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Mexico

Letter from Zapatistas to Women Who Fight All Over the World

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ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION. MEXICO.

February 2019.

To: women who fight all over the world. From: Zapatista women.

Sister, comrade:

What we want to say or warn you is a little sad because we tell you that we will not be able to hold the Second International Meeting of Women Who Fight, here in our Zapatista lands, this March 2019.

Well it turns out that the new bad governments already said it clearly that they are going to do their megaprojects of the big capitalists. From the Mayan Train, from the plan for the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, from planting trees for wood and fruit merchandise. They also said that mining companies and large food companies will enter. And there is also an agrarian plan that will attempt to destroy us original peoples, by converting our lands into merchandise. They want to complete what Carlos Salinas de Gortari could not accomplish because we stopped him with our uprising.

These projects are destruction. It does not matter how much they want to cover it up with their lies. The truth is that they go for everything against the original peoples, their communities, their lands, their mountains, their rivers, their animals, their plants and even their stones.

So not only do they go against us Zapatistas, but against all the women who say they are indigenous. And then also against men, but right now we are talking about women.

They want our lands to no longer be for us, but for tourists to come and take a walk and have their big hotels and their great restaurants, and the businesses that are needed for tourists to have those luxuries.

They want our lands to become farms that produce precious woods, fruits and water; mines to extract the gold, the silver, the uranium, and all the minerals that there are and that the capitalists want.

They want us to become their peons, their servants, to sell our dignity for a few coins a month.

Those capitalists, and those who obey them in the new bad governments, think that what we want is money.

They cannot understand that we want freedom; they do not understand that the little we have achieved is fighting without photos, without interviews, without books, without consultations, without polls, without voting, without museums and without lies.

They do not understand that what they call "progress" is a lie, that they cannot even take care of the safety of women, who continue to be beaten, raped and murdered in their progressive or reactionary worlds.

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How many women have been killed in these progressive or reactionary worlds while you read these words, comrade, sister?

Maybe you know it, but of course we tell you that here, in Zapatista territory, not a single woman has been killed in many years. But yes, they say that we are the backward, the ignorant, the little thing.

Maybe we do not know what the best feminism is, maybe we do not know how the words change, or what is gender equality. And it is not even fair that they say "gender equality," because they only speak of the equity of women and men, and even we, who they call ignorant and backward, we know well that there are people who are neither men nor women, who we we call "otroas," but who can call themselves as they please, and it has not been easy for them to gain that right to be who they are without hiding, because they are mocked, persecuted, violated, murdered. Are we still going to force them to be either men or women? If those people do not want to do it, it is done badly if they are not respected. How can we complain that they do not respect us as women if we do not respect those people? But hey, maybe it's because we talk about what we've looked at from other worlds and we do not have much knowledge of those things.

What we do know is that we fight for our freedom and that we now have to fight to defend it, so that the story of our grandmothers' pain will not be suffered by our daughters and granddaughters.

We have to fight so that history does not repeat itself and we return to the world of only making food and giving birth to children, to see them later on growing up in humiliation, contempt and death.

We did not take up arms to return to the same thing.

We have not been resisting for 25 years now to serve the tourists, the bosses, the foremen.

We will not stop being promoters of education, health, culture to now become employees in hotels and restaurants, serving strangers for a few pesos. It does not matter if there are many or a few pesos, what matters is that our dignity has no price.

Because that's what they want, comrade, sister, that in our own land, we become slaves who receive alms for letting them destroy the community.

Comrade, sister:

When you arrived in these mountains for the 2018 meeting, we saw that you looked at us with respect, and sometimes with admiration. Although not everyone came like this, because we know that there are people who came to criticize us and look badly at us. But that does not matter because we know that the world is big and there are many thoughts and some people understand that we cannot all do the same thing, and some do not understand.

And we do not want you to now look at us with sorrow or pity, like servants who are given orders in a good or bad way; or like those who are bargained with for the price of their product, sometimes crafts, sometimes fruits or vegetables, sometimes whatever, as women capitalists do. But when they go shopping at their shopping centers they do not bargain, but they pay what the capitalists say and they even get happy.

No comrade, sister. We are going to fight with everything and with all our strength against these megaprojects. If they

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conquer these lands, it will be by the blood of the Zapatistas.

This is what we have thought and we will do so.

Suddenly these new bad governments think or believe that, as we are women, we will quickly lower our heads, obedient to the boss and his new foremen, because what we are looking for is a good employer and a good pay.

But no, what we want is the freedom that nobody gave us, but we conquer it, fighting even with our blood.

Do you think that when the forces of the new bad governments come, their paramilitaries, their national guards, we will receive them with honors, with gratitude, with joy?

No, no matter what, we will receive them fighting and see if they learn that Zapatista women do not sell, and do not give up.

Now it is not safe anymore, because we know that capitalism comes for everything and wants it no matter at what cost. And they are going to do it because they feel that many people support them and that they can commit atrocities and people are still going to applaud them. And they are going to attack us and check their polls to see if they have good points and so on until they finish us.

While we are writing this letter, the attacks of your paramilitaries have already begun. They are the same as before: the PRI, then the PAN, then the PRD, then the PVEM and now they are from MORENA.

Comrade, sister:

Do not stop fighting. Even if those damned capitalists and their new bad governments get away with it and annihilate us, then you have to keep fighting in your world.

Because we agreed in the meeting that we are going to fight, so that not a single woman in any corner of the world is afraid of being a woman.

Your corner is your corner, comrade and sister, and it's your turn, as we are here in Zapatista lands.

These new bad governments think that they will easily defeat us, that we are few and that no one supports us in other worlds.

But no matter what, comrade and sister, even if only one of us remains, that one will fight to defend our freedom.

And we are not afraid, comrade and sister.

If we were not afraid more than 25 years ago when nobody looked at us, then less now that you looked at us.

Comrade, sister:

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Take care of the small light that we give to you.

Do not let it go out.

Even if ours is extinguished here with our blood, and even if it goes out in other places, you take care of yours because, although times are difficult now, we have to remain who we are, and we are women who fight.

Well, that's all companion and sister. The summary is that we are not going to hold the meeting, so we are not going to participate.

And if you do the meeting in your world and they ask you where the Zapatistas are, why do they not come, tell them the truth, tell them that the Zapatistas are fighting in their corner for their freedom as women.

That's all, take care of your comrades and sisters.

Maybe they tell you not to think about the Zapatistas because they are over now, that there are no more Zapatistas.

But when you think that that they already defeated us, without you noticing, you will see that we look at you and that one of us approaches and asks you in your ear, so that only you listen: "Where is your little light? What did we give you?"

From the mountains of the Mexican southeast.

The Zapatista Women, February 2019.

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