



timeline of key dates

- 1492 Christopher Columbus arrives in the Americas; indigenous communities often refer to this date as the beginning of five hundred years of resistance.
- 1519-1521 Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, a significant event in the Spanish colonization of the Americas.
- 1528 The conquest of most of Chiapas is completed under the leadership of Spanish conquistador Diego de Mazariegos.
- 1712 Tzeltal Revolt in the municipality of Cancuc in the highlands of Chiapas.
- 1810-1821 Mexican War of Independence from Spain.
- 1824 Chiapas becomes part of Mexico.
- Mid-1800s La Reforma, a period of modernizing liberal reforms in Mexico that strip both the church and indigenous communities of lands; in seeking to curtail the power of the clergy, La Reforma resulted in the enrichment of large landholders and worsened conditions for landless peasants.
- 1869 Caste War in the Tzotzil municipality of Chamula, sparked by the dispossession of indigenous communities.

1910-1920 Mexican Revolution.
 1917 Mexican Constitution is ratified.
 1929 Formation of the ruling Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party, PNR), later renamed the Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI.
 1930s Colonization of the Lacandon Jungle by indigenous peasants fleeing from fincas begins.
 1934-1940 Lázaro Cárdenas is president of Mexico and implements land reform that was promised in the Mexican Constitution of 1917.
 1950s Colonization of the Lacandon Jungle intensifies; the government seeks to relieve mounting tensions over land by encouraging land-poor indigenous peasants from the highlands to settle the rainforest in eastern Chiapas.
 1960 Samuel Ruiz becomes the bishop of the Catholic Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas (and would remain so until the year 2000).
 1969 Formation of the clandestine National Liberation Forces or FLN in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon.
 1974 The Indigenous Congress, organized by the Diocese of San Cristóbal, brings together over a thousand indigenous delegates and catalyzes an increased level of organization in the indigenous communities of Chiapas.
 Late 1970s The FLN begins recruiting indigenous members in the northern zone and central highlands of Chiapas.
 1982 Mexico declares that it is unable to pay its international loans, triggering a debt crisis and ushering in an era of strict neoliberal policies.
 Nov. 17, 1983 Members of the FLN form the EZLN.
 1992 Leading up to the implementation of NAFTA, the Mexican Constitution is changed to allow ejidos to be bought and sold.
 1992 Alcohol is banned in Zapatista communities.

1993 The CCRI is formed as the highest body of leadership within the EZLN, replacing the nonindigenous leadership of the FLN. Additionally, the EZLN passes a series of revolutionary laws, including the Women's Revolutionary Law.
 Jan. 1994 Zapatista uprising.
 Dec. 1994 The EZLN declares the existence of more than thirty autonomous municipalities.
 Feb. 9, 1995 The Mexican military launches an offensive against Zapatista communities.
 Feb. 16, 1996 The EZLN and the Mexican government sign the San Andrés Peace Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture.
 July 27- Aug. 3, 1996 The EZLN holds the First Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and against Neoliberalism.
 Oct. 1996 Comandanta Ramona travels to Mexico City for the founding meeting of the National Indigenous Congress.
 Sept. 1997 Mobilization of 1,111 Zapatistas to Mexico City.
 Dec. 22, 1997 Acteal massacre.
 1998 Series of incursions by the Mexican armed forces into Zapatista villages.
 1999 The EZLN holds the Consulta Nacional.
 2000 The PRI loses the presidential elections in Mexico after seven decades of one-party rule.
 2001 The EZLN organizes the March for Indigenous Dignity, and Comandanta Ester becomes the first indigenous woman to address the Mexican Congress.
 2005 The EZLN launches the Other Campaign.
 2006 Comandanta Ramona passes away.
 2007 The Third Gathering between the Zapatista People and Peoples of the World "Comandanta Ramona and the Zapatistas."

Next page: Zapatista march in San Cristóbal de las Casas to launch the Other Campaign, January 2006. (Photograph by Francesc Parés.)

glossary of acronyms and spanish terms

Las Abejas. Literally meaning "the bees," this is a religious organization that sympathizes with Zapatista demands but does not support armed struggle.

AMMAC. Abbreviation for Asociación Mexicana de Mujeres Asociación Civil (Mexican Women's Association).

ANCIEZ. Abbreviation for Alianza Nacional Campesina Independiente Emiliano Zapata (Emiliano Zapata National Independent Peasant Alliance).

ARIC. Abbreviation for Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo (Rural Association of Collective Interest).

cumpesino. A peasant.

Ciracol. Literally meaning a "snail shell, conch, or spiral"; formerly called Aguascalientes, these are the five regional seats of the Zapatista autonomous government.

cargo. A position of leadership or authority.

CCRI. Abbreviation for *Comité Clandestino Revolucionario Indígena* (Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee).

CIEPAC. Abbreviation for *Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción* (Center of Economic and Political Investigations of Community Action).

CIOAC. Abbreviation for *Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos* (Independent Center for Agricultural Workers).

CNC. Abbreviation for *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Peasant Confederation).

CNI. Abbreviation for *Congreso Nacional Indígena* (National Indigenous Congress).

CODIMUJ. Abbreviation for *Comisión Diocesana de Mujeres* (Women's Commission of the Diocese).

comandante/comandanta. Literally meaning a "commander," this refers to the EZLN's political leaders and members of the CCRI.

compañeras. The feminine, plural version of *compañero*, which is how Zapatista women refer to themselves.

compañero. A comrade or companion. In a political context, *compañero* generally refers to someone who belongs to a particular organization or movement. For the EZLN, *compañero*, or *compa* for short, is synonymous with "Zapatista."

consulta. A popular referendum.

DESMI. Abbreviation for *Desarrollo Económico y Social de los Mexicanos Indígenas* (Social and Economic Development of Indigenous Mexicans).

don/doña. An honorific in Spanish, placed before a person's first name and used as a sign of respect.

ejidos. Communally held land. The ejido system was an important aspect of land distribution programs in the wake of the Mexican Revolution. Until the Mexican Constitution was changed in 1992, ejidos could not be divided or sold. (An *ejidatario* is a member of an ejido.)

encomienda. The system used during the Spanish conquest of Latin America to give conquistadors control over the indigenous people living there.

encuentro. A gathering.

EZLN. Abbreviation for *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National Liberation).

la familia chiapaneca. Literally meaning "the Chiapanecan family," which refers to a small group of families that has historically maintained a grip on wealth and power in Chiapas.

finca. An extensive and largely self-sufficient agricultural estate that often controlled indigenous laborers through debt peonage, many times from generation to generation. Also known as a *hacienda* in other parts of Latin America. (The owner of a finca is known as the *finquero*.)

FLN. Abbreviation for *Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Forces).

Junta de Buen Gobierno. Good Government Council.

kuxlan. In Tzeltal and other Mayan languages, a word that refers to a nonindigenous person.

mestizo/mestiza. A person of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage.

militiano/militiana. A member of the Zapatista militia; an individual who lives in a Zapatista village, receives periodic military training, and can be called upon by the Zapatista army if necessary.

milpa. A cornfield.

nombre de lucha. Literally meaning a "name of struggle," which is a pseudonym that Zapatistas choose for themselves.

OCEZ. Abbreviation for *Organización Campesina Emiliano Zapata* (Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization).

palabra de Dios. Literally meaning the "word of God." This refers to biblical texts as well as the organizing process led by the Catholic Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas.

panela. A solid block of unrefined cane sugar.

patrón. A landowner or boss.

pozol. A drink made of corn dough mixed with water.

PRJ. Abbreviation for *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party).

PROCEDE. Abbreviation for *Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales y Titulación de Solares Urbanos* (Program for Certification of Ejidal Rights).

Seguridad Pública. The state police.

zócalo. A central plaza in a city or town.

suggested reading

On Zapatista Women

Kampwirth, Karen. *Feminism and the Legacy Of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004.

Kampwirth, Karen. *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.

Rovira, Guiomar. *Mujeres de maíz*. Mexico City: Biblioteca Era, 1997.

Speed, Shannon, R. Aída Hernández Castillo, and Lynn M. Stephen, eds. *Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006.

News and Analysis about the EZLN and Mexico

Compañero Manuel: The Chiapas Support Committee Blog on Zapatistas & Mexico, <http://compmanuel.wordpress.com/>.

El Kilombo Intergaláctico, <http://www.elkilombo.org>.

On Zapatista Autonomy

Baronnet, Bruno, Mariana Mora Bayo, and Richard Stahler-Sholk, eds. *Luchas "muy otras": Zapatismo y autonomía en las comunidades indígenas de Chiapas*. Mexico City: UAM-Xochimilco, CIESAS, UNACH, 2011.

On the History of Campesino Organizations in Chiapas and the Struggle for Land Reform

- Collier, George A. *Bastard Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas. With Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello*. Oakland, CA: Food First Books, 1994.
- De Vos, Jan. *Una tierra para sembrar sueños: Historia reciente de la Selva Lacandona, 1950–2000*. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social y Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002.
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- Gunderson, Christopher. "The Making of Organic Indigenous-Campesino Intellectuals: Catechist Training in the Diocese of San Cristóbal and the Roots of the Zapatista Uprising." *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 31 (2011): 259–295.
- Gunderson, Christopher. "The Provocative Cocktail: Intellectual Origins of the Zapatista Uprising 1960–1994." PhD diss., City University of New York, 2013.
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- Morales Bermúdez, Jesús. *Entre ásperos caminos llanos: La diócesis de San Cristóbal de las Casas, 1950–1995*. Mexico City: Casa Juan Pablos, 2005.
- Ríos Figueroa, Julio. *Siglo XX: muerte y resurrección de la Iglesia Católica en Chiapas, Dos estudios históricos*. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2002.

On the Relationship between the Diocese and the FLN/EZLN

- Legorreta Díaz, María del Carmen. *Religión, política y guerrilla en Las Cañadas de la Selva Lacandona*. Mexico City: Cal y arena, 1998.
- Tello Díaz, Carlos. *La rebelión de las Cañadas: Origen y ascenso del EZLN*. Mexico City: Cal y arena, 2000.

Next page: A Zapatista village in the autonomous municipality Primero de Enero. (Photograph by Francesc Parés.)

compañeras
ZAPATISTA WOMEN'S STORIES

Hilary Klein

Seven Stories Press
New York • Oakland