

Agenda and meaning of the anti systemic movements¹

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Summary: The contemporary social movements become anti systemic in their own dynamics, when they deepen their determinations and discover the nature and interconnections of the obstacles that they face. The intuition starts to generalize, anticipated by radical thinkers of the last half century, of which we are at the end of an age. From the Popular Assembly of the Oaxaca People experiences, I reflect in this work on the need to clean our looks – still contaminated by the age that ends - on having conceived the current struggles and having tackled transformation efforts. They would be sterile if they are caught in the former view. The new society cannot be a mere extrapolation of the ancient one. On having raised the need to prepare the funeral of the economic society (capitalism and socialism), of the American empire and the Mexican political diet, I suggest also ways to annotate with major precision the courses and ways of the current anti capitalist struggle.

Keywords: Anti systemic movements, APPO, socialism, anti capitalism, State-Nation

Agenda y sentido de los movimientos antisistémicos

Resumen: Los movimientos sociales contemporáneos se hacen antisistémicos en su propia dinámica, cuando profundizan sus empeños y descubren la naturaleza e interconexiones de los obstáculos que enfrentan. Empieza a generalizarse la intuición, anticipada por pensadores radicales del último medio siglo, de que estamos al fin de una era. A partir de las experiencias de la Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca, reflexiono en este trabajo sobre la necesidad de limpiar nuestras miradas –contaminadas aún por la era que termina- al concebir las luchas actuales y emprender esfuerzos de transformación. Serían desgaste estéril si están atrapados en elementos de la víspera. La nueva sociedad no puede ser mera extrapolación de la antigua. Al plantear la necesidad de preparar el funeral de la sociedad económica (capitalismo y socialismo), del imperio estadounidense y del régimen político mexicano, sugiero también caminos para acotar con mayor precisión los rumbos y maneras de la lucha anticapitalista actual.

Palabras clave: Movimientos antisistémicos, APPO, socialismo, anticapitalismo, Estado-nación

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Andrés Aubry said that history is not life's teacher. How might it be, if so many times it stinks for immoral and scandalous? But the history, Andrés, also said, is a mother of commitment, because it opens the eyes and reactivates the memory. That's why it fascinated him. And that's why he fascinated all of us with history and histories he reported.

Only two years ago Andrés adopted the perspective that today congregates us to construct an engagement book for Chiapas. He remembered then that the only way of changing Chiapas is to change the world ... As this is very difficult, perhaps impossibly, what we need to do, as zapatistas say, is to create a new world.

In the guide - agenda he bequeathed us, Andrés shares his reading of the present, which did to discover the anticipations of what will come. As usual, it achieved that in the past examination, the present came addressed, conscious that we are in one of these peculiar moments in which we have to investigate the past to discover tracks on what is expected by us, because it is the moment of change.

In his guide, Andrés reveals us the peculiar position of Chiapas, like hinge that receives all the vices of the world and encapsulates here the material memory of the planet. We are in a moment of election, points out Andrés, in an intersection. But the way has to be established from below, not from the domes. And that concerns Chiapas. No less. In Juan Bañuelos's words that Andrés reminded us, it concerns to weave the suit that I dressed tomorrow. Is his turn to give change, meaning.

The Watershed

In every age difficulties and crisis are faced and in all of them over come, in one day or in a hundred years. When crises appear that cannot be solved in the proper terms of every age, the historical need arises for a new age and a watershed is opened to go through for the next one, we are going through it now.

It is already finishing the age that Wallerstein has called the capitalist economy - world. It is going to be replaced with another one. But the nature and characteristics of the new age are not written in the stars. The fork is formed by possibilities not only different but opposite. We need to read them in the present, as Andrés taught us to do, to be able to choose, so that the age that we want begins and not the one we are afraid.

The end of the American empire

Two ingredients of the transition already took place and create new possibilities. The first one is the end of the American empire. The United States s domes stand up to speak for the first time about empire to refer to their projects ... when the empire came to its end. This is not as paradoxical as it seems. In its agony, all history empires have used their last resources to claim that they still are in the climax of their glory. But this way they only manage to precipitate their end.

In 1945 United States was a formidable productive machine. It was producing half of the registered world production. Europe and the Soviet Union had remained devastated by the war. Japan was busy. The countries of the so called South were European colonies or were not showing, economic nor politically.

The United States had notable autonomy. Its exports and imports were representing only 4 % of its production. They could lower the curtain and nothing would happen in its everyday life. The United States was a world creditor. That's why in Bretton Woods the dollar was accepted as world reservation currency and all countries, unless one had to hold on to new rules.

The United States had the political hegemony. It imposed in the United Nations statute the forms of its constitution. And it had the cultural hegemony. It was Hollywood´ s moment, when movies that we all were running to see, was showing us the American Way of Life as the nearest thing to paradise. On January 20, 1949 President Truman inaugurated the empire. On having indicated: "The old imperialism ... does not have space in our plans" it gave the United States an active role in the dismantling of the last European empires.

Truman also established the new imperialism emblem: the development, an emblem of the American hegemony that they would adopt blindly, without realizing what they were doing, even the most decided anti-imperialistic. On having minted the term underdevelopment and under developing this way two billion people, Truman gave new sense to the term.

A theoretical and philosophical Marx´ s proposal, packed the American style as struggle against the communism and to the service of the hegemonic plan of the United States, this way made permeable the popular and erudite mentality for the rest of the XXth century.

With the new century the American empire came to its end. The United States produces today less than 30 % of the world production. It is one between other economic actors, some of major size. It is a world debtor. The dollar is not anymore a reservation currency. Only to keep on operating, the United States needs two billion dollars daily, or, they sell at the best bidder because of two billion dollars a day.

Its exterior commerce represents more of the third part of its economy. It has become entirely interdependent. And although it still manages to capture heads and hearts of the minorities, it has lost the cultural hegemony.

Its current imperial pretensions try to be sustained in its indisputable military power. It is a beginner attitude without historical and political knowledge. 200 years ago, when other beginners wanted to use with similar ends the powerful Napoleonic armies, without rival in the world, it is said that

Napoleón said to them: “The bayonets serve for many things, but to sit down them.” With this horrifying metaphor he was making them see that with the army and police it is possible to destroy a country, but not to govern it, as the United States learns today in Iraq.

The United States lacks already the imperial capacity that it had. The army cannot give it. The restoration is impossible. It is not possible to give reverse gear in history. As Marx observed one day, when the tragedy is represented for the second time, it turns out to be a farce. It is true that this farce can become tragic, among other things because of the irresponsible cowboy mentality of the one who presides nowadays the United States, but it will not restore what already finished.

The end of the ancient government in Mexico

Between us can be stated another ingredient of the end of an age: the liquidation of the political government that existed in Mexico along most of the XXth century. As the political parties have tried to turn our political transition in mere compromises between them, and the PAN devotes itself to imitate the PRI, spreads the impression that we are still under the ancient rule. It is useful, for it, to have at sight the information that allows observing the contrast.

When Miguel de la Madrid inaugurated with a coup d'état the neo liberal period, the public sector represented two third parts of the Mexican economy, which was almost completely closed, or, in hands of the bureaucracy. Twenty years later it had come down to the fifth part of one of the most open economies of the world, an opening that means that its evolution cannot be decided in the country.

The contrast is even sharper in the political aspect. The president was controlling his government, his party, the Congress and the judicial power. Successive presidents modified the Constitution more than 500 times. The President was controlling politically up to the last corner of the country, across a mafia structure that covered the entire society.

Fox was controlling neither his government, nor his party, nor the Congress, nor the judicial power, nor even the presidential house. He did not manage to move forward any of the legal reforms that seemed to matter him so much.

In Mexico is still discussed the nature of our political transition, precipitated by the zapatista insurrection in 1994, because the neo liberal approach persists, the shell of the institutions of the revolution government is kept and the political classes have created in some states perverse imitations of the ancient government. But it is well dead. It is true that, as we do not organize the funeral opportunely, from the unburied corpse sprout all pests genre. But the restoration determinations are as ridiculous as sinister.

The reactionary ones

The end of an age is a source of instability and chaos. It always generates immense suspense. One adds to this the confusion that is creating the appearance of a new wave of reactionary people: people and groups that react to this suspense with backwards steps, trying to return to well-known territories in which they feel safe. This attitude stretches a veil on the perspective and causes all genre difficulties.

Between the reactionary ones first of all are the religious fundamentalists, who look for the certainties lost in the essentials of their faith. The worst, between them, are those of the economic catechism. We have the shame of Mexico being, probably, the last country becoming blindly attached to the called Consensus of Washington, which defined the set of politics that we call neo Liberalism.

The consensus broke. The last report of the World Bank, one of its principal promoters, indicates why and announces another route. One after another the faithful of this church leave it. One speaks today about Washington Post consensus. But nothing of that seems to come to Felipe Calderón's ears and his Treasury Secretary, which remain tied to politics as obsolete as senseless.

They do it, also, with a particularly dangerous attitude. The frustrated Calderon act, when he spoke

about power monopoly, shows his distressing confusion. His real political power lack leads him to imagining that he can replace it with the monopoly of violence that the law reserves the State. He needs to listen promptly to Napoleón's warning: with weapon you can hurt very much, but you will not be able to govern.

Between the reactionary ones here and there appear some fascists, the people who want to recover their peculiar form of authoritarianism that arose in the XXth century. They arise even in the most unexpected places, but till now they have not managed to have very much weight. In Latin America returned the nationwide. They support that the neo Liberalism was baneful and want to return to the good and old age of the State boss, some nationwide want to remove its sharpest edges to the neo Liberalism. The phrase belongs to López Obrador, but Lula or many other Latin-American leaders might have said it. Others want a model that substitutes the neo liberal one, with a more social orientation, in the tradition of the European social democracy and its welfare state. They want to protect what is left of this one after the neo liberal devastation.

Others, finally, have been rescuing of the negligence the word socialism. They do not seem to have perceived that, like any historical phenomenon, the socialism had a beginning and it is coming to its end. Not only there were problems and deviations in its implementation. Also there are, and serious, in the socialistic theoretical and philosophical tradition. At the end of accounts, the socialism is an only one variant of the economic society that will die with the finishing age. Some groups of this constellation continue a line that can be called a populist Stalinism. They speak about supreme leader, the only party and vertical structure. Instead of repression they use gifts for the masses. Other groups speak vaguely about participation socialism or dream in pure and hard Stalinism, without populist tones.

None of these currents can come very far. They still stick to terms of the age in agony. They will die together with it. But its confused, profuse and diffuse presence aggravates the suspense and captures the attention of many people.

Social movements mutations

The contemporary social movements have been born in terms of the old age and have, also, to face all the political fauna that sticks to the past. Not always they manage to discover the nature of the current situation and become anti systemic to acquire reality sense. Two features seem to accompany them in this transit: One refers to the location, which appears like alternative to the localism and the globalization simultaneously. Communities and people shut their resistance up to the colonialism and the development in their places, providing themselves in them, and tended to become parochial and even fundamentalist. In the present circumstances all the parochial movements will be swept of the map. That's why, without falling down in the proper rooted out form of the modernity, the dissatisfactions steady themselves more than never in their own places, but at the same time they open to others like them and form wide coalitions. It is the location. If a movement draws sufficiently deeply into the local, it becomes direct and immediately global, of big scope.

Also, the movements adopt increasingly the politics of **one not** and **many yes**. In contrast with politicians and parties, the search of general affirmations that sustain the promises that never expire, people always join concerning common rejections: a prey, a highway, politics, a leader, a diet ... But recognizes the real plurality of the world, the differences of all that you share that one common **not**, the value of its multiple **yes**, of its affirmations, ideals and different life projects. This way they anticipate a central feature of the new world that they are creating: a world which can fit the many worlds that we are.

Increasing conscience exists that neither the nature nor the society will be able to support many more years the current government. People realize, also, that in the bosom of this government do not seem to be options: there are no conceptual resources nor political to fight with the increasing difficulties. It arises this way, step by step, the anticipation of the end of an age. The contemporary social movements become anti systemic in their own dynamics, when they manage to give depth to its determinations and discover in practice the systemic nature of the obstacles that they face.

The Popular Assembly of the Oaxaca People (APPO)

I want to use the Oaxaca's current case to illustrate this argument. Everything started with a conventional struggle: the economic claims of an union. When that struggle was suppressed, immediately a leaders' coalition was formed that agglutinated hundreds of organizations around the common rejection to Ulises Ruiz, who had come to govern with a fraud and whose corrupt and authoritarian administration was generating an immense dissatisfaction. In a little while that coalition turned into a social movement convergence, with the typical politics of one not and many yes. The APPO quickly synthesized the local political culture: popular assemblies, magisterial trade unionism, indigenous communality, municipality, religious extension, radical left, regionalism, ethnic diversity, libertarian juvenile networks.

Very diverse movements take part in the APPO. Some of them come from far away, like the Indian people. Others were activated in this circumstance, like the popular urban movement. This plural composition gives the APPO a lot of parallel ways. Between those that seem to have more in common stand out some democratic struggles.

- There are those who still fight for the formal democracy, full of the swine-herd who has always characterized to the elections in Oaxaca.

- Diverse groups fight for the shared democracy: the popular initiative, the referendum, the plebiscite, the order revocation, the transparency, the accounts capitulation, the shared budget, the social controller's office.

- The principal challenge is to subordinate these two struggles to the one that is probably the majority, and looks for what we call radical democracy. Instead of concentrating on the constituted powers, this struggle is faced to what proper people can do and to the reorganization of the society from below.

From another angle, in the APPO coexist with innovative movements, which are already clearly anti systemic, some conventional struggles, be already the economic ones, to get from the capital or the State certain progress, or those that think about how to conquer the state, in the urns or by means of a hand blow, to reorient the domineering politics or to impel socialistic variants. The basic features of the APPO, like convergence of movements, are based on the experience.

- It lacks leaders. We have learned of the XXth century struggles, in which leaders intentions failed. Even what seemingly they triumphed they did not obtain what they were claiming.

- We also learned to criticize the socialism, although supporting some of its ideals. We criticize in accordance with that tradition the private ownership of the means of production, but we claim the communal property and want to reserve the collective only for some special cases. The production means must be in people's hands, not in a bureaucracy who supposedly administers them for all.

- We learned to criticize the formal and shared democracy, and steadied ourselves in communities and quarters to practice a democracy that cannot be but where people are, at ground level, in our autonomous assemblies.

- We are aware that the capital has more appetite than never, but not enough stomach to digest all those that it wants to control. That's why there will not be work places. The social truce has broken, in which workpeople were generating the profit of the capitalists in exchange for the fact that these were creating work places. We have learned to defy the capitalism beyond the rhetoric, on having forged social relations that escape the capital logic. Our anti capitalism does not consist simply on declaring a rhetorical war to the bourgeois, but in organizing autonomous ambiances that undermine straight the existence of this government.

- We learned to defy the development and progress, to steady ourselves in our own plural definitions of a good life and to adopt our own ways.

- We learned to question the proper individualism of the capitalist modernity, to steady ourselves in our community ambiances. Opposite to the atomized and homogeneous individual, we raise the person, a re knot.

- We learned to question the state - nation, with its formal democracy, which is not but a structure

of domination based on violence. Now we adopt other political horizons.

- We learned to defy the conventional political premise, which supports that people cannot govern themselves and reduces the political matter to define how can they decide who governs them. We have another notion of the power. We can govern ourselves to ourselves, in the appropriate political bodies that are those that we are constructing.

The zapatista inspiration and the current tasks

Since this is the subject, and this is what it seems to define the current anti systemic movements, at least like tendency, the zapatismo keeps on being our principal inspiration source. Wallerstein and Chomsky support that the zapatismo is the most radical political initiative and perhaps the most important of the world. They do not say it this way in the suburbs and villages, because in general people do not know sufficiently about other movements outside of Mexico and neither meet well those of Mexico. But what they know about the zapatismo is enough for them to find inspiration. They know about giving orders obeying. They practice it in their own places and now they want that to extend the whole society, as somehow we put to the test in the city of Oaxaca in 2006.

Little by little, together with the zapatistas, we are learning to recognize our tasks:

- It is our turn to introduce order and sense in the turbulent disorder that prevails.
- It is our turn to think everything all over again. To think now, with urgency sense, what we stopped thinking for more than hundred years, caught in an ideological dispute.
- Nos toca limpiar miradas personales y colectivas para inventar los
- And it is our turn to act with direction sense.

These tasks can be formulated in simple terms:

- To channel the general dissatisfaction, transforming protests and denunciations into viable initiatives and the resistance in liberation, from the articulation of the resistance bags.
- To subordinate the struggles for the formal and shared democracy to the radical democracy construction.
- To learn to be together although not mixed.
- To return from the future and ideologies, to take root in a transformation present.
- To leave the nationwide pretensions, to assume completely the leading role of the people, on having transformed the rights conquest into freedom defense.
- To construct autonomous forms of social life organization beyond development and globalization and the capital logic.

In the current circumstance, we need to stop looking up, towards the constituted powers, and take off from the root the obsession to take the power at any way. We must leave the state like exclusive horizon of the theory and action politics, to risk in the plurality world and construct in it new perspectives. The politics as sense of common good implies leaving behind obsolete notions, like that of national sovereignty or American imperialism, to face with clarity the new imperial logic of the multinational capital.

We need to seriously resign from the socialism, admit that it comes to its end and firmly resist the consequences. To know that the future is not predetermined, and that from the capitalism it does not continue the socialism but something still not invented, it is very worrying for those whom we have been formed in this tradition and dedicate most our life to fight for this ideal. But to establish this conviction theorist and practically is an urgent task.

How to dissolve the power old debate? One speaks about it as if it was a thing, which some have in excess and others do not have, something that it would be necessary to redistribute. The World Bank made fashionable the frightful term empowerment. It wants to empower women, children, Indians, poor ... We need other words to speak about what is not the opposite of power (what resists it), but slightly radically differently. It is neither its reflex nor its opposite one. It is in another place. It is a relation and is called dignity.

Humanists and revolutionaries of the whole political bogey propose to modify the ideologies without changing the institutions. The reformists want to change the institutions without altering the ideological system. This is to change everything so that nothing changes.

What it is necessary is to really change the institutional production government, that is to say, the statements in accordance with which we govern ourselves and others. There is needed the simultaneous stir of ideologies and institutions, articulating a historical knowledge of struggle that expresses the autonomy of our independent cultural nuclei, connected between themselves in the shape of network. It is a question of touching, not of promoting. To touch someone is a pretty word. It supposes moving with another, as in a dance, and to do it with everything, with the heart and stomach and the entire being, not only with the head, and the stir operates by contagion.

In the ideological plane, it is necessary to dare to resign from the worldwide speeches, to reinvent the speech, the language, the categories, the systems that produce statements with which can govern ourselves. We need to leave the scientific and to realize that the humanism is more and more openly totalitarian, a provocation that corrupts the thought. Its paradigm is the professionalized and institutionalized technocrat.

In the institutional plane, instead of reforming or fighting the declining institutions or taking them in our hands, we need to dissolve them, that is to say, to eliminate the supposed need for its existence. It is not a question of decentralization, the simple functions transference from the center to the periphery, with efficiency intentions. It is a question of re-forming the center ... on having dissolved it. It is the step from the decentralization to the des centralism.

To dismantle the state devices that defines the power starts by dissolving the professionalization and institutionalization of people's needs and capacities. It does not refer to take possession of them, since they contain a foreign and alienated boss, the virus of power and the capital logic, but of making them radically irrelevant on having articulated other ways of thinking and of doing things.

Instead of institutions more and more openly counterproductive (schools that produce ignorance, health system that get sick, etc.), each of which is a domination mechanism, it is a matter of putting in operation other tools, which could really be in people's hands and express substantively their activity, capacity, creativity.

The political machinery modernization makes it even more impotent, for its fragmentary and feudal character and the rigidity of its norms, its square windows. Upside-down, in these conditions, impulses fall down in the social gap; bottom-up, in the institutional gap.

To stop looking up, leaving any obsession for the capture of power, does not imply neglecting us. We need to be alert before the offenses and non senses that are woven in the constituted powers to prevent and to use the juridical and political procedures and the existing institutions as frame for the transition. We need to empty from political power all state devices and leave them only administrative functions of coordination and service. We need to resist the false dilemma between the institutional, electioneer way, and the use of weapon, as if these were the only options. Our tasks have a fundamental commitment with the nonviolence, which is neither passivity nor pacifism, but a way of life affirmed in the dignity.

To do all these tasks we need alliances and coalitions. But we must be conscious that full alliance is impossible. Beyond vested interests and organizational styles, the difficulty is that we walk in opposite directions, with different motives, reasons and intentions. It does not seem possible to seriously establish the convergence of all organizations that expect to be located to the left of the ideological bogey. But this does not necessary imply, accepting the division and falling down in the mania that turns the

partner into the principal enemy.

The circumstances demand us all to keep ourselves to ground evenness and from there see towards the sides. If that implies that we learn to listen to people, to admit in what they are, where their winds blow; if we manage to allow ourselves to be lead by them, trusting their good judgment; if we allow ourselves to be guided by their inspiration and force, more than for our ideological manias and intellectual constructions; if it is their dreams, more than frozen in obsolete vocations, which now we will start dreaming; if we learn to seriously take part in the politics of **not**, the no to the capital and the state, and many **yes**, that is to say, many different affirmations from a common denial; if from the radical pluralism, together but not mixed, since the action has been woven in the APPO and The *other campaign*, we organize now our gait it will be possible to do all our tasks.

La era que puede suceder a la actual, si se mantienen las inercias de los poderes constituidos, contiene horrores que sólo la imaginación desbordada de algunos escritores, como Orwell, ha sido capaz de formular. Aunque algunos signos empiezan a observarse en la realidad actual, son apenas un pálido esbozo de lo que puede ocurrir. Como ha dicho John Berger, sin embargo, nombrar lo intolerable, en un mundo cada vez más desesperado, es en sí mismo la esperanza. Si algo se considera intolerable ha de hacerse algo. Por eso la esperanza es la esencia de los movimientos populares. Al redescubrirla como fuerza social se abre la posibilidad del cambio.

The hope is not the conviction that things will happen like one thinks them. It is the conviction that something has sense, independently of what happens. That's why the pure hope resides in the first term, in a mysterious way, in the aptitude to name the intolerable, a capacity that comes from far away and makes politics and courage inevitable.

We have been capable of naming the intolerable. We cannot tolerate any more the current government, which equally destroys grounds and cultures. And we are not ready to tolerate the government that might settle in its place, in a new age. Instead of being supported by the expectation or depositing hope in new mirages, we have put ourselves in movement, disconnecting ourselves gradually from the slaving systems that mutilate us, to construct in freedom a new world, in which can fit the many worlds we are. This way we are defining, in practice, the sense of the new age.

That is what, I believe, anti systemic movements are.

San Pablo Etlá, Oaxaca, on December 13, 2007

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Postscript

Because of the reactions my intervention caused, it turned out to be clear for me that I had failed in my intention. I do now a new attempt: I invest the argumentation order, with the eagerness to gain clarity.

1. To make a way while walking

The struggle against capitalism, from below and to the left, is plural and opened in the starting point and also in the arrival one, since it is a question of creating a world in which many worlds fit. This struggle does not need a previous agreement on the government that will come after it. It is also not a condition to get started a shared vision on “the society as a whole” current and future: a “national project”, a “global design”, etc. The Utopian makings have a clear value, but it is absurd to raise that the consensus on some of them is a requisite to carry out the struggle.

The world nature of the capitalist government implies that it will only stop existing when it is possible to dismantle it to planetary scale. At present, also, it does not seem to be any corner of the world that could escape of the destructive and oppressive impact of the capital. Nevertheless, it is possible to nourish the struggle against the capitalism with determinations of transformation of immediate effects. In fact, this can be the most effective and forceful form of the struggle. In the resistance bags that have been forming in the whole world is possible to generate social relations and organization forms of the social life that escape to the logic of the capital and could turn like anticipations of the new society, in spite of

all the restrictions and threats that at present they should face.

“In the whole planet groups of nonconformist are forming, rebels' nuclei. The empire of the financial bags faces the rebelliousness of the resistances bags. Yes, bags, of all sizes, of different colors, of the most varied forms. Its only resemblance is resisting to the “new world order” and to the crime against the humanity who bears the neo liberal war”. (EZLN. Seven free pieces of the world jigsaw puzzle. June, 1997).

In the zapatista communities, that are a clear example of these resistance bags, a constant struggle escapes against the military and paramilitary harassment to which they are exhibited and against the pressures of any nature that they endure. One of the principal sources of fortitude in this resistance is the advance that they have had in the reorganization of social life and in the adoption of new forms of proper government.

Everywhere the resistance bags are putting to the test ideas and innovative practices, which gather from the past multiple traditions, adapt them to the contemporary conditions and use the sociological and political imagination to annotate new ways of transformation that are, for themselves, current images of tomorrow.

To carry on with this struggle against the capitalism, from below and to the left, we need to realize a systematical critical effort of our ideas and practices, which are inevitably inserted in the mental and social frame that generated the capitalism and it has spread over the entire world. We need to clean our looks, defy the domineering theories and create the conditions adapted for the autonomous generation of new knowledge, in which the erudite knowledge gets together with the empirical ones to articulate the historical struggle knowledge that can lead the transformation from below and to the left.

2. To clean the look: To know what oppresses, exploits and attacks us, and follow attentively its condition changes.

• The global "system"

We live under the most brutal, cynical, destructive and merciless "empire" of the history: the one of the big multinational capital. It uses the instruments of the national States, even the military men, to obtain its intentions. It acts with irresponsible arrogance, under the assumption of which it is over all control.

In spite of hurt by death, by its insuperable contradictions, this "system" will not collapse by itself. It can tragically prolong its agony, denying increasingly some of its premises – like the civil freedoms. And it can try to prolong its domination patterns in a new "system" that might be worse than the current one.

Only the determined and compound struggle of those who are opposed radically to the capitalism will be able to modify this perspective and install in its place a social organization that ends with the oppressions, developments and current aggressions. To organize this struggle it is indispensable to have clear conscience of the character of this new global empire and to distinguish it from the previous forms of oppression and development.

• United States

Although the hegemonic power of the United States entered on decline many years ago and its "imperial" capacity came to its end, this country keeps on having an immense economic and military power, which uses to impel the war that fights against people, in this country and in the entire world, to the service of the corporate capital.

The new situation generates so many opportunities as risks. The United States has intensified cynically its aggressions to other villages and countries, violating the international norms and facing universal repudiation. Only one conscious and compound struggle will allow fighting these new dangers.

• Mexico

The fact that it was the longest authoritarian system of the world became extinct in Mexico in the

last decade of the XXth century, as a result of a long struggle to end it, of the neo liberal enthronement and of the zapatista insurrection. A substitute of this government still does not settle completely. In the dispute for defining the terms of the new one, inside the current political transition, the constituted powers have been beating in the remains of the ancient government but using their authoritarian devices for a domination exercise so cynically as brutally and incompetently. We need a clear conscience of the new situation to face exactly the current struggles.

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All these convictions can be formulated like hypothesis and submitted to observation and cross-check. Numerous authors have been dealing with it.² Also they are historically being put to the test, as in the American "empire's case". Beyond any technical dispute about the terms³, for us, the generations of Latin Americans that construct ourselves politically concerning the struggle against the American imperialism, it has important implications to recognize its success. Some facts testify it:

- Although the OEA keeps on being an irrelevant bureaucratic device, it has already stopped being Washington colonies office;

- In spite of the enormous pressures that the United States exercised, it could not achieve the creation of the ALCA;

- Pressures and threats without precedents to take part in the "coalition" to invade Iraq were ignored by almost all Latin American countries.

- The United States has remained virtually isolated in its blockade to Cuba, aggravated with new aggressions, but this country not only keeps its resistance unscathed but it is creating new initiatives⁴.

A similar analysis can be applied to the Mexican case, in which we go on from an "imperial presidency", a kind of monarchy of six years, to a swaying government in which the presidential institution was seriously in doubt. The definitely vertical structure of the called "PRI-government" could only work when the president, in the plenitude of his real faculties, was the head of the party and of the whole system. It is the structure that has collapsed. From all points of the country's political and social life new spaces and hierarchies generated have been used.

Nothing of this implies that it is possible "to lower the custody" in front of the aggression. The war that escapes against people, in the whole world, is enraged and without barracks. The aggressiveness of the United States and its irresponsible violation of the international norms do not have many precedents. The increasing use of the military and police force by Calderon, because of his political weakness, is creating more and more intolerable situations. The proper gravity of the situation, nevertheless, demands to give precision to determinations, with clear conscience of current changes, instead of keeping on fighting with bogeys.

3. To clean the look: To know the State's nature

The modern state - nation, in whose altar a lot of previous forms of organization of social life were sacrificed, ⁵ was born like herald and principal instrument of social change and like promoter and protector of the institutions associated with the industrial capitalism. It was the principal sand of expansion of capitalism and it defined the space in which its domination was exercised preponderantly. After the mature representative democracy was inserted, it turned out to be "the best possible political covering for the capitalism" (Lenin).

The situation of this political government has been modified enormously. It has stopped being a privileged sand of the capital and it is exposed to a double attack: from the worldwide corporate and from the regions and ethnic groups. Its politic capacity has been this way mined⁶. The old state - nation devices and the new macro-national structures are more and more inadequate and insufficient, what leads to the increasing use of force like substitute of politics: nowadays exists in the planet, a hundred of "internal conflicts" that can be considered "civil wars", and in almost all countries repression increases against the social movements.

Some specialists think that the state - nation, like political government, is today stronger than ever, although it is more and more limited to the function of more or less population police control, to the

service of the multinational capital. Others think, on the contrary, that they are openly in a process of extinction, limited to mere ritual shells. From all ideological points of view, in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank as between anarchists and Marxists, predict both the final fall and the strengthening of the state-nation without precedents, as political government, in the age of globalization.

Beyond this debate, which is important to continue with attention, it turns out to be clearer than the capitalism current crisis and the intensification of popular struggles have made appear in all its nakedness the nature of this form of political organization, like structure of domination and control. Also, there has been re-opened the debate relative to the need to dismantle the whole machinery of the current state, conceived and produced for the capitalism, if it is a question of moving to another production government. The historical experience shows reliably that it is not enough to give this machinery another ideological orientation.

Without losing sight of the need to confront the still current institutions of the state - nation and the representative democracy, as well as the possibility of using them for diverse intentions, it has become indispensable to adopt a political reflection horizon beyond the state - nation, in order to conceive and practice transformation actions.

4. To clean the look: Socialism?

In all Latin America they have been listening again calls to the "socialism" that adopts diverse perspectives. Not only isolated or clandestine groups call them, but recognized political parties and even heads of state.

The socialism can be seen like a doctrine body and a set of ideals or like a historical phenomenon.

If the position that socialistic experiences have really existed is taken, with diverse conceptions and practices, and that most people in which these systems were adopted got up against them and put term to the experience, it seems necessary to adopt the assumption that the socialism, like any historical phenomenon had a beginning, might have come to its end: we would be at the beginning of its extinction.

If it is considered that it is a doctrine and some ideals, and that one and others were "betrayed" or "seriously distorted" in the experiences called socialistic, then the matter of theoretically defining the "real" socialism appears. Through this way often can get into discussions of religious type, in which there are appealed diverse authors as argument of authority. Often one goes back in time and even appeal, like source of socialistic certification, to thinkers that Marx located between the "Utopian Socialists" when the "scientific socialism" started to get shaped. In accordance with this approach, very diverse forms of contemporary organization and the most different experiences and ideals are labeled like socialism, in the middle of endless debates on the characteristics that an "authentic" socialism must adopt in the contemporary conditions.

This type of debate has turned out to be historically sterile and in general it stimulates the division and clash between those who are interested by transformations beyond the capitalism. That's why it seems excellent and appropriate to think about the position that demands to **claim the heredity of the socialism** for those who are its legitimate heirs: the groups and people that fight against the capitalism today. La crítica de los socialistas contra este régimen ha sido la más duradera. Also, it is possible to find in the ideas and in the socialistic experiences specific inspiration for the current struggles and for the economic, social and political organization forms conception that will follow the capitalists.

On having realized a reflection of this nature, it will be important to take into consideration that both the capitalism and the socialism were conceived and put into practice inside the mold of the Enlightenment, which is indispensable to come out to seriously face the question of cultural pluralism, among other things.

San Pablo Etlá, December 20, 2007

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Notes

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1 Intervention in the First International Conference In Memoriam Andrés Aubry, "... Planet Earth: anti systemic movements ...", San Cristobal de las Casas, December 13-17, 2007.

2 There is abundant literature on these topics. On the empire of the multinational capital, in particular, David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (West Harford: Kumarian Press, 1995) and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2000) that offer two very diverse points of view on the matter. Both have been an object of intense controversy, for some weaknesses of their analysis, but they contribute information and very useful approaches. Wallerstein's work is valuable to aim at what means the current terminal phase of the "capitalist economy - world". See, in particular, *Criticism of the system - world capitalist* (Mexico: Era, 2003); *The structural crisis of the capitalism* (Mexico: CIDECI-Uniierra Chiapas/Contrahistorias, 2005); *The decline of the American power* (Mexico: Era, 2005) and *System - world analysis: An introduction* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 2005). Iván Illich's work, especially in the last twenty years of his life, raises the horror of "the systems age" that can happen to the economic society in agony (with a "system notion very different from that of Wallerstein) and also it shows the signs that anticipate it in the current world. Almost all texts of the collection assembled by Valentina Borremans in *La perte des sens* (Paris: Fayard, 2005) have been published in English and some in Spanish.

3 During the last 500 years innumerable people endured the colonial domination of diverse European countries. This form of domination was surviving at the end of the Second World War, when it started the beginning of its end. Although the United States supports until today the territorial control on Puerto Rico, from 1949 it was actively opposed to the exercise of domination that is based on the extension of the national sovereignty to the territory of other countries, typical of modern European "empires". It was simply a matter of displacing them to exercise their own domination. The one that suffered particularly Latin America was named "an American imperialism" both in popular and technical terms. It was considered with foundation that the OEA was operating like Washington office of colonies and was following faithfully its dictations. The United States was putting and removing governments in the region and was trying to justify it in the frame of the cold war. "Somoza is a prostitute's son, but he is our prostitute's son", was saying Truman. I support that this specific domination exercise has concluded, as it is showed by innumerable recent episodes in which people and governments, of Latin America and other parts of the world, resist successfully the American attempts of exercising this domination that practiced without obstacles for more than 40 years.

This observation has a practical character, more than theoretical. It is based on the assumption of which it is useful to distinguish between the domination in its "imperial" capacity that the American government applied and that of the multinational capital, for which governments, even the United States, are appropriate instruments. I do not suggest entering an academic discussion on the term, which turns out to be sterile. I am conscious of that the word empire is overloaded with technical meanings. Some specialists associate it only with Han's China and Rome, while others recount it to almost any exercise of domination. In the Marxist treatment of the imperialism, stand out the theories of Rosa Luxemburgo and Lenin, but also must be included the contributions of Baran and Sweezy. Between not Marxists, stand out the social-democratic theories, like that of Hobson or those of Kautsky and Hilferding, that of Schumpeter (that he considers to the pre-capitalist imperialism), those of the "state - potency" (like that of Max Weber), that of the Anglo-Saxon federalist school (like Robbins) and others. Aside of these political and academic disputes, the reality and the imaginary of the Latin Americans were in several decades subject to a form of domination that was usually called "an American imperialism". This form has come to its end. It is important to know it, particularly when a segment of the American dome uses again the imperial language. In 2002 a high official of the White House declared to the journalist Ron Suskind that the leaders of the country believed the following: "We are at present an empire and, when we act, we create our own reality. And when you study this reality we act again, creating other new realities, which you also can study. We are actors of the history ... and to you, to all of you there will be no other way than study what we do". These attitudes, which nourished the American politics of the last years, have accelerated the decline of this country and they came already to its possibility limits, both for internal and external factors.

4 An attentive reading of Fidel Castro's speeches during the last two years would show his clear conscience of the changes in the United States condition.

5 A myriad of nation and state forms suffered in general a grotesque metamorphosis after the modern state - nation was constituted. Although it was born with the Treaty of Westfalia in 1648, it only acquired its current character with the French Revolution, which fused the history of the State with that of the nationalism.

6 The credibility on the state - nation and its political classes, hence its political capacity, deteriorate after its functions dissolve as government of social regulation and like crisis structure management, as it gets worn or dispels its function as manager of the economy (that becomes multinational), and like space of socio cultural conflicts prosecution (that loses legitimacy rapidly).