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The Sixth Declaration and the Other Campaign

A Program and Project for the Continuation of
Capitalism

Libertarian Socialist Group

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August 2007

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A critique by the Mexican “Libertarian Socialist Group” of
recent EZLN “Zapatista” policies centred on the “Other
Campaign”, including the political campaigning and cult of
celebrity of Marcos; and analysis of their political programme
as left-capitalist constitutional reformism, i.e., only a defence
of Mexican domestic capital and state — “bourgeois
protectionism” — against the encroachments of international
neo-liberalism.

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students, etc.. An effort that, according to the EZLN, was itself a failure, since the EZLN admitted that it had undertaken no political work among workers and students. And, effectively, it didn't.

As in the case of the Alianza de los Comunistas Libertarias (Alliance of Libertarian Communists), who, while positioning themselves as critical of certain points of the Sixth Declaration and seeking to form an "anti-constitutional bloc" with other adherent groupings, continues to maintain in a lamentable way that an anti-capitalist proletarian movement can arise from within the Other Campaign. They thereby completely liquidate their own program and work in pursuit of a completely nationalist-statist and bourgeois project.

Marcos did well in emphasizing that the problem of capitalism is not one of consumption, but of production. However, in spite of his criticism, he returned immediately afterwards to his vague "anti-capitalism," when he said that not consuming the products of multinationals is only "one" of the ways to "combat" capitalism. This "form" is not anti-capitalist at all, but rather is one that generates confusion among the exploited about what capitalism is, and it pushes them to defend domestic capitalists against "foreign multinationals." Part of the responsibility for this confusion lies with the EZLN itself, as we have been able to see already in the Sixth Declaration.

of those who proclaim themselves to be “anti-capitalists” follow the siren song either of “revolutionary nationalism” or of decrepit Marxism-Leninism, we, the revolutionary anarchists of the Libertarian Socialist Group, criticize openly and radically the false route on to which the Zapatista leadership is directing its followers.

9. For this reason, the Libertarian Socialist Group demands:

Freedom for all the Zapatista political prisoners!
An end to the harassment of the Zapatista communities!

Freedom for all the political prisoners of the Other Campaign!
An end to the harassment of members of the Other Campaign!

Libertarian Socialist Group (Grupo Socialista Libertario),
Mexico
August 2007

Appendix

The Zapatista National Liberation Front is the political arm of the EZLN, one that originated with the Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle (January 2006). In this, the EZLN called for the formation of a “peaceful, civil organization. We invite the participation of the workers of Mexico, of both countryside and city, the indigenous, residents of the barrios, teachers and students, women, of all the Mexican citizens who desire, not power, but democracy, freedom and justice for us and our children.” That is to say, the FZLN was an effort of the EZLN to generate a movement, not only of the indigenous, but of workers,

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tection of the state, without differentiation on the basis of class).

5. Therefore, the Sixth Declaration does not represent a step forward in the Zapatista program, in spite of the inclusion of “anti-capitalist” rhetoric. It goes no further than defining capitalism as anti-neoliberalism, just as previously all the “national liberation” movements in the world had equated anti-capitalism with anti-imperialism.
6. Despite the change in language, the Zapatista program of the Sixth Declaration does not represent a revolutionary rupture with the past. On the contrary, it either remains within the very old (and not the “very different”) tradition of Marxism-Stalinism-Guevarism, exemplified by the FLN (antecedent of the EZLN) and the EZLN itself before it went public, or it stays within the liberal-democratic framework (a position that it defended at the outset, in the face of a discredited Marxism that collapsed with the Berlin Wall).
7. In either of the two cases, neither the old statist Marxism nor the welfare state of “revolutionary nationalism” represents the emancipation of the workers from capital.
8. We recognize the valor and sincerity of all the people who make up the Zapatista communities. We do not doubt for an instant that their sole motivation is to fight against the terrible oppression that they have endured at the hands of the state and capital, an authentic struggle in which many have lost their lives. It is precisely for this reason that today we criticize the path that is currently being followed, just as previously hundreds of organizations criticized the erroneous alliance with the PRD and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. Today, when the majority

to the program expressed in the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle. The result is that is impossible for the Other Campaign to be guided by any other perspective than this.

3. Since the Other Campaign is a Zapatista project, participation in it means the abandonment of any other program besides that of the Zapatistas.
4. The bases of the Zapatista program, under whose aegis the Other Campaign is guided, and as espoused in the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, are the following:
 - a. Anti-neoliberal: making an erroneous equation between anti-neoliberalism and anti-capitalism, it considers anti-capitalism to mean opposition to neo-liberalism and not to capitalism itself.
 - b. Nationalist: advancing a patriotic discourse that leads—along with the erroneous equation of anti-neoliberalism and anti-capitalism—to the conclusion that the struggle must be for “national sovereignty” and not for the emancipation of the working class. This conclusion leads the Zapatista program to the defense of the national bourgeoisie and to a longing for the old “revolutionary nationalism” of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s.
 - c. Statist: it defends to the death the nation-state, a defense inherent in the goal of “national liberation,” which is once again counterposed to the emancipation of the exploited and oppressed. It subscribes to the bourgeois theory of the state, which is seen as a “public thing” entrusted with guarding the welfare of the people (clearly understanding the people as being the whole of the citizenry under the pro-

“In his declarations and speeches across Mexico, Marcos upheld ... the nation-state as the best exponent of the public good. This false understanding of the state causes him to justify the existence of this institution that really only has the social function of legitimizing and maintaining the exploitative order...

Marcos, exuding confidence in the state, and very much in accord with bourgeois theories, declared in May 2006 on CNN that “the Mexican state has abandoned its duty.” For Marcos, the state is not the organized power of the exploiters against the workers; rather, it is responsible for looking after the “common good,” a task that, according to Marcos, it has ceased to carry out—thanks to the “neoliberals.” Marcos to the contrary, we believe that the state continues to fulfill exactly its duty, which is to maintain class society. Every act of repression, every act of violence exercised against the masses, shows this.”

I

The Other Campaign: A Zapatista Project

A great deal has been said about the Sixth Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle issued by the EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army) and the attempt to put it into practice by means of the Other Campaign. This latest appeal of the Zapatistas was accompanied by a red alert in the areas controlled by the EZLN, with the movement’s leaders going into hiding, and by a series of events that quickly aroused the interest of others both near and far. All waited for much anticipated news from the EZLN, news that then came in the form of the Sixth Declaration. The

EZLN announced that it had made its own calculations, knowing that this “new stage” would mean that it would lose sympathizers (the entire spectrum of the intellectual left; the entire base of the PDR, etc.—that is to say, what was put at risk was the support received by the EZLN that came in large part from the national and foreign bourgeoisie). Then came the bombshell: for the first time since 1994, the EZLN declared publicly that it was “anti-capitalist” (while astutely—and thereby ensuring that it would retain some of its supporters among the petite bourgeoisie—not declaring itself to be socialist, and not only were the Zapatistas not socialist, the Sixth Declaration and the Other Campaign represented something new, something never seen before, something that did not copy the past, but which represented “something else”).

The Sixth Declaration basically appealed for the unity of “leftist and anti-capitalist” individuals and organizations. Two months after the publication of the declaration, during the “preparatory” assemblies of the Other Campaign, Subcomandante Marcos sought to make clear that this was not simply a Zapatista initiative, but one that would belong to all those who adhered to the Sixth Declaration. Now that two years have gone by since the Sixth Declaration first saw the light, what is the basis of this unity? Is the Other Campaign a campaign belonging to everyone, or is it one more Zapatista campaign? The answer to the first question gives, almost automatically, the answer to the second. It is an irrefutable truth that the unity of the Other Campaign is a unity made behind one figure, in other words, the only thing that unites those participating in the Other Campaign is their admiration for the mythic guerrillero, the would-be successor to Che Guevara, Subcomandante Marcos. The Other Campaign talked a lot about being the union of “anti-capitalists.” It is much more the union of the admirers of the favorite star of the petit bourgeois anti-globalization movement. Those who are reading this text may say that we are exaggerating. Not at all,

“Redeemers and Unredeemed,” made in a forum called “Latin America Viewed by the Other Campaign,” Marcos said:

A part of this singular history is the Cuban people, the last to become independent [from Spain] and the first to become free on our continent.

What a beautiful concept of freedom Marcos has! He would probably consider as being very free the Cuban workers who have to beg for food from tourists in order to feed their children, or perhaps those who are very “free” are the Cuban prostitutes who have to sell their bodies, or probably he sees a great deal of freedom in the fact that Cubans cannot travel through the restricted zones reserved for tourists, or in the fact that Cuban workers cannot organize in a way that is independent of the state-controlled unions.

However, state capitalism in the Cuban manner is only one option as regards the ultimate goal of the Other Campaign. Because the Sixth Declaration implicitly defends Mexican capital, the project of the Other Campaign—should it triumph—would oscillate between a traditional bourgeois republic with an interventionist state and full-blown state capitalism. As we have said above, this is not in itself a contradiction, but a simple variation, without much importance, in the type of capitalist society.

III

Conclusions

1. The Other Campaign is simply yet another Zapatista campaign (as were the CND and the FZLN) in search of a national Zapatista political movement.
2. Therefore, the Other Campaign subscribes to the agenda, timetable, forms and modalities of the EZLN, as well as

But is there a contradiction between a nationalist discourse in defense of domestic capital and declarations about expropriating the means of production? We don't believe so. Rather than being a contradiction, it is simply an example of the false anti-capitalism that the EZLN and the Other Campaign defend. When we read or listen to the declarations of sympathy made by Marcos for states such as Venezuela and Cuba, we recognize that there is a great deal of similarity between the EZLN's nostalgic discourse about the Mexican interventionist state of yesteryear and the "anti-capitalism" of Cuba and Venezuela, so much so that we can only conclude that this is where the project of the Other Campaign is headed.

Previously, we indicated that the predecessor of the EZLN, the FLN, spoke openly of "socialism." It has always been a trait of the Latin American guerrilla left that identifies with Stalinism, Maoism, or Guevarism to equate "socialism" with the conquest of political power and state ownership of all the means of production. It has always considered that the "abolition" of corporate private property and its substitution by state property (property that has been "privatized" from the proletariat) abolishes capitalist relations of production. However, the only thing that has occurred is that a state bureaucracy has been substituted for the bourgeoisie as the ruling class, creating a new class that concentrates and monopolizes political and economic power for its own benefit and not that of the masses. This false conception about "socialism" comes from the Soviet Union, which also promoted the idea that it was "constructing socialism," when in fact what reigned in the USSR was a degrading form of capitalist exploitation: state capitalism.

This what really exists in the Cuban state, and it is where Venezuela is headed, along with the EZLN and the Other Campaign, who promote the reactionary idea that the Cuban state is the perfect and genuine representative of the Cuban people, and that there is no division between "above" and "below" in Cuba. A few days ago, in a communication entitled

and the proof of what we say are the many hours that Marcos has devoted to signing autographs and having his picture taken, holding a baby, with the "people from below" and—why not—with some artists of the "left," undoubtedly sufficiently "anti-capitalist." However, we would like to clarify that we are speaking in generalities about those who participate in the Other Campaign. There are a few exceptions, but they only prove the rule.

Another example of this focus on Marcos have been (and are) the local assemblies, which have devoted large amounts of time to organizing receptions for this distinguished personality. The local assemblies of the Other Campaign have spent days and weeks in deciding who will undertake the feeding, housing, and caring of Marcos.

The obvious result of this making Marcos into the focal point of the unity of the Other Campaign is that the campaign can only be a Zapatista one. Everything turns around Marcos and the EZLN, and everyone else must try to adjust to the schedule, the agenda, and the form of activity imposed by Marcos and the EZLN. In reality, this has been clear from the beginning, when the Other Campaign was presented as a long term project involving three, carefully defined stages. The first stage consisted of the tour undertaken by Marcos throughout Mexico; the second involved the establishment of Zapatista commissions in the whole country; the third involved the strengthening of the presence of Zapatista cadres, which now would not be merely regional, but in every state and for an indefinite period of time. Naturally, these stages were never open to debate. What is this, if not a Zapatista campaign?

Another example of this, and one that clarifies the situation better than any, is how Marcos suspended his tour (proposed by him, in a time period and under conditions determined by the EZLN) without consulting absolutely anyone, thus leaving those supporters in the northern states in the lurch.

There are many other examples, such as the changes made by Marcos in the schedule of activities programmed by the local coordinators, which were modified at the caprice of the “distinguished visitor,” or questions about the intonation of the Zapatista hymn at almost all the public events of the Other Campaign.

We are not going to elaborate more in demonstrating that the Other Campaign is directed in its totality by the EZLN, which has set the former’s agenda. Those who have participated in the Other Campaign know that this assertion is true, and no further proof is required.

Toward the Refounding of the FZLN

During the meeting with political organizations, Marcos placed an emphasis on not seeking to deprive these organizations of their social base. The EZLN did not seek to unseat the leadership of these movements, but only sought to unite the various struggles. This is how the Zapatista leader explained it:

The EZLN is not active among workers, or students; its work is fundamentally among the indigenous. We are not going to dispute with you the moral authority and legitimacy that have been achieved by the popular movements of workers and peasants or however we may call it. Nor are we going to challenge the leadership of these movements. The Sixth Declaration is quite clear: we seek to unite our struggles with the struggles of workers and peasants; we do not wish to direct the struggle of workers and peasants. (Subcommander Marcos, preparatory meeting, August 6, 2005)

Perhaps the failure of the FZLN (the Zapatista National Liberation Front) had caused the EZLN to put aside its effort to cre-

As for the armed wing of the Mexican state—that is to say, the army—Marcos declared before the adherents of the Other Campaign in Irapuato:

The Pact of Chapultepec means that the Mexican state has become a police state, one including the army, which is going to assume the functions of an internal police. It will be the end of national sovereignty if they succeed. The army will no longer serve to defend the country from foreign invasion; it will serve to protect the rich from the poor.

Here Marcos only repeats the bourgeois view that the army and other militarized forces serve to protect the community and to preserve “national sovereignty.” When he says that the army is no longer going to defend the country, he again shows implicitly that he considers that, prior to neoliberalism, the armed forces fulfilled a favorable role for the masses, because they were nothing more than the armed expression of a “sovereign national state.” This also demonstrates the thesis of our analysis: Zapatismo and the Other Campaign can go no further than the goal of defending the state in its “interventionist” role in economic questions; they cannot fight effectively against capitalism, only its ultra-liberal aspects.

The Other Campaign: Toward the Continuation of Capitalism

Another part to underline is that, on rare occasions, the Zapatista leader has spoken about the expropriation of the means of production. We recall that he did so during the first meeting held by the Other campaign with workers and, it is worth noting, in one good criticism he made of those who absurdly think that fighting capitalism consists of not drinking Coca-Cola or not consuming other products made by multinationals.

might identify the state as the guardian of bourgeois property and thus fight to destroy it.

According to the liberal classics, every individual is free from birth, and the very essence of every human being is individual freedom. For liberal thinkers, the state is a “social contract” established by completely free and autonomous individuals, who sacrifice a portion of their freedom to establish the aforementioned contract for the sake of the “common good.” Therefore, the state (according to the idealist—and thereby false—thesis of liberals) represents the interests of society as a whole.

In his declarations and speeches across Mexico, Marcos upheld this theory, presenting the nation-state as the best exponent of the public good. This false understanding of the state causes him to justify the existence of this institution that really only has the social function of legitimizing and maintaining the exploitative order. The modern state is the product of the rise of the bourgeoisie as the dominant class, which means that this class adapted the state to suit its own purposes, so as to be able to reconcile the interests of the different bourgeois factions and to give a juridical legitimacy to its privileges. Its other components, such as the army and the police, have the function of maintaining, on the basis of violence, the existing system of exploitation.

But Marcos, exuding confidence in the state, and very much in accord with bourgeois theories, declared in May 2006 on CNN that “the Mexican state has abandoned its duty.” For Marcos, the state is not the organized power of the exploiters against the workers; rather, it is responsible for looking after the “common good,” a task that, according to Marcos, it has ceased to carry out—thanks to the “neoliberals.” Marcos to the contrary, we believe that the state continues to fulfill exactly its duty, which is to maintain class society. Every act of repression, every act of violence exercised against the masses, shows this.

ate its own political arm and to limit itself to a union with popular political organizations in the city and countryside? The dissolution of the FZLN might lead us to think so, but it is enough to review the communiqué of the CCRI-RG of the EZLN concerning the dissolution of the FZLN to understand that not only has the EZLN not renounced the task of creating its own political arm, it has worked strenuously to refound such an organization following the failure of the FZLN. The following paragraph from the communiqué explains it thusly:

At the end of this past month of October, 2005, a delegation of the CCRI-RG of the EZLN met with some members of the Zapatista Front for National Liberation and asked them to consult with all the comrades of the Front about the possibility of dissolving the organic structure of the FZLN, returning the name of this Zapatista civil organization to the EZLN, which had convoked it from beginning to end. This was done with the objective of giving the EZLN the freedom to refound a peaceful, civil, Zapatista organization that, ratifying the principles of the Fourth Declaration, will incorporate the advances of the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle (anti-capitalist and of the left), along with the achievements of the FZLN in its ten years of existence, trying to avoid the errors and mistakes that had been present in its work, and going forward with the direct participation of the Zapatistas of the EZLN. (Communiqué of the CCRI-RG [Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee – General Command] of the EZLN, November, 2005)

The obvious conclusion, then, is that the EZLN continues to aim at the construction, at the national level, of its political arm,

which it sees as a “civil and peaceful Zapatista political organization.” Therefore, everything indicates that the tour undertaken by the Zapatista leadership throughout the whole country was not done only with the intention of “listening to those from below,” but was used as an opportunity to re-establish its political arm. Marcos himself maintained that:

We want to make it clear that the EZLN maintains its line, that of promoting the appearance of new social subjects, the appearance of new organizations, of new forms of organization, and of new worlds. (Subcomandante Marcos, preparatory meeting, August 6, 2005)

The EZLN thus maintains its line, the same that it has upheld since January 1996 and was made public in its Fourth Declaration: that of the construction of its political arm. The Sixth Declaration is one more attempt to achieve this, and as was stated in the same communiqué concerning the dissolution of the FZLN, “a new stage of civil Zapatismo begins.”

The Other Campaign and its Zapatista Program

However, the EZLN has not only maintained its line concerning organizational questions, but also in relation to matters of political program. And they had already alerted us:

We warn everyone: We are going to fulfill the Sixth Declaration even if we are alone, and even if no one wants to work with us. (Subcomandante Marcos, *ibid.*)

This warning is nothing other than an affirmation: no one can be part of the Other Campaign without accepting the Zapatista program expressed in the Sixth Declaration. The Sixth

What we affirm, in contrast to the reformism of the Sixth Declaration, is that the 1917 constitution, with or without the changes made to it by neoliberalism, is a capitalist constitution, because it is a constitution that defends and legitimates the essence of capitalism: private property. In fact, the creation of this “magna carta” was the result of the victory of the bourgeoisie that emerged triumphant during the Mexican “revolution.” The constitution represents the interests of this bourgeois sector.

Beyond all this, the proposal to draft a new constitution makes it clear that the Sixth Declaration does not truly question existing class society. It tells us that the EZLN desires a constitution “that recognizes the rights and liberties of the people, and which defends the weak in the face of the powerful.” This cannot be understood in any other manner than that the Other Campaign does not seek to put an end to the social division between exploiters and exploited, between rulers and governed, but rather seeks to establish new laws that would make more “harmonious” the coexistence between those who possess socio-political power and those who do not. We can otherwise not understand what it is meant by speaking of the “powerful” and “weak” in a supposedly non-capitalist constitution. What can the “powerful” represent if not the capitalists and the politicians, and what can the “weak” mean if not the exploited worker of the city and countryside?

Marcos and the Bourgeois Theory of the State

During his tour through Mexico as part of the first phase of the Other Campaign, Marcos let it be seen that the fundamental goal of this project is to reform the institutions of the Mexican state. It appears that the Zapatista spokesperson partakes of the bourgeois theory of the state, which, by the way, is a holy farce to justify the state’s existence in front of the popular masses, thereby avoiding a situation in which the exploited

capitalism consists in establishing new laws. Its formula is to make a “political revolution”: to discard neo-liberal policies and to empower individuals who will elaborate “just” laws for the dispossessed. Left to one side is the fact that the central and decisive element of the anti-capitalist struggle is for the workers to destroy the economic basis of capitalist society, that is to say, to abolish private property and to collectivize (an action that should not be confused with state ownership) the means of production, distribution and livelihood. The Sixth Declaration makes no mention of the appropriation of the means of production in the hands of workers, reducing everything, in true reformist tradition, to making new laws for the poor.

The second aspect to underline is that the initiative to elaborate a new constitution once more shows (to those who, at this point, still have not been convinced) that the Sixth Declaration and the Other Campaign are instruments to build a strong state, one like that which emerged from the bourgeois political revolution in 1910. Therefore, the Other Campaign fights for a new constitution, because as the Sixth Declaration tells us:

...the Mexican constitution is now completely warped and changed. It's no longer the one that guarded the rights and liberties of working people. Now it protects the rights and liberties of the neoliberals so that they can have their huge profits.
(Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle)

It would be impossible to be more clear. The EZLN does not oppose the existing constitution on the basis of class antagonism. The problem it perceives is that this constitution is “warped and changed.” This means that the EZLN considers this constitution to have been a faithful representation of the people’s rights up until the era of neoliberal reforms, and that if this constitution had not been “warped,” one would not fight against it. Rather, it would be the duty of every proletarian to defend it—like any good soldier, like any good Mexican.

Declaration sets forth a guideline, a series of irreducible principles that must be accepted by all its adherents. It may be argued by the EZLN that its consultation concerning the famous six points was a way in which “everyone” fashioned the Sixth Declaration. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle is a document issuing from a political-military organization, a document that contains a beginning, a middle, and an end. If it was truly desired that it be a document of “everyone,” of all “the left and anti-capitalists,” then local committees of debate should have been created in all of Mexico in order to define such a proposal, something that did not take place. On the contrary, others were summoned simply to sign the document, to adhere to it.

The question of the six points was situated so far from reality that none of them could be carried out. The Other Campaign was encountered in its first stage (when was it ever voted on?); it was not encountered (and it was never intended to be) at the moment of a supposed debate about its six points.

The six points that were supposedly to be debated were put forth by the EZLN, which arrogated to itself the authority to answer questions about them, creating the means by which the questions could be received (through an internet page and via a physical address, the latter being in the capital district only). The EZLN put itself forward as the mediator that would ensure that “all voices were heard,” and thereby ensured that it would control the results. It proposed a format whose very first question (that of basic principles, that is to say, of the program) only allowed for a “yes” or “no” response. And if one voted no, what did this mean? The message was clear: the program is as stated, and it must be accepted as a whole or not at all. All the remaining questions were about the organizational form of the Other Campaign. And the results of the survey? After an initial report that barely 10% of those in the campaign participated, nothing more was heard about them. And the six points themselves? Forgotten!

What remained clear was that the Other Campaign had only one agenda—that of the EZLN, and only one program—that of the EZLN. One can agree or disagree with it, but it cannot be modified in the slightest way.

The deployment of Zapatista cadres throughout Mexico was not done in vain and had a very well defined, specific objective:

My work as part of this delegation is stated in the name we have been entrusted with. We are the Sixth Commission of the Lacandon Jungle and the Other Campaign—this is my work. One thing, the Sixth Commission is the spirit of the Other Campaign, because if the Other Campaign goes ahead and we abandon the Sixth Declaration, comrades, we will end up like sand scattered by the wind and everyone will be abandoned, and this way we won't succeed, because the Sixth Declaration contains certain recommendations: how we must be within the Other Campaign and what we think must be done for the Other Campaign... (Comandante Zebedeo, Monterrey, Mexico, May 5, 2007)

Zebedeo was quite clear: the objective of the Sixth Commission is to guide the Other Campaign from within the framework of the Zapatista program elaborated in the Sixth Declaration. If we add to this the warning Of Marcos that the Sixth Declaration is going to be fulfilled even if the Zapatistas have to do so by themselves, we arrive at the conclusion that any attempt to modify the Sixth Declaration would be rejected by the EZLN. It is for this reason that it is not possible to participate in the Other Campaign without accepting the Zapatista program, that is to say, without compromise or wavering from this program.

exploited condition of wage earners, whose labor enriches the bosses, who are the same whether they are called “Hans” or “Pedro,” “Harwood” or “Martinez.”

But if any reader thinks that we are being unjust, and that we are slandering the EZLN by describing it as defending Mexican capital through the Other Campaign. Let us cite the following, which will help to clarify our position a bit more:

They also said the borders must be opened so foreign capital can enter to fix up all the national businesses. But now we see that there aren't any national businesses; foreigners gobbled them all up, and the things that are sold are inferior to those that were made in Mexico. (Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle)

The EZLN laments precisely that which we mentioned a few paragraphs previously: the fact that the exploiters are not Mexican, that have foreign last names and customs. With its nationalism—an ideology that impedes the proletariat from recognizing and affirming itself as a global class—the EZLN is left to plead for the “exclusive right” of Mexican bosses to exploit their “compatriots.”

The entire Sixth Declaration is impregnated with this bourgeois protectionist language. Throughout the document, there are only evocations of this old “revolutionary nationalism” and the kind of regime that espoused such an ideology. In fact, the crucial element, the foundation stone of the Sixth Declaration, is proof of the fundamentally bourgeois program of the EZLN, which does not constitute in any way a real revolutionary rupture with the past. This central element that we are referring to is the fight for a new constitution, or what is the same thing, for new laws on which the Mexican state is to be based.

Here there are two points to be analyzed. The first is that Zapatismo maintains, in a utopian way, that the struggle against

existed “credit and price controls” does not have anything to do with anti-capitalism. On the contrary, it has a good deal of similarity with the indignation of the petite bourgeoisie and middle classes who were most affected by NAFTA.

In its very choice of name, the EZLN shows that its program is counterposed to the historic interests of the proletariat. The EZLN can only be a radical exponent of the defense of domestic capital, because, as its name states, its project is “national liberation,” the liberation of the Mexican nation-state, an entity that includes all the classes existing within its framework, including, of course, the Mexican bourgeoisie.

The project of “national liberation” stands in contradiction to that of the liberation of the proletariat, of the exploited people. The “reconciliation”—fatal for the exploited—of both projects was the work of Stalinism and Maoism in the 1960s and 1970s, currents that patriotically called upon the exploited to unite with their domestic exploiters in order to “combat imperialism.” It is not merely fortuitous that the EZLN defends such a conception of “anti-capitalism,” taking into account that the aforementioned political currents influenced the birth of the FLN [National Liberation Front], the predecessor of the EZLN. This false, patriotic “anti-capitalism” is what is expressed repetitively in the Sixth Declaration. For example, Subcomandante Marcos tells us the following:

As for the workers in the city, the factories close, and they are left without work, or the capitalists open what they call maquiladoras, which are foreign owned and pay very little for many hours of work.
(Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle)

The Sixth Declaration places an emphasis on the foreign character of maquiladoras, as if the exploitation of the worker depended on the provenance of capital or the nationality of the owner. The relations of capitalist production sustain the

II

The Sixth Zapatista Declaration: A Manual for Defending the Capitalist State

Some of those on the revolutionary left have interpreted the Sixth Declaration as a break on the part of Zapatistas with their openly reformist past, which was embodied in nothing more than a set of demands for democratic rights within the context of the Mexican bourgeois national state.

Certainly, in a first reading of the Sixth Declaration, the EZLN appears to divest itself of narrow appeals to bourgeois legality, because this declaration includes an element that was not contained in the five previous Zapatista declarations: the struggle against capitalism. However, a detailed analysis of the Sixth Declaration shows that the program and the political project proposed by the Other Campaign reveal nothing more than the same Zapatista intentions as before: to defend, rescue and strengthen the Mexican capitalist state.

Even if it incorporates a slight change in Zapatista discourse, the Sixth Declaration embodies the same reformist objectives as before, and, as such, we consider those organizations and individuals that collaborate in the Other Campaign—even if they do so from a position of critical support—do nothing more than aid in the realization of the dreams of Marcos and the EZLN: to return fully to the nationalist state of the 1930s-1950s.

In spite of the “anti-capitalist” language of the Sixth Declaration, the true intentions of the Zapatistas remain the same as they have been since the public appearance of the EZLN: to combat only neo-liberalism, not capitalism in all its essence. And being based on statist patriotism, the anti-neoliberal struggle of the EZLN is converted, in deeds, into a defense of national (domestic) capital.

Throughout the Sixth Declaration, there is nothing less than an erroneous equation of capitalism with neoliberalism; that is

to say, when we are told to fight against capitalism, the only thing being referred to is combat against an economic “model” that has been imposed throughout the world during the past two-and-a-half decades. This appears to forget that the “welfare state” prevalent in the world from the 1930s onward was also based on domination and the exploitation of one class by another, and there existed in this state both opulent millionaires and poor masses.

There is a mistaken conflation of concepts, and this converts the Sixth Declaration into a defence of domestic capital, something demonstrated easily, as when, for example, we are told:

Therefore, neoliberal globalization, that is to say, the capitalist, destroys what exists in a country, destroying its culture, its language, its economic system, its political system, and also destroys the ways in which those who live in this country relate to each other. (Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle)

Are we to understand that before the “neoliberal conquest” of these countries their economic system was not capitalist? That before globalization these countries lived on the margins or outside of capitalism? And if, according to the Zapatistas and their followers, these countries (for example, Mexico) were not capitalist, does this mean that they were countries exempt from what the Sixth Declaration calls “robbery, contempt and despoilation,” and were examples of what we should fight for? And if, on the contrary, it is admitted that these economies were forms of capitalism in which all of the contradictions of capitalism were present, then why does the Sixth Declaration repeatedly defend such a past?

We believe that this last quotation from the Sixth Declaration gives us the key to an answer. Zapatismo longs for the paternalistic welfare state that existed before neoliberalism and fights to revive it fully. The following quotation makes clear

the nostalgia of the EZLN for the protectionist nationalism that under capitalism has no other goal than to protect domestic capital, that is to say, the bourgeoisie and national exploiters who feel threatened by the competition of foreign capital:

So much for the economic foundation of our Mexico, which includes the countryside, industry, national commerce, is being destroyed, and only a bit of rubble—which will certainly be sold off too—remains. (Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle)

Yearning for bourgeois protectionism, the Sixth Declaration says:

And where previously there had been credit and price controls, there now is only charity and, sometimes, not even this.

These are nothing more than bourgeois nationalist clichés that would fit perfectly into the speeches of AMLO [Lopez Obrador, the leftist candidate who challenged the outcome declaring Calderón to be the winner of the 2006 Mexican presidential election] in the zócalo [the central plaza of Mexico City, where Lopez Obrador’s supporters held a mass sit-in over a number of days after the election] and on his national tour. This “economic foundation of our Mexico” that Marcos speaks about was the foundation on which was erected the old PRI regime that existed until the time of Lopez Portillo, the last defender of the “model” of “revolutionary nationalism.”

And if it is certainly impossible to deny the horrible devastation wreaked by neoliberalism, or to deny that standard of living of the masses under a protectionist regime was much better than it is today, it is completely unacceptable that such a bourgeois regime is presented as being “anti-capitalist” by the Sixth Declaration. The nostalgia for this “model” where there