

Gilberto Lopez y Rivas: Seven reasons to support the proposal of the CNI-EZLN

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Since the publication of the proposal agreed upon by the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) and the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) to form an Indigenous Governing Council for Mexico whose spokeswoman will be registered as an independent candidate for the presidential elections in 2018, many adherents to the Sixth Declaration [of the Lacandón Jungle] have set ourselves the task of participating in workshops, public forums, and round-table discussions to reflect upon, analyze, present, and of course debate this singular political act in its multiple dimensions, challenges, and commitments.

This is one more initiative to come out of the indigenous world, and in particular, of Zapatismo and its immediate allies, with the objective of articulating resistances from below and to the left in order to confront that storm of civilizatory import which constitutes contemporary capitalist globalization and which is expressed in the form of a recolonization and a war of conquest of territories, natural resources, disposable human beings, as well as the destruction of nature. This recolonization and war of conquest are hurtling the human species and all known life forms towards possible extinction. That is, the current struggle of the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples exceeds the frameworks of left and right, which are by now well-worn and emptied of all content, and situates itself in the dichotomous position of being for life or for death. Rosa Luxembour, who did not live the nightmare of Nazi-fascism nor the current form of criminal and militarized capitalist accumulation, more than a century ago had already laid out the disjuncture of socialism or barbarism.

In this context, what are some of the reasons to take up as one's own the proposal of the CNI-EZLN?:

1. It is an idea that has been discussed in depth by the Mayan Zapatista communities, and later by the more than 40 originary peoples that make up the CNI. It is not the fruit of a group of notables who think for everyone else, but rather the result of the horizontal deliberations of innumerable assemblies that analyzed the proposal until arriving at its approval, under one of the principles of "govern by obeying": convince, don't defeat. It is not the random fancy of a single person, nor does it have hidden promoters within the government that the institutional left and the "anonimati" of the social networks can denounce.
2. The formation of an Indigenous Governing Council for Mexico is supported by several decades of de-facto experiences of autonomy across the whole geography of our haggard national territory, which contrast notably with the corrupt, delegitimized and discredited governments on all three levels and all three powers of the party-ocracy, which have produced an enormous weariness among the citizenry and a profound crisis of so-called representative democracy. It is evident that the group currently in power does not represent the interests of the Mexican people and the nation, and they are in fact nationally traitorous governments that have given up the exercise of sovereignty and turned over the country, its territory, workforce, and natural and strategic resources to transnational capitalist corporations, docilely submitting to the economic, political, ideological, and military domination of the United States, the hegemonic armed wing of world imperialism. The Indigenous Governing Council and what may result from it are the embryo of popular-national representation and sovereignty, based on the provisions of Article 39 of the Constitution, which is still in effect.
3. The Governing Council and the independent candidacy of the compañera María de Jesús Patricio Martínez originate in the sector of the exploited, the oppressed, and the discriminated-against, which has for decades forged a strategy of resistance against

capitalism: autonomy, which institutes, in turn, a practice of government and political action which is radically different from the one we know, without bureaucracies, intermediaries, professional politicians or local strongmen. Despite structural precarity, the counter-insurgent war of attrition, paramilitaries, organized crime, repression, and the criminalization of their struggles, these autonomous governments have demonstrated their capacity to organize peoples in a process of reconstitution, consciousness-raising, participation of women and young people, and strengthening of ethno-cultural, national, and class identities through the collective and autonomous appropriation of community safety, health, education, culture, communication, productive and economic activity, and the carrying-out of justice, as well as the defense of territory and natural resources.

4. In a country in which the corruption and generalized cynicism of the political class reign, the indigenous proposal is based on the notable ethical congruence of its backers. The EZLN as well as the CNI have for decades practiced what they preach, and they have made real the principles of not selling out, not giving in, not betraying, and not supplanting nor taking advantage of others' struggles. The slogan "for everyone, everything; for us, nothing" has been a reality throughout all these years. These organizations have been establishing the popular power of "govern by obeying" without asking anything in return and, despite their difficult life conditions, they have been in solidarity with all the struggles of those below.
5. The candidacy of an indigenous woman goes beyond a politics of quotas and feminist positions that don't take into account the triple oppression that indigenous women have suffered and the cultural specificity within which they demand full rights. It is situated as a clear response to the reigning patriarcalism, a gender politics of a new breed, whose origins can be found in the EZLN's Revolutionary Law for Women.
6. It is an inclusive proposal, not just of and with the indigenous peoples, which takes up as its own the reivindications of all the exploited, oppressed and discriminated people on earth, regardless of their ethno-national origins and cultural characteristics. It is not an essentialist or ethnicist proposal. Its addressees are all the peoples of Mexico, including that of the majority nationality. It is that world in which we all fit.
7. The initiative does not divide the institutional left. As Paulina Fernández points out, the initiative exposes it, and I would add, exposes it in all its racism and misery.