

Wednesday, March 13

## **Subcommander Marcos**

- “First Declaration of War”
- “Twelve Women in the Twelfth Year”
- “Tomorrow Begins Today”
- “Why we Use the Weapon of Resistance”



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0-rPLK5JpA>

## Warm-up: El loco de la colina / The Crazy Guy on the Hill



### ***Introductory words from Jesús Quintero***

Spanish Television (TVE) interview with Marcos by Jesús Quintero (June 2006)

**Jesús Quintero:** This man hides his identity under a *balaclava* (ski-mask). Some say he has Spanish roots, and was a Philosophy professor from the UNAM. But this is, perhaps, only part of his legend... He has waged a war, on behalf of the indigenous communities, against the abuses of Mexican power. He is a guerrilla rebel of today; *a new Che Guevara*. An idealized reincarnation of Emiliano Zapata. He is Subcommander Marcos, leader of the Contemporary Zapatistas.

**Marcos, are you Indian, *Mestizo*, Caucasian?**

**Marcos:** I am a *Mestizo*. For more than 20 years, I was in the indigenous communities, living with them, and in one way or another, I became the **translator of indigenous cultures** and this way of seeing the world for the mestizo population. The ski-mask, the act of not seeing who I am is an act of **not affirming my own identity, but rather the collective identity of this movement**, which is that of the Zapatistas.

**Have they offered you millions to take off your mask?**

**Marcos:** Well, no. If it were millions, we could've negotiated, but they haven't offered me anything except for threats...

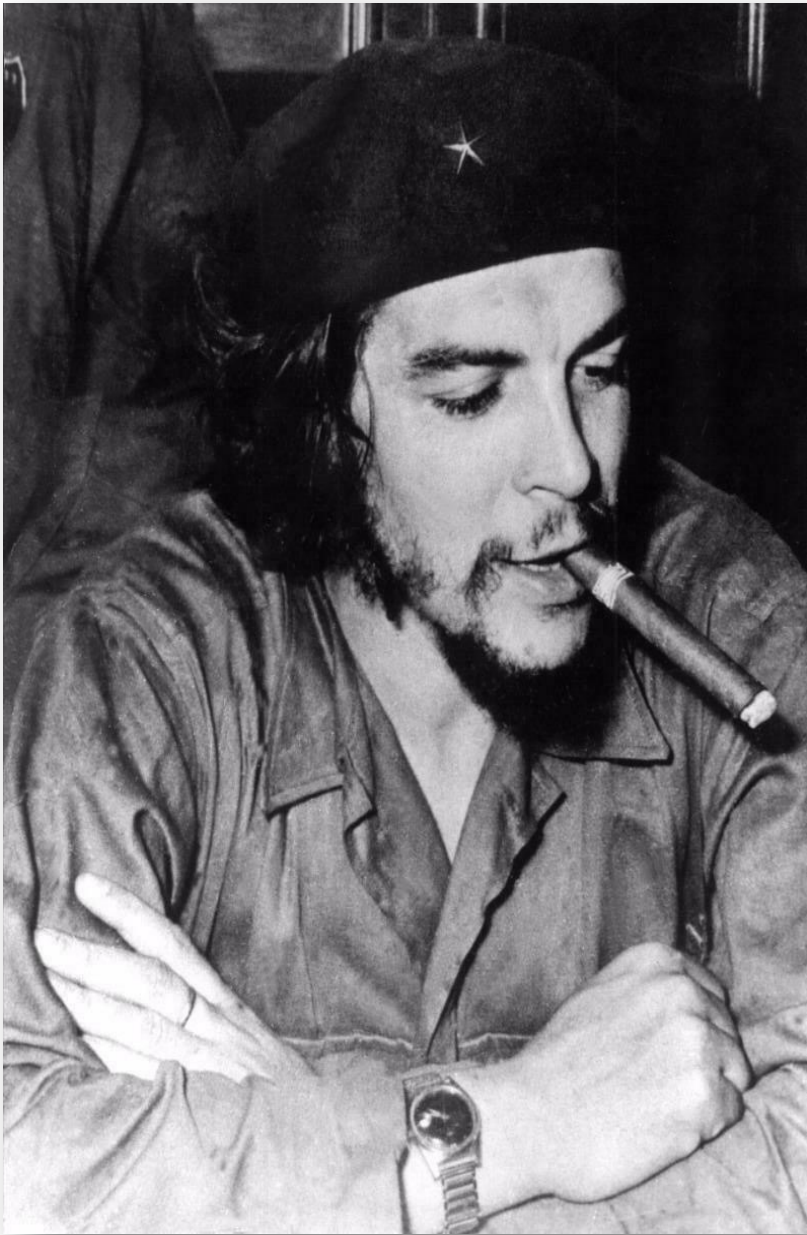
**Jesús Quintero:** Well, really, your way of going around “incognito” is to also reveal your face, opposite of what everyone else does.

**Marcos:** This is the paradox of our movement.

**What do you feel when they compare you to Che Guevara?**

**Marcos:** It is an unjust comparison, for Che, of course. It was another time for Latin America, for the world, another way of seeing the world. In no way would I compare myself to Che, unless it were at a disadvantage.





January 1, 1994

**The FLN:** a political-military organization whose end was the taking of political power *for* the *campesinos* and the workers of the Mexican Republic, and to establish a popular republic with a socialist system.

From the FLN (Forces of National Liberation)...



To the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation)...

**The EZLN:** an indigenous organization formed by and for the rural indigenous communities in Chiapas that gained international support and attention after the coming into effect of NAFTA (January 1, 1994). The group focuses on building dialogue and inclusivity within a democratic state, and autonomy for the indigenous communities.



# Shifting Ideologies: From the FLN to EZLN

## The Zapatista Idea

### The PRI

- Electoral Fraud and corruption (Carlos Salinas de Gortari)
- Revisions to Article 27 of the constitution

### NAFTA

- A “final kick in the stomach for the indigenous communities” (Paco Ignacio Taibo II, “Zapatistas” (22).
- The Mexican State emphasizes international capital and affairs rather than the local communities’ rights and needs.

### International context

- Public spectacle
- New type of movement and moment (post-Cold War) that needs to capitalize on the benefits of living in an electronic era while at the same time recognizing the diverse citizens, and not the leaders, as its base.

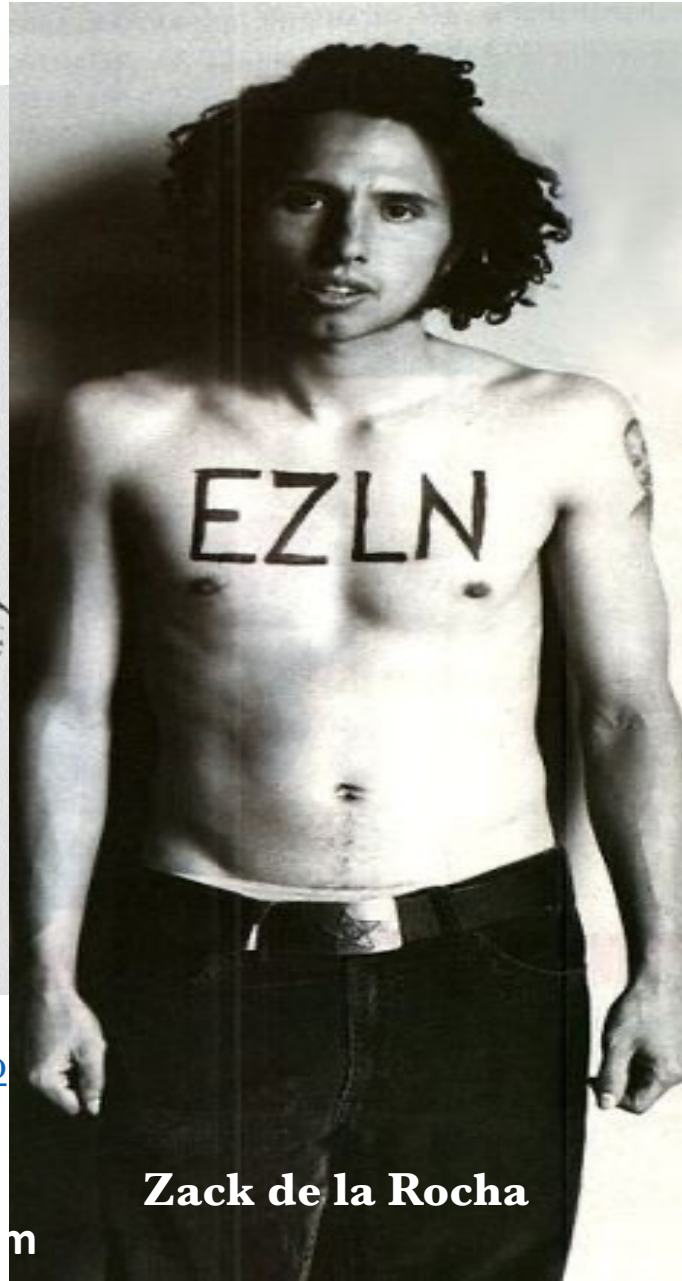
Marcos’s discourse also replaces key utopian aims associated with past political struggles – the assumption of power to bring about socialism – with a nation-centered democratic rhetoric that draws on:

- National heroes, events, and questions of land
- National identity
- The inclusion of everyone in a horizontally-constructed democratic society.
- Internationally renowned rebel leaders (i.e. Che Guevara – but as a point of difference, not departure)

# What are the Movement's tools and goals?



<http://timesofahmad.blogspot.ca/2015/01/perspective-words-as-weapons-irfan.html>



**Zack de la Rocha**



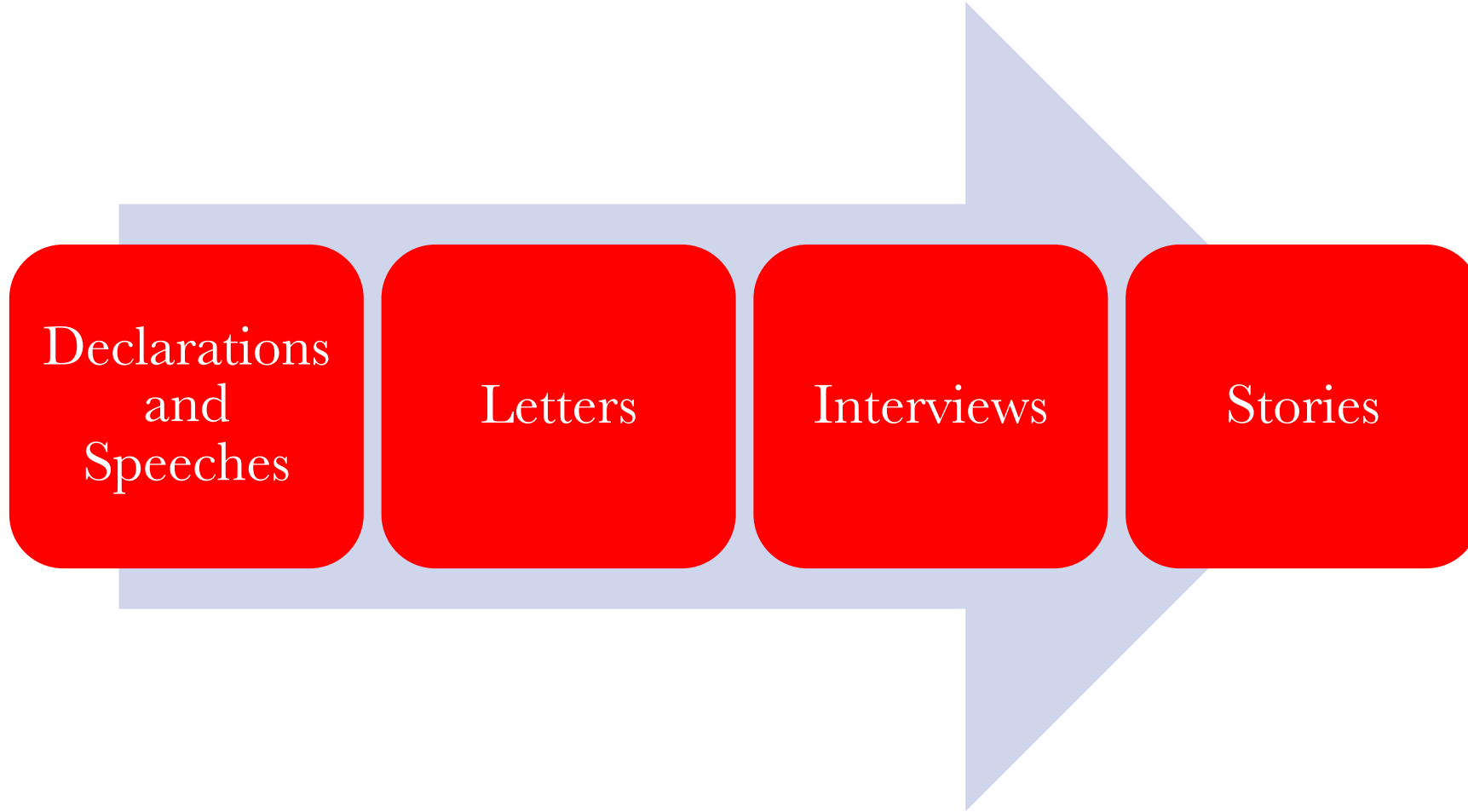
**Dialogue rooted in previous National movements (1968)**

Subcomandante Marcos

Dignity, Authority, A



# Marcos's Writing





# our word is our weapon

selected writings

SUBCOMANDANTE INSURGENTE

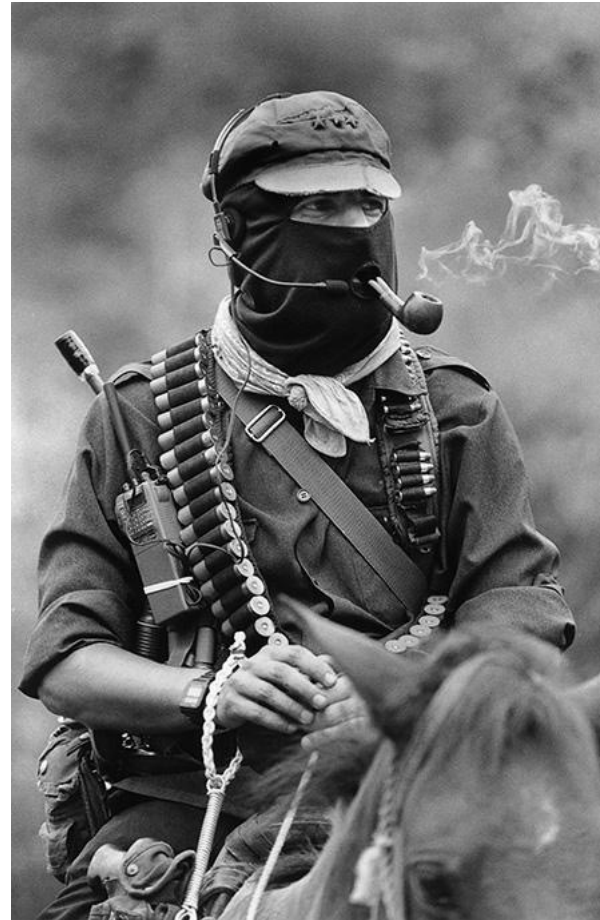
## MARCOS

Edited by  
JUANA PONCE de LEÓN

Foreword by  
JOSÉ SARAMAGO

*Subcommander Marcos*  
*“El Sup”*

*The “not quite Commander...”*



Words as weapons...

# “The First **Declaration** from the Lacandon Jungle”

(January 2, 1994)

“TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO:

MEXICAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

History of oppression

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.”

# The “we/us” and the “they/them”

## Who are “we”?

“We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. We are millions, the dispossessed who call upon our brothers and sisters to join the struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a seventy-year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors who represent the most conservative and sellout groups” (13).

## Who are “they”?

The “Mexican federal army, the pillar of the Mexican dictatorship from which we suffer, monopolized by a one-party system (PRI) and led by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the maximum and illegitimate federal executive that today holds power” (14).



# Declaration of War

- “According to this *Declaration of War*, we ask that other powers of the nation advocate to *restore* the legitimacy and the stability of the nation *by overthrowing* the dictator.”
- Does this sound familiar?



# What are the demands?

- 1) democratic elections
- 2) protection of prisoners
- 3) condemnation of all “traitors to our country”
- 4) new group in charge: the Zapatista Army of National Liberation;
- 5) surrender of all to avoid unnecessary loss of lives;
- 6) “Suspend the robbery of our natural resources...”

But who is Marcos... really?

I will save that for Monday!



- 1) What is the hook of this essay? [*How does Marcos draw us, the readers, in?*]
- 2) How is this essay structured?
- 3) How does Marcos present himself and the 12 women of this essay to the reader?
- 4) How would you describe the role of women, in particular indigenous women, in this movement?
- 5) What narrative strategies and tropes do you observe in this essay? Do you see similarities with other types of narratives we've read this semester?

# 1. “Twelve women in the Twelfth Year”

**Choose one!**  
**12-15 minutes!**

Choose one of the essays below, and respond to the questions in groups. Then, share your audio/video responses to 1-2 of the questions you discussed in our Padlet. Clearly identify the text and question(s) you are responding to in your posts!

### **“Tomorrow Begins Today”**

- 1) How do you define neoliberalism? What is Marcos’s view of it? How does he define it?
- 2) How does Marcos play with time, space, and perspective in this speech?
- 3) How does he establish connections among the Zapatista fight and global issues?
- 4) What is the significance of this statement? “Many fences had to be broken to come and break through the fence around reality. There are different fences. In ours, one must get past the police, customs officials, tanks, cannons, trenches, planes, helicopters, rain, mud, insects. Each one of the rebels from the five continents has his or her own fence, struggle, and a broken fence to add to the memory of other rebels.”
- 5) Does Marcos seem to see this “encuentro” (encounter/gathering) as an isolated event? Why or why not?

### **“Why We Use Weapons of Resistance”**

- 1) What is the meaning of the title?
- 2) What are some of the points/concepts that Marcos sets out to redefine in this essay? Why?
- 3) Why do the Zapatistas say this: “I am as I am and you are as you are. Let’s build a world where I can be, and not have to cease being me, where you can be, and not have to cease being you, and where neither I nor you will force another to be like either me or you.” So when we Zapatistas say, “A world where many worlds fit,” they are saying, more or less, “Everyone do your own thing.”
- 4) What is the point of “Part II” of this essay?

