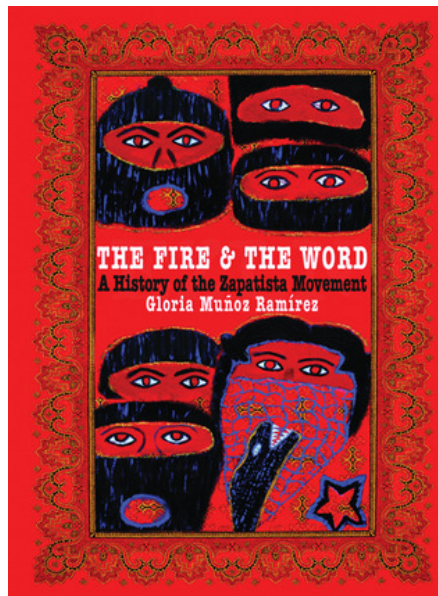




The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement

Gloria Muñoz Ramírez , Subcomandante Marcos (Introduction) , Hermann Bellinghausen (Foreword)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement

*Gloria Muñoz Ramírez , Subcomandante Marcos (Introduction) , Hermann Bellinghausen
(Foreword)*

The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement Gloria Muñoz Ramírez , Subcomandante Marcos (Introduction) , Hermann Bellinghausen (Foreword)

An illustrated history of the Zapatistas based on interviews with the movement's original organizers.

Originally published in Mexico to mark the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Zapatistas, this new edition has been expanded with an epilogue that outlines developments from 2003 to the present. According to Subcomandante Marcos, *The Fire and the Word* is "the most complete version of the public history of the Zapatistas."

Gloria Muñoz Ramírez has worked for *Punto* (Mexico), *La Opinion* (United States), and the Mexican daily *La Jornada*. She has lived and worked extensively in Chiapas, Mexico.

The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement Details

Date : Published April 1st 2008 by City Lights Publishers (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9780872864887

Author : Gloria Muñoz Ramírez , Subcomandante Marcos (Introduction) , Hermann Bellinghausen
(Foreword)

Format : Paperback 300 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, Social Issues, Activism



[Download The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movem ...pdf](#)



[Read Online The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Mov ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement Gloria Muñoz Ramírez , Subcomandante Marcos (Introduction) , Hermann Bellinghausen (Foreword)

From Reader Review The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement for online ebook

Harrison says

A blow by blow account of the Zapatista rebellion, I found certain sections a bit tedious, but at the same time I recognize the importance of popular documentation of the indigenous struggle whose voices are often silenced and whose history is often erased. Ultimately, the book is carried by the inspiring facts of the Zapatista rebellion and is at its best when it lets the Zapatistas speak for themselves.

Kevin says

At its best, this book gets out of the way, and lets the Zapatistas tell their own story - one that, of course, is both touching and inspirational. Muñoz Ramirez herself provides a helpful summary of the Zapatista struggle, though not as profound of one as one might expect, given the years she's lived in the Lacandon Jungle. The artwork and pictures in the book are marvelous, though the inclusion of a map would have been of great help.

Rocio says

A chronicle of the Zapatista Movement. A wonderful account of the struggles of the people of Chiapas

Daniel says

I read this book while attending the First World Festival of La Digna Rabia, the Zapatista Festival commemorating 25 years of the EZLN, and the 15th anniversary of their war against the Mexican Army. In fact, I devoured the book on the two 13 hour bus rides from Mexico DF (site of the first stage of the Festival) to San Cristobal de las Casas (largest city taken by the EZLN in 1994, and close enough to Oventik that we could stand in the bed of a pickup truck that ferried people to and from the Zapatista rebel territory).

Because of when and where I read the book, I have a hard time remembering where the pages of the book ended and seeing the direct results of the Zapatista struggle for liberation began. I saw both an invigorated New Left movement for democracy, freedom, and justice in Mexico and an organized movement of indigenous peasants who are at the same time both filled with truly awesome and deserved pride and humble beyond any I've ever met. Here in Zapatistaland, transgendered sex workers and share-croppers share their struggle with day laborers, university students, urban squatter punks and elderly indigenous women. The Zapatistas have brought together an impossibly diverse movement under two concise slogans, one that comes from the mouth of Subcomandante Marcos, "Everything for everyone and nothing for ourselves," and the other from the mouth of the fierce indigenous Comandante Ramona, "Never again a Mexico without us."

I'm amazed by the organizational evolution of the Zapatistas. New Left movements in the 1960s and 1970s often started out with motives for mass-based democratic social movement, and then through cult-of-personality political perversion and exoticizing violence moved towards less and less democratic forms until

they became a tiny clandestine "military" organization (see the RAF, Weathermen, other Guevarist organizations). The Zapatistas started off as a strict Marxist-Leninist military organization (literally an army), and have evolved into a mass-based social movement, with support from all of Mexico.

Too often people only know the Zapatistas through their brilliant spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos. This book gives voice to the many others, including other EZLN officers, but also participants in their Good Government Boards, and members of their base communities. The book has three parts: first, the author interviews the aforementioned parties with regard to the Zapatistas' organizing in the ten years leading up to the 1994 declaration of war on the Mexican government, a fascinating window into a guerilla movement. Second, the author gives a thorough blow-by-blow account of the public history of the EZLN. This part is thorough to the point of occasionally paragraph-long lists, but it never felt like a "this happened, then this happened" poorly executed historical summary. And then in a third section, Subcomandante Marcos reflects on the struggle at 20 years, and answers questions collected from readers of the leftist daily newspaper *La Jornada* and the Zapatista-supporting magazine *Rebeldía*. Newer versions will have a 20 page introduction and looking forward epilogue about the Sixth Declaration and the Other Campaign (where the Zapatistas encourage the formation of a new politics for all of Mexico below and to the Left).

The book design is gorgeous. The most iconic photographs of the Zapatista movement are scattered throughout the book, and drawings, paintings and watercolor both fade behind the text (though always maintaining legibility) and pepper the margins. The book has easy, thumb-wide margins, and a very readable font with relaxed leading. I am going to keep this book on my desk while I design my current project for inspiration.

If I had to give someone one book to read about the Zapatistas, it would be this one, without question. If someone was already interested in the Zapatistas and had already read several other books about them, I would still recommend it, wholeheartedly.

Nathan Titus says

The subtitle of the book says it all. "A History of the Zapatista Movement" indeed. I wanted to know about their way of life and their philosophy, but like basically all Zapatista literature I've come across, it went out of the way to avoid discussing that, and focused almost exclusively on the Zapatistas history of oppression and persecution by the Mexican government (and governments all over the world to a lesser extent.) The most obvious example I can think of is the page by page, year by year account of the government breaking, going back on, and refusing to settle any agreement based on the San Cristobal accords. The impression that the book clearly wants you to walk away with (and that I agree with) is that the government is a bad actor whos not to be trusted. What the book didnt tell the reader is what was actually in the accords. In other words, the book, like all Zapatista literature I've encountered, gives you a very good idea of what they are fighting against, but basically none of what they are fighting for.

The conspiratorial side of me thinks this is deliberate. Its easy to sympathize with oppressed victims, and the Zapatistas need all the sympathy they can get. I suspect they would get less if they came out and explained their life philosophy, which consisted of collective ownership of resources, and collective control of the individual. And I cant really explain exactly what that means, because as I said talk of their philosophy is avoided.

let me give you another example: their initial list of demands when they occupied 7 towns in 1994. equality, democracy, liberty, justice, independence, employment, land, food, housing, health, education, and peace. Now the first few sound like they just want the government to leave them alone, right? maybe so. But land, food, employment, housing, ext....to someone who has seen the popularity of Bernie Sanders, this sound like they want the government to also give them some things. But then again maybe not. This wasnt in the book,

but take the demand for health. I happen to know that in the Zapatista Carocols, they have their own hospitals that the government didn't give them. In fact I'm fairly sure the government has shut them down from time to time. This could be a demand for the government to stop doing that, ie, just leave them alone. But who knows. The book doesn't go into detail on what is meant by these demands. It doesn't even mention the Zapatista hospitals; that's something I know from elsewhere. So if you want a history, look here. If you want to know how the Zapatistas think, keep looking.

Tram Nguyen says

I traded for this book while in Chiapas, and it was very useful to have then. While the work comes with impeccable credentials -- written by a La Jornada journalist who spent 7 years living with the Zapatistas...I still found it a bit disappointing. Kind of a blow by blow account of the rebellion, without much context or narrative. The good thing is that it does introduce you to many more names and voices of other EZLN leaders besides Marcos, though I must say, his intro is the best part of the book.

Nancy says

a history told thru the eyes of those who lived it...despite the fact that the author breaks down the series of events that characterized every year of the EZLN movement as of the 1994 uprising, she couples it with commentary and contributions from zapatistas themselves, which makes the story more wholistic than it is linear...damn, the zapatistas rock!

Jack says

Having moved to San Cristobal de Las Casas, where the EZLN's armed insurrection started in 1994, I figured it was sensible to get more informed about the Zapatistas. Before starting this book, I felt the indelible impression that the movement has made in the region, and have sensed its wider repercussions in the country. Contrary to my belief coming into Mexico that the Zapatistas are a fringe group far to the left of the Mexican political mainstream, each of the handful of Mexicans whom I had a chance to talk politics with are all more or less within the rough proximity of where the green party would land on the US political spectrum, and all spoke more or less approvingly of at least some aspects of the Zapatista movement. 20 years ago the EZLN struck a vein in Mexican society (as I was soon to learn in this book); it had tapped into a progressive, social justice, socialist, and egalitarian vein that runs deep and whose fervor has been fed by the ongoing injustices and egregious inequalities that have been the rule throughout Mexico.

Other marks that the movement has made is manifest in the smattering of EZLN bookshops and coffee shops that sell Zapatista key chains, bumper stickers, and t-shirts. It's also manifest in the invigoration of San Cristobal as a whole as a destination. Over the last two decades, what has always been a beautiful colonial town as become a bustling destination for Western tourists here for the scenery as well as the poverty tourism, European hippies here for the anarchist vibe and cheap cost of living, Mexican creatives and intellectuals here for the same things who have since cultivated a hot bourgeoisie arts scene in the midst of the poverty of Chiapas. It's hard not to smell the heavy scent of irony, that the Zapatista's renown has brought its archnemesis neoliberalism to its very doorsteps, and it not going anywhere.

Okay what about the book. First let's describe what it is not. This is not a book of investigative journalism. It

is not an objective or critical account of the Zapatista movement from a third party. It is not, as traditionally conceived, a historical chronicle of a political movement. Why? Although the author/editor/compiler of this book is a journalist by trader, she has created this work as an activist.

If taken as literature it is middling at best, if taken as propaganda it's a bit too meandering and lacks the cutting clarity and simplicity that great propaganda has. What it is is the autobiography (actually more memoir) of a movement. As such, it is not hindered by criticality, and it announces its positivist beliefs and convictions in each passage and chapter. It's construction is a patchwork, much as it likes to believe it's movement is as well. It is a patchwork of first hand accounts of the movement's history, and specific chapters of the progression by members and supporters of the movement, most prominently featuring a large amount of dictations by subcmdt. Marcos. These testimonials are tied together by historical and political context by Munoz Ramirez, but give no doubt, the context is through the lens of a true believer. Due to the degree of conviction this is written with, it often suffers for clarity and coherence, but nonetheless the book will give you a feel for how a movement views itself.

Melondrop says

Read this book while in Oventic! Helped so much to have a clearer chronological picture of the movement!
Loved sub Marcos' parts.

Cristina López says

she is on tour right now, in Los Angeles!
Go see her!!
