

SUEÑOS Y RESISTENCIA POLÍTICA DE MUJERES TSOTSILES ZAPATISTAS

INTRODUCTION (RESUMEN EN INGLÉS).

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The aim of this book is to provide an explanation of the different forms of manifest resistance in which women Zapatists have played an outstanding role to transform the situation of indigenous people of Tsotsil origin who belong to the Zapatist Autonomous Municipalities in Rebellion (Municipios Autónomos Rebeldes Zapatistas, MAREZ, in Spanish). These autonomous municipalities form part of the Caracol II which is the center of the autonomous territory of Oventic, situated in San Andrés Sak'amch'en de los Pobres, and San Pedro Polhó, located in the official municipality of San Pedro Chenalhó, both in the state of Chiapas, Mexico (1994-2017) have participated in these forms of resistance. Caracol II is the backbone of the Zapatist movement before the world. Several autonomous exercises have been created based on the experience of these women as a reaction to the centralized power of the Mexican Government and the government of the state of Chiapas.

The Zapatist movement in which these women participate have its roots in a long series of offences that the Maya people have endured during different historical intervals, viz., before and after the Spanish Conquest, along different moments during the Colonial period, Mexican Independence, annexation of Chiapas to Mexico, the Mexican Revolution and the Agrarian Reform. All through these historical moments women have been present but neglected or have played a subordinate position. It is in the 70's that the indigenous people from various ethnic groups such as Tsotsil, Tseltal, Ch'ol and Tojolabal become aware of the unequal conditions in which they have lived, without any social and political rights, as part of the population of Chiapas.

Chiapas is one of the boarding states which communicate Mexico with Central America. It is adjacent to Guatemala and the Pacific Ocean from the east and south, and to the west it has the Pacific Ocean and the states of Veracruz and Oaxaca. This state constitutes 3.7% of the national territory, that is, 75 643.4 km²; its capital is the city of Tuxtla Gutiérrez. From an ecological and cultural diverse perspective, it is perhaps one of the wealthiest states of Mexico. Its non-renewable (wood, minerals, forests and oil) and renewable (water, maize,

coffee, honey, beans, and cocoa) resources have been continuously plundered. This situation makes evident that the adverse conditions of these indigenous people have not been overcome. As a result, the awakening of these people to question the exploitation that has taken place in Chiapas was discussed in the Indigenous Congress in 1974, given that this exploitation has created a strong inequality in the access to human rights and the right of living. The long history of Chiapas is the scenery of cruel struggles for the land and territories. Not only the peasants, but also in the last decades, other excluded social subjects have created their own organized spaces to defend themselves from the power of caciques and landowners. This is the case of the Maya women. In this context the surge of the EZLN movement and its participation in Mexican politics can be explained; the motto of this group is “Democracy, Justice and Freedom”.

To understand the complex political tapestry and the resistance of indigenous Tsotsil¹ women throughout History, in the light of the armed rising of the Zapatist Army of National Liberation (EZLN, initials in Spanish), constitute a big challenge.

This work pinpoints the role taken by the Maya Tsotsil women living in the Upper Land of Chiapas. Their change of attitude and socio-political practice has been relevant to Mexico and the world. This work provides a contribution in various aspects: it highlights the repercussion in the background of the struggle of these Tsotsil women, enunciates their autonomy proposals, a new way of acting socially, and the assumption of a new political culture that, starting from everyday life routines, tends to create organization paradigms that include familial, communitarian and social aspects.

This work acknowledges, in agreement with Ana Esther Ceceña, that Zapatism characterizes the expression of the first anti-neoliberal revolution in the world, in contrast to the traditional Latin-American upheavals. The concepts of “power” and “democracy” mark a difference with the left-winged movements that occurred during the XXth century.² For Zapatists power is built from the lower levels of society; Zapatists do not fight for power, on the contrary, they build their authority by “obeying” the resolutions of the people. On the other hand, democracy for them includes all the social movements of indigenous persons, proletarians, peasants, women and colonists, among other human groups.

This work draws attention to the unequal conditions that indigenous women from the Upper Lands of Chiapas have endured. It is centered in the women that have inhabited these lands since the time of the Maya to the current Tsotsil female rising, as well as the pluri-cultural interactions of these women in Mexico. Some background is provided concerning Zapatist communities (Zapatist communities are those consisting of Zapatist members only; there are other

indigenous communities formed by a mixture of members from different political parties, PRI, PAN, PRD and PVEM, in which Zapatists have a minor presence) and Zapatist peasant women in their relation to the neo-liberal capitalist State.

(Para explicar que hay mujeres campesinas Zapatistas y mujeres campesinas no Zapatistas, algunas de partidos políticos como son el Partido Revolucionario Institucional PRI, otras del Partido de Acción Nacional PAN, en tanto que otras del Partido de la Revolución Democrática PRD, o del Partido Verde Ecologista de México, PVEM, porque en la traducción parece que las zapatistas no son campesintas.

Lo que está señalado con amarillo es que si hay o no hay comunidades zapatistas y es que en realidad hay comunidades en las que las zapatistas son una minoría y otras en las que toda la comunidad es zapatista. Hay comunidades en donde están revueltos de diferentes partidos políticos y en los municipios autónomos rebeldes zapatistas, todos son zapatistas. El Caracol es el centro político del territorio rebelde que integra los diferentes municipios autónomos. No se si queda claro en la lectura o corrijo esa precisión?)

Our reflections are centered mainly in the period 1994-2002.

Although some more recent analyses are integrated given the need of further up-dates, such as the outcomes obtained by the Zapatist Little School. This educational system is teaching new forms of organization to the municipalities lying on the periphery of the autonomous Zapatist municipalities and to different sectors of the civil society.

Footnotes

¹In this text, the term “Totsil” is written with “s” in agreement with the Mesoamerican Maya linguists instead of “z”, which is used by the Mestizo linguists, when they make reference to the Tzotzil-Tzeltal Maya culture. We will use indistinctively the “k” and “c” in the words “Oventik”, “Oventic”, Sakamch’en, Sacamch’en, The agreement was to eliminate the “c” and use the “k”.

²Ana Esther Ceceña. “*El zapatismo: de la inclusión en la nación al mundo en el que quepan todos los mundos*”. Latin-American Council of Social Sciences (Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, CLACSO, initials in Spanish), Argentine, 2004.