

Until death if it is needed

Subcomandante Marcos

11/08/2020

“Until death if it is needed.”

“Until death if it is needed!”

I heard this sentence in 1992, in Tzeltal... in Tzotzil... Ch’ol, Tojoloab’al... I think also in Mam... and also in Spanish. In 1992, 500 years after the Spaniards came to conquer these lands. I heard it when our peoples, our men, women, children and elderly decided to take arms against the supreme government.

Nine months ago, or a bit more, we published the *Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona*.¹ We committed ourselves to make an effort to unite all the resistances, all the rebellions, and all the fights that rose from below and from the left in Mexico, against the voracity of the governments and the powerful ones who control them. As the first act, we decided to go all over the Mexican Republic, and we heard this same phrase, this same sentence, in the voice of other indigenous peoples, of peasants, proletarians, students, women, young people, teachers, elders: “To death, if necessary.”

Them and us, with *La Otra Campaña*, we decided to unite our fights, not to change a government but to overthrow it, not to beg to the rich, but drive them out of this country; the one who is there [Marcos points in the distance to his right] is going to leave and the one who is there [Marcos points in the distance to his left] is also going to leave! They will leave, and we will overthrow! And we Zapatistas are used to keeping our word.

We heard the voices of peasants deceived by the PROCEDE and the PROCECOM, stripped of their *ejidos*, with no prices on their products, desperate, without even the opportunity to be able to emigrate to the city or to another country, cornered against the precipice and seeing how the big companies, the agro-industries, the tourist centres begin to take possession of their lands, and instead of the army, the deputies, the senators, the political parties, the officials of the federal government arrive to take away the land of their grandparents, of their great-grandparents, of their parents, and that should belong to their children.

“Until death if it is needed,” they said.

¹ <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/ezln-sixth-declaration-of-the-selva-lacandona>

And we have seen the indigenous peoples dispossessed of their communal lands, no matter which political party: PRI², PAN³, PRD⁴, PT⁵, Verde Ecologista⁶... When the indigenous people arrive in the city to sell their products, [they receive] kicks from the police, buckets of cold water, they are insulted... And the PRD governs, and the PRI governs, and the PAN governs... And still for us indigenous peoples the same story, the same plundering, the same mockery, the same despise of our language, our culture, our colour, the way we are as we are.

And these indigenous peoples said “Until death if it is needed.”

We heard the young, men and women, anarchists, libertarians, punks, goths, skinheads, and whatever do those who rebel against those who rule from above call themselves... And they told us how the police pursues them. How there is a crime and instead of catching those who govern, those who are responsible, they help them. And so we have to fight with the police so that they do not put them in prison, so that they do not beat them any more, so that they do not rape them, so that they do not treat them as if they were filthy animals. These young men and women are looked upon with suspicion by those above because of the way their hair look, the way they talk, the way they dress and even the music they listen to.

“Until death if it is needed.”

And we have listened to women of all types... We are tired of being seen as an object to be beaten, to be whipped, to be chased, to be sold, to be humiliated and to be killed.

“Until death if it is needed.” said these women.

And we have heard those who work in the city, employees treated like in the times of Porfirio Díaz, men and women forced to work 12, 14, 16 hours for 45, 46 pesos a day, and they see that it is not enough.

“Until death if it is needed.” said the workers of the maquiladora.⁷

And we have listened to the small traders evicted by the police of the governments of the PRI, PAN, PRD, PT, Verde Ecologista, Convergencia⁸, all so that the city does not look dirty. So that the big shopping centres, such as SAM’S, Walmart, Comercial Mexicana, Soriana, and all the rest of these things that are the same, whatever they call themselves, can have their luxury customers, without those customers having to offend their sense of smell with our odour, which is the odour of work.

The small traders told us “Until death if it is needed.”

And we have heard workers, employees who have had all their labour rights taken away, who have been tricked by the same hacks now under a different name, because above they want to elect a new government under a different name, and keep us as we are.

“Until death if it is needed,” they said.

And we have heard from elderly men and women who are tired, fed up with a lifetime of work, of struggle and being thrown into a corner, as if they were a burden, a piece of rubbish. And even if sometimes those above give them a penny or two, they have a lifetime of seeing the same Mexico from below, fucked, despised, humiliated.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_Revolutionary_Party

³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Action_Party_\(Mexico\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Action_Party_(Mexico))

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_of_the_Democratic_Revolution

⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Party_\(Mexico\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Party_(Mexico))

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecologist_Green_Party_of_Mexico

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maquiladora>

⁸ [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convergencia_\(partido_pol%C3%ADtico\)](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convergencia_(partido_pol%C3%ADtico))

“Until death if it is needed,” they said.

And before leaving the mountains of the Mexican southeast, my comrades, the chiefs, the leaders of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional told me: we are in this “until death if it is needed.” Alive or dead, in prison or free, disappeared or in the streets, the mountains, the river, or the sea. We come to repeat the same to those above, to the politicians, to the greatly rich. We are going to tear them to pieces.

Here we are, we weren’t summoned for a commercial, we weren’t promised an advertising spot, it wasn’t a roll call that brought us to where we are, it wasn’t the deception of above, in the radio, the TV, the newspapers, but it was our heart which decided we had to do something else, and we will take from Slim⁹ TELMEX, the SAMBORNOS, everything that he has we are going to take away, and give it to the workers, the telephone operators, the employees of those businesses, and we are going to take the land away from the landowners and the peasants are going to work it, without GMOs, without chemicals, since they work the land already. And we are going to take the schools away from the corrupt, idiotic and mediocre officials who have them, and we are going to give them to the university students, we are going to take the banks away from the bankers, we are going to take the industries away from the big owners and we are going to take the governments away from the bad governors, and we are going to take them no matter what.

The streets will shine again as they shone today, with the people from below, humble and simple with the pure desire to fight, to be part of this history that will change this country once and for all. The fields, the mountains, the rivers are going to shine with something that was not known until now, something which is the unity of all the rebellious humility in this country. Another Mexico is going to rise. And someone from above, a scholar, is going to ask when this began, and will say it was this 1st of May 2006, it was with the sixth declaration, it was when in each state, in each locality people organized themselves.

And any answer of this kind is going to be a lie, because that which is the tomorrow of this country, of the other Mexico began when each one of us, men, women, children and elders took the fear we had, our anguish, our loneliness and crumpled it into a little ball and threw it on the ground when we decided as men, as women, as children and as elders to do something for this country. And the only thing we can do is remake it, pushing away those who are watching us, those who are back there [he points to a government building] and all who are above those who are, as they say, “fucking around.”

It is a question, companions, of making the loneliness we felt, the fear, the anguish change hands, to make those who are above fear that they will be filled with anguish, and that the stock market will fall and the only company that will see its own profits rise is the airline that has flights to Miami, because we are going to change this country once and for all. We are going to give it our name and our face, that of each and every one of you, the names and faces of the indigenous people, of the small traders, women, young people, students, teachers, workers of the countryside and the city, the elderly, and the suffering of these generations won’t go away until the downfall of the system that made us like this, the capitalist system.

And it will end here, in Mexico, and one day we will meet here in Zocalo again, and there will be another voice calling us; ours, the voice from below, and we will know then that it is the hour to start building another country, a country for us, from below and from the left, where what people think is taken into account, and with new laws we will send all the lawyers to study, because the

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos_Slim

laws they already studied will all be sent to hell. They are criticising us because the Zapatistas are taking out this word of rebellion, because we don't take into account the correlation of forces. Comrades, the Zapatistas, all the Zapatistas, have never given a damn about the correlation of forces.

We are traveling all over the country and we are finding many people who are fighting and who until now have fought alone, who have resisted plundering, who have resisted repression, who have resisted each of the injustices that each one of us sees, we were alone and now we are learning to say, *Compañero, y Compañera*, with meaning, not as a slogan, but knowing that we are already together, as Zapatistas, as a family, as individuals, as collectives, as groups, as social organisations, as indigenous peoples, as political organisations of the left, in one big movement, in the only possibility that this country will survive, because if we don't do it, those above will continue to destroy until all this is a pile of rubble with a sign that says it's for sale.

We are going to change all this, together as it should be, from below and from the left, this great movement is going to rise when we end up listening to all the voices, to know each other among everything, we are going to set the time, date and place, so that those who are above can open the doors of the prison and free all our comrades who are imprisoned, and all the poor people who are unjustly imprisoned and the doors will be open only long enough later to put those above where they should be, in prison to join the rapists, the drug lords, the serial killers, because they are just like them!

This is what will happen; whomever sees us, we will be seen by those above, and we won't appear in the newspapers or in the television and radio news, because *La Otra Campaña* does not exist for those above, or rather they wish it did not exist. They see, filled with fear, that despite all the silence they've directed at us, and despite all the money they are directing towards the funding for their electoral campaigns, despite all of that, more and more people from below, without names and without faces, are taking the name and the face of those of us in *La Otra Campaña*.

We will be a national boxing show where we fight with our words, we will create another country and with another constitution and where we will be able to forget these days in which we get home and we see on the table the water bill, and the telephone bill, and the taxes, and see that there are only beans to eat and sometimes not even that, that you don't get paid enough even for *tortillas* and yet you have to work from dawn and even before that until late at night, and see that we are not leaving the situation in which we are. Their houses, those of the ones above, will be ours, and we will have good housing, with services provided by us, since we are those who work.

We will have a decent job and a salary, we will have land to work on, good food, hospitals with medicine and doctors, education for all, secular, free, public, we will have independence, and never again will any government do what the government of Vicente Fox has done, which was to humiliate the historical memory of this country in front of George Bush and the American people, and we will see democracy as it should be seen, as ours, coming from below, not that of those politicians from above who have turned their politics into a commodity and their work into prostitution dressed in fancy dresses.

Comrades, we are *La Otra Campaña*, and with us are sex workers, with us are homosexuals, lesbians, transgender people, with us are street children, street workers, small tenants, informal merchants, market traders, with us are indigenous peoples, with us are peasants without land or in the process of losing it, with us are workers, students, teachers, the elderly, and with us are

the ugly ones, the filthy ones, and we are here in *La Otra Campaña*, the best of this country, and that is all which we are going to do.

Thank you, Comrades. Thank you.

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<https://intheredautumn.wordpress.com/2020/11/08/until-death-if-it-is-needed-supmarcos/>
This is a translated transcript of the speech of the Zapatista Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, "Hasta morir si es preciso." The translation might be adapted at points for more clarity in the English language.

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