

# Zapatistas: The ?first post-modernist guerilla group??

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With Mexico?s economy in deep crisis, in September President Ernesto Zedillo invited the EZLN to participate in National discussions on political reform. They immediately accepted. This came in the wake of an unofficial referendum in Chiapas which revealed that a majority of the population wanted the Zapatistas to abandon ?the armed struggle? and form a political party. Despite the EZLN?s statement that they would never give up their weapons, the EZLN is on the brink of entry into ?normal? Mexican bourgeois politics? Keith Harvey looks at the Zapatistas? recent evolution and argues that there has always been a reformist logic behind the revolutionary rhetoric.

On New Year?s Day 1994 a new guerilla group announced its presence to the world by occupying six towns in the Chiapas state of Mexico<sup>1</sup>. Born in the Lacandona rainforest, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) had been gestating for ten years. Evading detection for much of that period, the timing of their military offensive was motivated by the coming into force of the NAFTA agreement between USA, Canada and Mexico.

This agreement, coming on top of a decade of neo-liberal reforms by the Mexican PRI government, promised further impoverishment for tens of thousands of poor and landless peasants. Blocked from advancing their cause through bourgeois democratic means due to PRI intimidation and manipulation of the electoral process, the EZLN shifted their struggle to the military plane.

The local uprising made an immediate impact in Mexico and North America. The long-standing networks of activists that had been drawn together in the fight against NAFTA facilitated the surge of information and solidarity. The swift flood of reporters and human rights groups acted to spread the news and to some extent impeded the retaliatory slaughter by the Mexican Federal Army.

Although the EZLN withdrew in the face of an overwhelming display of force including helicopter gunships, heavy artillery and thousands of troops, the short-lived EZLN operation ignited a wave of strikes and land occupations throughout Chiapas in late January and February.

The PRI controlled 111 of the 112 municipalities in the state. In dozens of these mayors were run out of town, town halls were burned down and offices seized. Roads were systematically blocked. By 26 February, one bourgeois paper, *La Jornada*, reported:

?The spontaneous municipal uprisings, the rebellions of teachers and municipal workers, the blocking of banks (by peasants), the takeovers of land, and the general climate of civil disobedience is making Chiapas ungovernable.?<sup>2</sup>

In all this activity it was the land occupations that were the most threatening. In Soconusco 11 fincas were taken over; in Chilón 38 properties were seized; 27 ranches were overrun in one valley in Ocosingo.

Altogether 100 land seizures were reported and 10,000 cattle were reported missing. And all this in full knowledge that a 40 year prison sentence was the punishment for illegal occupation of private land.

The PRI government, faced with this challenge, sought to defuse it with an offer of dialogue.

By mid-February a national dialogue between the EZLN and the federal government was under way. For one year, despite ebbs and flows of popular support inside Mexico for the EZLN, and despite a change of PRI President in the August 1994 elections, no progress was made in five rounds of negotiations.

Then, on 9 February this year, under pressure to restore investor confidence after the dramatic collapse of the currency and the onset of recession in January, the Mexican government ordered the Federal Army to tear down the EZLN blockades, arrest EZLN leaders and occupy the war zone. Some 50,000 troops (nearly a third of the Federal Army) have occupied the area, driving thousands of peasants into the mountains and rainforests.

The EZLN remains armed and undefeated but pressed back into the Lacandona rainforest and their hundreds of villages.<sup>3</sup> The PRI government has chosen to wage a hearts and minds campaign in the Chiapas, handing out tonnes of food and medical supplies to undermine support for the EZLN. To date they have refrained from launching an all-out military assault; but neither will they give the peasants land, tractors and other fundamental reforms sought by the Zapatistas.

### **Roots of Rebellion**

The EZLN was quickly dubbed the first post-modernist guerilla group by the New York Times: one that owes no loyalty to foreign governments, one that has learned the lessons of the defeats of the Central American guerilla armies. The leadership of the Zapatistas is praised for its skilful propaganda machine, for using the information superhighway to the full.

Its chief spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, has captured the hearts and minds of western journalists with his articulate, often poetic and richly informed interviews and communiqués to the world.

How new then is the EZLN, what are its roots and linkages? What kind of guerillaism has it forged? What are its strategic objectives and what kind of alliance among the different social classes of Mexico does it seek to forge to achieve its goals?

The Chiapas region of Mexico is rich in resources but most of its people are impoverished. Since the familiar sight of the guerrillas in ski-masks first hit our screens, the statistics of oppression and poverty have been well rehearsed.

The main resources of the state are oil, coffee and beef cattle. Some 35% of Mexico's coffee is produced in Chiapas and employs over 80,000 people. While the peasant producer gets less than 2,500 pesos per kilo for coffee sold to the middleman, it sells for 8,000 pesos a kilo abroad.

The same rip-off happens in the beef industry. Cattle sold by poor farmers sell for 400 pesos per kilo and are re-sold by middlemen to agribusinesses for up to 4,000 pesos per kilo.

The EZLN estimated that in the late 1990s 1.2 trillion pesos of resources left the state while only 600 billion in credits and public works came in from Mexico City. Chiapas is the source of 20% of all Mexico's electricity production (including more than half of its hydro-electric power). Yet only one-third of homes in the state have electricity.

Two-thirds of the state's 3.5 million people live and die in rural communities. Half of them do not have

drinkable water and two-thirds have no sewage system. 90% are too poor to pay taxes.

Educational achievement is the worst in the country with three-quarters of all children failing to finish first grade. Most drop out because economic hardship demands that they work to help their impoverished families as soon as they are able. Chiapas has the highest mortality rate in Mexico, the worst nutritional diet: the facts and figures of oppression go on and on . . .

Capitalist development has robbed the peasants of their land, deprived them of the fruits of its natural resources, ground the people down and driven them to early graves for centuries. But the trigger for the revolt lies in more recent events:

?There was a standstill until the supreme government had the brilliant idea of reforming Article 27. That was a powerful catalyst in the communities. Those reforms cancelled all legal possibilities of their holding land. That possibility is what kept them functioning as para-military self-defence groups.

Then came the electoral fraud of 1988. The *compañeros* saw that voting didn't matter either because there was no respect for obvious, basic things. These were the two detonators, but in my view it was the reform of Article 27 that most radicalised the *compañeros*. That reform closed the door on the indigenous people's strategies for surviving legally and peacefully. That's why they rose up in arms, so that they would be heard.?<sup>4</sup>

### **A new insurgency?**

Naturally in the first days and weeks after 1 January 1994, the Mexican government tried to stigmatise the EZLN as foreign: the 'green-eyed Marcos' was obviously not Mexican, the weapons came from Nicaragua, the insurgents were Guatemalan or El Salvadorean guerrillas.

All of this rubbish was soon disproved. The EZLN is made up of around two thousand indigenist peasants from Chiapas.<sup>5</sup> There are a handful of *ladinos* (white Mexicans) including Marcos himself. Their AK47s and aged rifles have been accumulated gradually from the black market where drug dealers' weapons captured by the army are recycled; M-16s and R-15s were captured in small operations against the police in the last ten years. The EZLN has neither sought external material support nor lays claim to ideological allegiance with any specific brand of 'Marxist-Leninism' or petit-bourgeois nationalism.<sup>6</sup>

The EZLN specifically rejects the *foco* tradition—the idea of a small armed elite separated off from the people it claims to fight for and waging a sporadic hit and run war behind enemy lines. The EZLN has more in common with the 'people's war' form of guerrillaism, in that it bases itself on the idea of liberated zones within which the revolutionary army institute land and tax reforms in occupied areas.

Marcos has said that the Zapatistas specifically reject the Maoist conception of this form of guerrillaism:

?We don't think like the Maoists. We don't think that the campesino army from the mountains can fence in the cities.?<sup>7</sup>

But the FMLN in El Salvador, likewise, abandoned this simplistic Maoist truism and organised armed popular campaigns simultaneously in the cities. In fact the EZLN in its ten years of preparation seem to have put down far fewer roots in the urban centres than did the FMLN.

During this ten year period the EZLN built up a core active group of around 5,000:

? . . .the *compañeros* could participate in one of three different ways: as part of the regular combat force that lives in the mountains, as part of the irregular combat force that lives and works in the communities, or

as part of a reserve force composed of the elderly and children. These last also receive military training.<sup>8</sup>

The EZLN is at pains to stress its national roots and its conscious emulation of the armies of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, the leaders of the Mexican revolution of 1910-20. More recently, the EZLN claims to be inspired by the example of the guerrilla group in Ocosingo, neutralised by the federal Army in 1974.<sup>9</sup>

The EZLN originated in the 1980s as a series of co-ordinated defence groups, put together by the peasants to resist the 'white guards' attached to the cattle ranchers and other big landowners in Chiapas. Gradually, the emerging guerrilla army sunk roots in the communities in the many villages of the region.

The EZLN stresses that over time they adopted the democratic structures and methods of decision-making that existed in the indigenist communities. All decisions on war and politics are taken by the EZLN General Command (CCRI), which is made up of dozens of peasants drawn from the separate communities.

The declaration of war and the revolutionary laws of the EZLN, announced at the start of the campaign, were drawn up and adopted after long discussions in the communities.<sup>10</sup> When the first round of national dialogue with the government began in February 1994, the committee was based on two members elected from each community. This democratism represents a conscious break with the practice of Stalinist inspired guerrillaism, and is a progressive trend within the Zapatista movement.

## Goals

The first programmatic statement of the EZLN was issued in a special issue of their paper (The Mexican Awakener) on the day they seized San Cristobal de las Casas. The manifesto appeared in the form of a series of Revolutionary Laws which taken together can be said to amount to a revolutionary democratic programme.

It contains, among other things, a very progressive set of demands in relation to women in the indigenist community. Part of the ten year preparation for the insurrection included a long campaign for women in the communities to be allowed to control their own bodies, to be educated, to take public positions, and to be free of the threat of domestic violence. Evidence suggests that women play a central role within the EZLN command structure.<sup>11</sup>

Other laws include detailed provisions on administration and taxes to be levied in the liberated zones, the administration of justice and provision of social security. But at its heart is the agrarian programme. The EZLN:

'... demands the return of the land to those who work it and, in the tradition of Emiliano Zapata and in opposition to the reforms of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, the EZLN again takes up the struggle of rural Mexico for land and freedom.'<sup>12</sup>

Good quality land, privately owned, in excess of 100 hectares, will be confiscated and distributed to the landless, organised into co-operatives. Machinery and other capital equipment would be expropriated as well in order to allow the confiscated land to be put to use. Large agricultural business will be expropriated and agricultural produce will be sold at a fair price. None will be allowed to be exported until national demand is satisfied.

This is a classic poor peasant agrarian programme directed against latifundists, (large landowners) in this case the large cattle ranchers who have expropriated, by fraud, theft or brute force, whole areas of land owned or held in common by the peasant communities.

What is striking about the programme is its attitude to other forms of private property. The EZLN espouses

a classic petit-bourgeois reverence for small private property and, apart from large agricultural concerns, avoids calling for nationalisation or expropriation of other businesses or finance. In its place it calls for a ceiling to be placed on rents to be paid out to landlords.

In a section on Labor Law (i.e. the working class) it calls for a minimum wage and a Prices and Salaries Commission made up of employers, landowners and workers. It calls for a plan of comprehensive medical care to be paid for by employers and a taxation system which levies a 20% top rate on the profits of the largest capitalist concerns.<sup>13</sup> In short, the EZLN advances a social reform programme for the working class, to be paid for by a relatively modest system of taxation levied against capitalists.

While this revolutionary democratic programme is quite detailed, it also has the character of a maximum programme. Intended as a series of measures to be enforced whenever and wherever the EZLN establishes its control during the revolutionary war, it has never had the chance to be put into effect. In its place, once the cease-fire was established, the minimum programme<sup>2</sup> of political reforms<sup>2</sup> became the operative set of demands; for autonomy and a fair electoral system.

The EZLN is proud of repeating that it is not a 'left' organisation but an 'indigenist' one.

It rightly sees that the Indian ethnic groups have been victims of capitalist development in Mexico. But rather than see their liberation as tied to a fight for working class power, in a society which is mainly proletarian as a result of capitalist development, it seeks to protect itself and in some senses cut itself off from this development.

Thus the demand for autonomy is central to the EZLN programme. In and of itself the demand for autonomy is entirely supportable for the variety of ethnic groups in the Chiapas.

Control over education, local government, certain taxes, the exploitation of natural resources in their area<sup>2</sup> all these are democratic demands.

In addition, the long tradition of direct and participatory democracy in the communities stands in stark contrast to the 60 odd years of fraud and manipulation under PRI rule at the Federal level. This latter fact is well testified to by the fact that Chiapas returns the highest pro-PRI vote of any state in Mexico while anti-PRI discontent is clearly the highest also!

But the dilemma the EZLN faces is that autonomy from the central state has to be negotiated by the central state: it is, after all, not independence.

This central state will not grant such autonomy, precisely because the rich cattle ranchers and large-scale state (and foreign owned) industries, cannot allow the major economic resources to fall under local democratic control.

So, unless the programme of autonomy goes hand in hand with a programme for the overthrow of the central state authority and its replacement with a regime that has no economic interest in continued exploitation of the Chiapas, then autonomy is a utopia.

But the EZLN has no strategy for the overthrow of the central state. Its strategy for reform of this state depends upon an alliance of class forces which cannot achieve it.

## **Strategy**

The EZLN does not aim to seize power to achieve its goals. This is a first in the history of guerrillism.

This view has been repeated countless times since 1 January 1994 in interviews and communiqués. Yet,

according to the declaration of war issued on 31 December 1993, the first order given by the EZLN leadership was, 'Advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican Federal Army . . . '?14

To destroy the second biggest and best equipped army in Latin America and seize the capital of the country may be thought of as taking power, but this ambition was soon dropped once the EZLN's original retreat from San Cristobal de las Casas was effected. In an interview in February last year Marcos admitted:

'We know that we cannot defeat the Federal Army, but we also know that the Federal Army cannot defeat us militarily.'15

This soberness when it comes to estimating the balance of military forces, is also related to the lack of external support. The EZLN know that to be successful in their aims they must place politics in command of the gun. Thus there is a sense in which Zapatism is a break with previous forms of guerillaism whose hallmark has been to subordinate politics to the armed struggle.

The EZLN place the perspective the other way around:

'We don't understand armed struggle in the classic sense of the previous guerrillas. That is, we do not see armed struggle as a single path, as one single almighty truth around which everything else spins. . . What's decisive in a war is not the military confrontation, but the politics at play in that confrontation

. . . What matters are the politics that move one or the other party. . .'?16

The EZLN do not seek to put an end to capitalist exploitation in the cities or the towns. On the contrary, their whole political strategy, which is absolutely faithful to guerillaism, is the 'armed popular front'. The EZLN appeal to all those capitalists and professionals who are alienated by the PRI system of government.

Naturally, they cannot be appealed to as (the leading) part of a social alliance if you seek to abolish them as an economic class.

In this sense the armed actions of the EZLN were subordinated to the promotion of a broad popular front. They were intended to galvanise Mexican civil society to forge a grand coalition of all popular classes, including disaffected bourgeois, to get a changed electoral system. In reality, this aspect of the EZLN strategy became transformed into the goal once the cease-fire was announced and the EZLN was pinned back into the Lacandona rainforest.

In that sense the EZLN does not look so different to the M-19 guerrilla movement in Colombia which was formed in the early 1970s when fraud deprived the victorious Presidential candidate from taking office.

The M-19 resorted to armed struggle in order to allow the possibility of free elections in Colombia. They were among the first to disarm as a result of concessions on this front.17

Marcos put this proposal in one interview:

'We are proposing a space, an equilibrium between the different political forces, in order that each position has the same opportunity to influence the political direction of this country?not by back room deals, corruption, or blackmail, but by convincing the majority of the people that their position is best . . . we are talking about a democratic space where the political parties, or groups that aren't parties, can air and discuss their social proposals.'18

The EZLN views the class struggle in an idealised fashion. The form of bourgeois dictatorship and the

latitude given the parliamentary regime is not understood as specific historical outcome, determined by the strength of social classes, the weakness or strength of the national bourgeoisie in relation to imperialism and so on.

The EZLN does not see the content of bourgeois political power as being to guard and reproduce their wealth and property.

A greater degree of openness and absence of manipulation could be created in Mexican politics without changing the fundamentals, because the more formal power that was given, the more the openness of debate, then the more sophisticated would become the methods of persuasion and of ideological control. Real power would slide even further towards the executive branches of the state.

In most of the industrial world the possibilities of political debate and discussion exist, but the exploited still give their consent in elections to parties that enforce this exploitation. The EZLN naively believes that a transparent system of bourgeois democracy would allow the manifest injustices that exist to be articulated at a government level and real change be initiated.

This is simply unrealistic and the whole history of capitalism proves it.

If the democracy envisaged is more direct and permanent than bourgeois parliamentarism? permanent assemblies of the masses, immediate accountability, revocability etc.? then this will require a revolution and an armed insurrection to smash the Federal Army, which will not allow it. But the EZLN refuses to admit this simple truth.

## **Negotiations**

Since the first occupation of the Chiapas towns, the EZLN has softened its position on the bourgeois opposition to the PRI and increased its dependency upon it.

In the period between the first national dialogue (February 1994) and the Presidential elections (August 1994) the Zapatistas refused to endorse any political party in Mexico.

Taken together with refusal to form a political organisation and stand its own candidates, this position was both self-defeating and yet indicated a petit-bourgeois fear of its own tendency to be drawn into unprincipled political pacts.

As the elections drew near and as the first National Democratic Convention met, the EZLN moved to a position of implicit and indirect support for the PRD and Cárdenas.

Cárdenas was PRI-trained and the PRD was a split from the PRI in 1988 in response to the capture of the PRI by US-trained economic technocrats who were implementing the IMF's neo-liberal policies in Mexico.

In 1988 the PRD stood for some kind of return to state protection; but by 1994 Cárdenas did not pretend to stand by even this.

The EZLN made a fundamental error in tying the prospects for a nation-wide strategy of resistance to the PRD and an electoral process. Incredibly, at this convention in August 1994, all groups were barred by the EZLN if they supported the armed struggle, since they said it was necessary to try and change the system by peaceful methods first. This was the price to be paid for PRD participation.

The elections were a massive blow for this perspective: Cárdenas lost badly. But in January of this year, the EZLN deepened its errors in calling for the creation of a country-wide 'National Liberation Movement' to be led by Cárdenas. Indeed, after the elections in August 1994, the EZLN narrowed its immediate

programme even further to focus on the recognition of the election of Amado Avendaño as governor of Chiapas, and on troop withdrawals from the state.

Avendaño was the anti-PRI candidate who stood on a PRD ticket and narrowly lost, probably due to fraud.

Negotiations between the EZLN and the government were broken off on 8 October 1994. The government, with a new mandate and with the opposition forces demoralised by the results, were emboldened to harden their stance.

The EZLN announced in return that it was setting up parallel government bodies in the areas that it controlled and closing down all government offices.

The EZLN called for the resignation of the PRI government in January 1994 and its replacement with a transitional government made up of people of prestige outside the parties, who have the moral authority to lead the country.<sup>19</sup>

While this government was in office there would be a 'National Dialogue on Democracy, Freedom and Justice' which would penetrate down into all local communities throughout Mexico to debate the content of a new constitution which would be created by a National Democratic Convention (NDC).

Naturally, the PRI government rejected such an idea out of hand. But an NDC did get formed and met twice during 1994.

### **Solidarity**

In the first weeks and months after the New Year rebellion, the Zapatistas gained a lot of solidarity, and galvanised popular support inside Mexico itself.

The worst response has been the negligible solidarity from the Latin American social democratic and Stalinist left. This has undoubtedly helped the PRI government to isolate the EZLN and put it on the defensive.

At the 5th Sao Paulo Forum in Montevideo (July 1995), there were an impressive number of organisations present. The organisers refused to invite the EZLN while at the same time they wanted to invite the PRI as an observer!

What could possibly explain this act by the so-called 'left'? One need look no further than the presence and influence of the Cuban Communist Party in this Forum, which refuses to support any opposition to the PRI in Mexico.

It has long seen this government as an interlocutor for Cuba with the US in its search for an accommodation and an end to sanctions.

The diplomacy of Stalinist 'socialism in one country' is alive and well in Cuba.

It is prepared to see valiant struggles of the oppressed on its doorstep go down to defeat rather than see its relations with favoured bourgeois regimes come to an end.

### **Workers and the EZLN**

The fact remains that the isolation imposed on the EZLN by the Latin American left will induce it to look even more to its bourgeois allies inside and outside Mexico.

This will be self-defeating. The strategic task confronting all forces wishing to effect lasting nationwide social change in Mexico is to draw in the majority of the Mexican working class to the side of economic and political struggle against the state.<sup>20</sup>

This is far from easy. The PRI controls the trade unions. The bureaucracy of the unions is large, repressive and corrupt; it is an extension of the PRI state apparatus.

The hostility or indifference of petit-bourgeois classes in Mexico towards the working class is therefore natural; workers' organisations can and do act as an ally of the PRI against social justice. But the fact remains that unless this bloc between the working class organisations and the PRI is broken the prospects for strategic change in Mexico is poor.

Mexico is a fundamentally proletarian society and the key sectors of wealth creation and economic power are in the industrial sectors.

The initial mistake made ten years ago by the EZLN was not to adopt a national strategy for a worker/poor peasant alliance. The decision to build up support among the Chiapas peasants alone meant that the only force really capable of cracking the federal government resistance to social change in the Chiapas—the working class—had not been prepared.

But what can be achieved has been seen this year in the demonstrations and organisations that have emerged in response to the economic recession and the austerity packages imposed by the government.

For the first time ever, the trade union bureaucracy refused to organise the traditional May Day demonstrations, out of fear they would be aimed against the new packages.

Still, 100,000 marched under new leaderships to protest; many thousands made the conscious link between their demands and the fight of the EZLN for land and democratic rights.

An independent working class movement, allied to the poor peasants, is the only force that can rally the social power to overthrow the state and secure land, workers' democratic rights and a socialist plan of production.

This is the direction the poor peasants and indigenist supporters of the EZLN must take if their initial heroic rebellion is not to be isolated, vilified and sold out at the negotiating table.

## Notes

1 Around 1,500 EZLN guerrillas were involved in briefly occupying San Cristobal, Rancho Nuevo, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Oxchuc and Huixtan. Only Rancho Nuevo saw serious fighting to gain the town. The Federal Army immediately mobilised 14,000 troops to take them back. The EZLN retreated in good order from all towns except Ocosingo. There, 2,000 army troops cut off the escape route of 500 EZLN fighters. In three days of fierce fighting up to 200 were killed, a majority of them civilians as well as 40 plus Zapatistas. See *Rebellion from the Roots*, J Ross, Monroe, 1995, Chpt 6 for the best account of the New Year uprising.

2 Quoted in *ibid*, p211

3 The villages in the rainforest are home for around 400,000 indians.

4 1994 Interview with Marcos, 4-7 February, in, *Zapatistas!*, ed Autonomedia, New York 1994, p151

5 The main Mayan ethnic groups and languages in the Chiapas are Tzotziles (300,000), Tzeltales, Choles (120,000), Zoques (90,000) and Tojolabales (70,000).

6 Marcos had said that the Sandinistas placed too many illusions in elections, the FMLN were wrong to

give up their arms.

7 Zapatistas!, op cit, p151

8 ibid, interview with Marcos, 11 May 1994, p294

9 By and large however, Mexico has been notable for the lack of guerrilla groups in the post-war period.

10 Speaking of the decision to launch the war Marcos stated: 'Then the General Command explained it to the ethnic committees. Those committees to those of the regions and ravines, those ones to the local committees; the pros and cons were argued until it was time to vote. Records were taken to how many said yes, how many no, how many did not know; without distinction of age, men, women and children. Then came the reverse process . . . it ended up that the immense majority were inclined towards it.' in ¡Zapatistas! op cit, p249-50

11 Major Anna Maria, for example, led the assault on San Cristobal.

12 Revolutionary Agrarian Law, in Zapatistas!, op cit, p55.

13 ibid, pp53-61

14 'Declaration of War?', reprinted in ¡Zapatistas!, ed Autonomedia, New York 1994, p50

15 Interview with Marcos, ibid, p157. On several occasions Marcos insisted that he fully expected a full-scale offensive against the EZLN to follow the New Year rising which would have crushed them but hopefully galvanised a response from 'civil society'.

16 ibid. p143 and 157

17 Naturally, little has changed for the better in the social and economic conditions of the masses despite the fact that parliamentary democracy has become slightly more inclusive, another lesson the EZLN should have studied.

18 Zapatistas!, , op cit, p298

19 Zapatistas! op cit, p19

20 The working class in Chiapas is very small. Less than 1% of industry is large or medium. 94% of industrial concerns are micro-business making furniture or food products, employing a handful in each.

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