

Decolonize Boston - materials collected by Ukumbwa Sauti for discussion:

EZLN's Declaration of War

"Today we say 'enough is enough!' (Ya Basta!)"

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO:

MEXICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

[Retrieved from <http://struggle.ws/mexico/ezln/ezlnwa.html>]

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EZLN 6<sup>th</sup> Declaration of the Selva Lacandona

III - How We See the World

Now we are going to explain to you how we, the zapatistas, see what is going on in the world. We see that capitalism is the strongest right now. Capitalism is a social system, a way in which a society goes about organizing things and people, and who has and who has not, and who gives orders and who obeys. In capitalism, there are some people who have money, or capital, and factories and stores and fields and many things, and there are others who have nothing but their strength and knowledge in order to work. In capitalism, those who have money and things give the orders, and those who only have their ability to work obey.

Then capitalism means that there a few who have great wealth, but they did not win a prize, or find a treasure, or inherited from a parent. They obtained that wealth, rather, by exploiting the work of the many. So capitalism is based on the exploitation of the workers, which means they exploit the workers and take out all the profits they can. This is done unjustly, because they do not pay the worker what his work is worth. Instead they give him a salary that barely allows him to eat a little and to rest for a bit, and the next day he goes back to work in exploitation, whether in the countryside or in the city.

And capitalism also makes its wealth from plunder, or theft, because they take what they want from others, land, for example, and natural resources. So capitalism is a system where the robbers are free and they are admired and used as examples.

And, in addition to exploiting and plundering, capitalism represses because it imprisons and kills those who rebel against injustice.

Capitalism is most interested in merchandise, because when it is bought or sold, profits are made. And then capitalism turns everything into merchandise, it makes merchandise of people, of nature, of culture, of history, of conscience. According to capitalism, everything must be able to be bought and sold. And it hides everything behind the merchandise, so we don't see the exploitation that exists. And then the merchandise is bought and sold in a market. And the market, in addition to being used for buying and selling, is also used to hide the exploitation of the workers. In the market, for example, we see coffee in its little package or its pretty little jar, but we do not see the campesino who suffered in order to harvest the coffee, and we do not see the coyote who paid him so cheaply for his work, and we do not see the workers in the large company working their hearts out to package the coffee. Or we see an appliance for listening to music like cumbias, rancheras or corridos, or whatever, and we see that it is very good because it has a good sound, but we do not see the worker in the maquiladora who struggled for many hours, putting the cables and the parts of the appliance together, and they barely paid her a pittance of money, and she lives far away from work and spends a lot on the trip, and, in addition, she runs the risk of being kidnapped, raped and killed as happens in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico.

So we see merchandise in the market, but we do not see the exploitation with which it was made. And then capitalism needs many markets - or a very large market, a world market.

And so the capitalism of today is not the same as before, when the rich were content with exploiting the workers in their own countries, but now they are on a path which is called Neoliberal Globalization. This globalization means that they no longer control the workers in one or several countries, but the capitalists are trying to dominate everything all over the world. And the world, or Planet Earth, is also called the 'globe', and that is why they say 'globalization,' or the entire world.

And neoliberalism is the idea that capitalism is free to dominate the entire world, and so tough, you have to resign yourself and conform and not make a fuss, in other words, not rebel. So neoliberalism is like the theory, the plan, of capitalist globalization. And neoliberalism has its economic, political, military and cultural plans. All of those plans have to do with dominating everyone, and they repress or separate anyone who doesn't obey so that his rebellious ideas aren't passed on to others.

Then, in neoliberal globalization, the great capitalists who live in the countries which are powerful, like the United States, want the entire world to be made into a big business where merchandise is produced like a great market. A world market for buying and selling the entire world and for hiding all the exploitation from the world. Then the global capitalists insert themselves everywhere, in all the countries, in order to do their big business, their great exploitation. Then they respect nothing, and they meddle wherever they wish. As if they were conquering other countries. That is why we zapatistas say that neoliberal globalization is a war of conquest of the entire world, a world war, a war being waged by capitalism for global domination. Sometimes that conquest is by armies who invade a country and conquer it by force. But sometimes it is with the economy, in other words, the big capitalists put their money into another country or they lend it money, but on the condition that they obey what they tell them to

do. And they also insert their ideas, with the capitalist culture which is the culture of merchandise, of profits, of the market.

Then the one which wages the conquest, capitalism, does as it wants, it destroys and changes what it does not like and eliminates what gets in its way. For example, those who do not produce nor buy nor sell modern merchandise get in their way, or those who rebel against that order. And they despise those who are of no use to them. That is why the indigenous get in the way of neoliberal capitalism, and that is why they despise them and want to eliminate them. And neoliberal capitalism also gets rid of the laws which do not allow them to exploit and to have a lot of profit. They demand that everything can be bought and sold, and, since capitalism has all the money, it buys everything. Capitalism destroys the countries it conquers with neoliberal globalization, but it also wants to adapt everything, to make it over again, but in its own way, a way which benefits capitalism and which doesn't allow anything to get in its way. Then neoliberal globalization, capitalism, destroys what exists in these countries, it destroys their culture, their language, their economic system, their political system, and it also destroys the ways in which those who live in that country relate to each other. So everything that makes a country a country is left destroyed.

[Retrieved from [http://www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story\\_id=805](http://www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=805)]

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Q: What do you think is the West's proper role in Africa now?

A: To help diminish the tension in Africa, the West is going to have to understand one thing: the importance of native spirituality in the life of Africans. Historically the customs and traditions of day-to-day life in Africa have been dismissed by Western cultural anthropologists as primitive, chaotic, pagan activities that should be replaced by Christianity, the only civilized religion. The West has also long assumed that it should convert tribal cultures to literacy, which is to say an entirely different way of looking at the world, of living in the world. Most Africans who have achieved a comfortable Western lifestyle are Christian. Why? Because it comes with the package: Christianity, literacy, and a material lifestyle all come together.

Q: And that's really Christianity's selling point, rather than its spiritual perspective?

A: Yes, it's a marketing strategy. In Africa, you cannot come into a comfortable material lifestyle without going through Christ. So many Africans say, "I'll take the whole package. That way I'm sure I'll get what I want." This is the compromise the rising urban class of Africa makes. Christianity is not seen as a soul-transforming device capable of producing redemption, but as a source of substantial material gratification. Those who convert will show up for Sunday Mass as usual, looking devout, but on weekdays they will see the shaman, do their sacrifices and usual rituals.

Q: What is the native assessment of Christianity as a spiritual perspective, apart from its capacity to deliver the goods?

A: If you discuss the beliefs of Christianity with the village diviner, the medicine man, he

will say the white man must be extremely stupid. The white man must be profoundly troubled--probably torn by a huge guilt connected to how he treated the ancestors--to think that villagers would buy the idea that someone died on the cross for us. They would say these beliefs are evidence that the white people killed someone of great importance, probably a diviner and a healer. If you kill a healer, you must make amends by appeasing the healer's spirit.

Q: You're saying that Christ's death was not properly grieved and ritualized, but even so, as a culture, we should have gone on, instead of fixating on guilt over this particular healer's death.

A: That's right. There's a problem in Christianity that the white man is still running away from. It could have been fixed by facing facts and saying, "What should we do?" The healers and diviners in the white man's culture would have known what that man's spirit wanted.

Q: In the West we hear that the ongoing political turmoil in Africa is mostly caused by "ancient tribal rivalries," with occasional mention of the disruptive legacy of colonialism. How do you see it?

A: It's true that tribal rivalries have something to do with political instability. It's also true that those rivalries were exaggerated by colonialism. Colonialism essentially insulted the tribal territories, and as a result, nations came to be composed of an agglomeration of many tribes--65 in Burkina Faso alone. The Mossi majority sees itself as the owner of my country; others are just negotiators for representation. That is the way it is now, and it is the sole responsibility of colonialism. The other tribes, realizing they cannot compete through normal political channels, resort to spiritual channels. They figure out ways to get their members into important government positions.

Source URL: <http://motherjones.com/politics/1995/03/visions-malidoma-some>

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Excerpt from:

### **TLATOKAN ATLAHUAK DECLARATION**

#### **Declaration of the Indigenous Peoples Parallel Forum**

#### **of the 4th World Water Forum - Mexico City, Mexico - March 17-18, 2006**

5. We reaffirm that the relationship we have with our lands, territories and water constitute the physical, cultural and spiritual basis of our existence. The relationship with our Mother Earth obligates us to conserve our fresh water and seas for the survival of present and future generations. We assume our roles as guardians, with rights and responsibilities that defend and guarantee the protection, availability and purity of water. We unite to respect and implement our traditional knowledge and laws, and to exercise our right of self-determination to preserve water and life.

6. The situation of the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico makes it even clearer that the struggle for our water is tied fundamentally with our struggle for our right of self-determination. This is the case of our Yaqui relatives, the Otomí, Ñahñahú, Matlazinca, Mazahua,

Tlahuica and Nahuas of the Alto Río Lerma; of our relatives of Xochipas, of Xochimilco of Tecámac, of Xoxocotla Morelos; and as with our relatives of the Sierra de Manantlán and Ayotitlán in Jalisco; and other Indigenous Peoples of the world.

7. Mexico and countries that are accomplices of the multinational corporations, violate with impunity the human rights and fundamental freedoms that they themselves have consecrated in the Covenants, Conventions and Declarations of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

8. We assert our right of development determined by our own laws and traditional authorities, consistent with our values and worldview.

9. Our lands, territories and natural resources, particularly our water (rivers, springs, wells, lakes, groundwater) continue to be stolen or ruined with extreme pollution. The water multinationals, with the support of the international finance agencies like the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank are accomplices in the privatization of our territories and our water. This creates a scarcity of water raising its economic value and furthering the view of water as an object of commerce.

10. We reject the neoliberal model of life that views water as merchandise, not as a public good, or a fundamental human right. Agencies such as the World Trade Organization promote privatization projects of our vital liquid. This destroys flora and fauna and consequently creates sicknesses like cancer, even among youth, as well as the disappearance of our cultures.

11. As Indigenous Peoples, we assert in all the national and international laws, the right of self determination and the recognition of our territories. We assert our autonomy in the use and enjoyment of our natural resources such as water, as a human right. We demand this recognition for our own customs and laws and oral traditions.

12. We demand from the national authorities and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and Organization of American States and the governmental participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, the full participation of Indigenous Peoples in any project or action of water management and development in our territories. We demand the guarantee of the right of free, prior and informed consent as is established by international law.

13. We declare our solidarity with the struggle of the Indigenous Peoples of Mexico and other parts of the world who have come to this forum to condemn authorities that don't resolve conflict nor guarantee the supply of water, but repress those who struggle to defend water; including energy and mining companies that consume and poison our Mother Earth and water and poisoning all Life.

[Document linked at <http://www.ienearth.org/water.html>]