of those who have everything in the face of those who have nothing? “*Mutatis mutandis*,” national security programs are no longer

national, confronting other nations, but they are against everything, everywhere. The image of the city surrounded (and threatened) by rings of misery and the image of the nation harassed by other countries, has begun to be transformed. Poverty and dissidence (those “others” who don’t have the manners to disappear) are no longer in the periphery, but can be seen in almost any part of the metropolises and of the countries.

What I am pointing out is that the “reorganization,” which is being carried out in the governments of the polis, of those fragments, as rehearsal or “training” for national reorganization, is useless. Because what it has to do with, more than reordering, is isolating the “harmful” fragments and moderating the impact which their demands, struggles and resistances might have in the polis of money.

Those who are governing the city are only administering the fragmentation process of the polis, in hopes of moving on to administer the process of national fragmentation.

The privatization of space in the cities is nothing more than fear violating its own regulations. The polis has been converted into an anarchic space of islands. The “coexistence” among the few is possible because of the common fear they have of the “other.” Long live private streets! Private neighborhoods will follow, then cities, provinces, nations, the entire world privatized, that is, isolated and protected from the “other.” But it will not be long before the rich neighbor is also an “other.”

What nuclear war did not do, the corporations can. Destroy everything, even that which gives them wealth. A world where no worlds fit, not even its own. This is the project of the Hyper-Polis which is being erected on the rubble of the Nation State.

III. Politics

Are there no longer any national causes which hold the polis, nations, societies, together? Or are there no longer politicians capable of embracing those causes? The discrediting of politics is something more than that: it has something of hate and bitterness. The average citizen is moving, tendentially, from indifference to the political classes’ outrages, to a repudiation which is taking increasingly “expressive” forms. The “flock” is resisting the new logic.

The politician of yesteryear defined the common task. The modern one tries to and fails. Why? Perhaps because he himself has brought about his own loss of prestige, or, more accurately, more than prostituting a cause, he has prostituted a profession.

Lacking a reality as reference point, the modern political class produces a hologram which is not based on the size of its aspirations, but on the size of their current calendar: Those who are governing a people have not renounced the governing of a city, a province, a nation, the entire world. It is just that their today determines a population, and they have to wait for the next elections for the next step.

If the Nation State previously had the ability to “see further” and to project the necessary conditions for capital to reproduce “in crescendo,” and to help it deal with its periodic crises, the destruction of its fundamental bases are preventing it from completing that task.

The social “ship” is adrift, and the problem is not only the lack of an able captain. It so happens that they have stolen the rudder, and it isn’t turning up anywhere.

While money was the dynamite, politicians were the “operatives” of the demolition. By destroying the bases of the Nation State, the traditional political class also destroyed its alibi: the all-powerful athletes of politics are now looking, surprised and incredulous, at a white shopkeeper, who has no idea whatsoever of the arts of the State. He hasn’t even defeated them, he simply replaced them.

That traditional political class is incapable of rebuilding the foundations of the Nation State. Like a bird of prey, it makes do with feeding on the spoils of a country, and it feeds in the mud and blood on what the empire of money has built. While it feeds, the *Señor* of Money is waiting at the table.

The free market has suffered a terrible metamorphosis: now you are free to choose which shopping center to go to, but the shop is the same, and the brand is also the same. The false initial freedom in the tyranny of merchandise, “free supply and free demand,” has been shattered.

The foundations of “western democracy” have been dynamited. Campaigns and elections are being conducted on their rubble. Election pyrotechnics shine quite high, so high that they don't manage to illuminate the ruins which cover the political work even a bit.

In the same way, the spinal column of government work, the Reasons of State, are no longer useful. Now it is the Reasons of the Marketplace which direct politics. Why employ politicians if the marketing analysts understand the new logic of Power better?

The politician, the State professional, that is, has been replaced by the manager. And thus the vision of the State is reassembled as a vision of marketing (the manager is nothing more than a foreman of yesteryear, who firmly “believes” that the success of his company is his own success) and the horizon shrinks, not just in terms of distance, but also in magnitude.

Deputies and senators no longer make laws, that work is done by the “lobbies” of advisors and consultants.

Traditional politicians and their intellectuals, orphans and widows, are tearing out their hair (those that still have any), and rehearsing new alibis over and over again in order to offer them up in the market of ideas: it is useless. There is an overabundance of sellers there, and there are no buyers.

Turning to the traditional political class as an ally in the resistance struggle is a fine exercise in nostalgia. Turning to neo-politicians is a symptom of schizophrenia. There is nothing to do up there, other than betting that maybe something can be done.

There are those who are devoted to imagining that that the rudder exists and to fighting for its possession. There are those who are seeking the rudder, certain that it has been left somewhere. And there are those who make of an island, not a refuge for self-satisfaction, but a ship for finding another island and another and another.

IV. The War

In the postmodern stress of the society of Power, war is the couch. The catharsis of death and destruction soothes, but it does not cure. The current crises are worse than those of the past, and, therefore, the radical solution that the Power provides for them, war, is worse than those of previous times.

Now, globalization, the greatest fraud in the history of humanity, does not even have the decency to try and justify itself. Thousands of years after the emergence of words, and, along with them, reasoned argument, force has again come to occupy the decisive and deciding position.

In the history of the consolidation of Power, humanity's ability to live in harmony has turned into coexistence. While at war. The dominant-dominated dichotomy now defines the world community, and it attempts to be the new criteria for “humanity,” even for the most scattered fragments of global society.

The vacuum left by statesmen is being filled, in the hologram of the Nation State, by managers and arrivistes. In the apparent order of capital, however, the company soldiers (a new generation which not only reads and applies Sun Tzu, but which has the material means to carry out his movements and maneuvers) are incorporating military war (in order to differentiate it from

economic, ideological, psychological, diplomatic and other wars) as one more factor in their marketing strategy.²

The logic of the marketplace (more profits, always and at any cost) is imposed on the old logic of war (destroy the fighting capacity of the opponent). International legislation then gets in the way, and it must be ignored or it must be destroyed. The time of plausible justifications is over. There is not even much emphasis now on "moral" or even "political" justifications in war. International bodies are useless and onerous monuments.

For the society of Power, human beings can be either clients or criminals. In order to insure the mediocrity of the former, and to eliminate the latter, the politician lends a legal face to the illegitimate violence of Power. War no longer needs laws which "justify" or "back" it. It is enough to have politicians who declare it and who sign the orders.

If the government of the United States has appropriated the role of "Policeman" of the Hyper-Polis, it must be asked what order it wants to maintain, what property should it defend, what criminals should it incarcerate, and what law gives its actions coherence and order. In other words, who are the "others" the society of Power must be protected from.

There is no worse general for conducting a war than a military man, that is why, previously, the great generals, the winners of wars (not the ones who fought the battles), were politicians, statesmen. But, if there are no longer any more of them, then who is conducting the current battle of world conquest? I doubt that anyone in their right mind would assert that Bush or Rumsfeld is leading the war in Iraq.

So the ones who are leading it are either military men, or they aren't. If they are, the results will begin to be seen soon. The military isn't satisfied until it totally destroys its opponent. Totally, in other words, not defeat it, but disappear it, do away with it, annihilate it. And so the solution to the crisis is just the prelude to a larger crisis, to a horror which is impossible to describe in words.

If it is not military people, then who is leading? The corporations, one might answer. But they also have logics which they superimpose on those of individuals, and they direct them. Like a being with life and intelligence of its own, the corporation lectures its members to go in such and such a direction. Which? Towards profits. In this logic, money directs itself towards where it can secure the best conditions for rapid, growing and continuous profits. Will it direct itself towards where there are less or where there are more? Yes, the corporation will go, tendentially, against another corporation.

Will the results of the war in Iraq resolve the crisis which is confronting large corporations? No, or at least not immediately. The diversionary effect of a conflict for the expectations of the Nation-State-With-Aspirations-To-Being-Supranational has the lifespan of a television commercial.

"We've already won in Iraq" the citizens of the United States will say. "And now? Another war? Where? Is this the new world order? A war everywhere and always, just interrupted by TV commercials?"

V. Culture

Reclining on the couch of war, the society of Power looks at its complexes and ghosts. They have many names and many faces, but one common denominator: "the other." That "other" who, prior to globalization, was far away in time and space, but which the disorderly construction of the Hyper-Polis has brought to the society of Power's backyard.

² Sun Tzu was a Chinese general around 500 B.C. who wrote *The Art of War*, a collection of essays articulating his principles for conducting war, which are generally published under the title. Some central themes include war "is based on deception," the art of war is vital to the maintenance of the state, and that the "the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting."

The culture of the “other” becomes the despised mirror. Not because it reflects the power in its inhuman cruelty, but because it recounts the history of the “other.” The different who not only does not depend on the “I” of Power, but who also has his own history and splendor, without even having noticed the existence of the “I” or having imagined its future appearance.

In the society of Power, the failure of man in harmony, his being in the collective being, is concealed behind individual success. But the latter, in turn, conceals that that success is made possible by the destruction of the other, of the collective being. For decades, in the Power's imagination, the collective occupied the place of evil, arbitrariness, irascibility, cruelty, implacability. The “other” is the face of the rebel Lucifer in the new “Bible” of Power (which does not preach redemption, but subjection), and it is necessary to once again expel him from paradise. And the “smart bombs” play the role of the blazing sword.

The face of the “other” is his culture. That is where his difference lies. Language, beliefs, values, traditions, histories, are made collective body in a Nation, and allow it to differentiate itself from others, and, based on those differences, to relate to others. A Nation without culture is an entity without face, in other words without eyes, without ears, without a nose, without a mouth and without a brain.

Destroying the culture of the “other” is the most resounding way of eliminating it. The looting of cultural wealth in Iraq was not the product of inattention or disinterest by the occupation troops. It was one more military action in the war plan.

In the great wars, the great tyrants and genocides devote special efforts to cultural destruction. The similarity between Hitler and Bush's cultural phobias is not because they demonstrated common symptoms of madness. The similarity is in the projects of making the world world-wide which drove the one and led the other.

Culture is one of the few things which keep the Nation State still breathing. The elimination of culture will be the coup d' grace. No one will attend the funeral, and not because of a lack of knowledge, but because of the “ratings.”

VI. Manifestos and Demonstrations

The foundational act of war of the new century was not the collapse of the twin towers, but nor was it the fall, graceless and unspectacular, of the statue of Hussein. The 21st century began with the globalized “NO TO THE WAR” which gave humanity back its essence and held it together in a cause. As never before in the history of humanity, the planet was shaken by this “NO.”

From intellectuals of all stature, to unlettered residents of the forgotten corners of the earth, the “NO” became a bridge which united communities, towns, villas, cities, provinces, countries, continents. In manifestos and demonstrations, the “NO” sought the vindication of reason in the face of force.

Although that “NO” abated, in part, with the occupation of Baghdad, there is more hope than impotence in its echo. Some, however, have moved to the theoretical terrain, and they have exchanged the question “What to do in order to stop the War?” for this other: “Where will the next invasion be?”

There are those who assert, ingenuously, that the US government's statement that it will not do anything against Cuba demonstrates that there is no reason to fear a North American military action against the Caribbean island. The North American government's wish to invade and occupy Cuba is real, but it is something more than a wish. There are already plans with routes, times, contingencies, stages, partial and successive objectives. Cuba is not just a territory to be conquered. It is, above all, an affront. An intolerable dent in the luxury automobile of neoliberal modernity. And the marines are the body men. If those plans are made concrete, it will be seen, as it now is in Iraq, that the objective was not to topple *Señor* Castro Ruz, nor even to impose a political regime change.

The invasion and occupation of Cuba (or of any other place in the geography of the world) does not need intellectuals who are “surprised” by the actions of the Nation State (perhaps the last which remains as such in Latin America) for internal control.

If the North American government was not even moved by the lukewarm rejection by the UN and first world governments, and nor was it worried about the explicit condemnation of millions of human beings throughout the planet, the words of rejection or encouragement by intellectuals are not going to encourage or stop it (speaking of Cuba, the “heroic” action of Israeli soldiers was recently learned about: they executed a Palestinian with a shot to the back of the neck. The Palestinian was 17 months old. Was there any statement, any manifesto with indignant signatures? Selective horror? Weariness of the heart? Or does the “we condemn them anywhere and whomever they are” include now and forever each and every one of the doses of terror which they up above shove down the throats of those of below? Is it enough to say “no” once?).

Neither will protest demonstrations, no matter how massive and continuous they might be, even within the US, stop them.

I mean: NOT BY ITSELF.

A fundamental factor is the capacity for resistance of the aggrieved, the intelligence to combine ways of resistance, and, something which might sound “subjective,” the decision-making capacities of the aggrieved human beings. The territory to be conquered (call it Syria, Cuba, Iran, the mountains of the Mexican southeast) will then have to turn itself into a territory in resistance. And I am not referring to the number of trenches, weapons, traps and security systems (which are, however, also necessary), but to the willingness (the “Morality/Morale” some might say) of those human beings to resist.

VII Resistance

Crises precede awareness of their existence, but reflection on the results or solutions of those crises are turned into political actions. The rejection of the political class is not a rejection of doing politics, but of one way of doing it.

The fact that, in the very limited horizon of the Power's calendar, a new way of doing politics has not appeared, does not mean that it is not happening in a few or in many of the fragments of society throughout the world.

All resistances, in the history of humanity, have appeared ineffective, not just on the eve, but also well into the night of the attack, but time is, paradoxically, on their sides if it is conceived of in that way.

Many statues can fall, but if the decisiveness of generations is maintained and encouraged, the triumph of resistance is possible. It will not have a precise date, nor will there be tiresome parades, but the foreseeable decline of an apparatus — which turns its own machinery into its project for a new order — will end up being complete.

I am not preaching hollow hope, but remembering a little of world history and, in each country, a bit of national history.

We are going to win, not because it is our destiny, or because that is how it is written in our respective rebel or revolutionary libraries, but because we are working and fighting for that.

That is why a little respect is needed for the other who is resisting someplace else in his otherly self, as well as a lot of humility in order to remember that much can still be learned from that otherly self, and wisdom to not copy, but produce, a theory and a practice which does not include arrogance in its principles, but which recognizes its horizons and the tools that serve for those horizons.

It is not about solidifying existing statues, but about working for a world where statues serve only for birds to crap on them.

A world where many resistances fit. Not an international of the resistance, but a multihued flag, a melody with many tunes. If it seems dissonant, that is just because the calendar of below is still arranging the score, where every note will find its place, its resonance and, above all, its link with the other notes.

History is far from over. In the future, harmonious coexistence will be possible, not because of wars which attempt to dominate the other, but because of the “no” which gave human beings — as it did before, in prehistory — a common cause and, along with it, hope: that of humanity's survival, against neoliberalism.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos