Globalisation in Latin America

from a Critical Perspective

By

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I. Globalisation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Pertinent Points</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Characteristics of globalization</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Economic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. A Victim of Globalisation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Political</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultural</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Environmental</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Kyoto Protocol</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Impact of Globalisation</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Evolution of Globalisation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II. The Thought of Eduardo Galeano</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Background</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Galeano Speaks Against Globalisation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3
C. Historical Overview of Latin America 32
  1. *Open Veins of Latin America* 33

D. *Upside Down* 40

E. Further Writings by Galeano 43

Chapter III. The Zapatista National Liberation Army 45
  A. The Human Cost 47
  B. The Environmental Cost 49
  C. Arms Industry 51
  D. San Andres Accords 52
  E. The Political Struggle 53
    1. Indigenous Rights 53
    2. Mexican Government’s Counter-proposal 54
    3. The Zapatista Struggle goes On 54

Chapter IV. The Thought of Subcomandante Marcos 59
  A. Unknown Identity 60
  B. A Selection of Essays and Articles 62
  C. Philosophical Works 65
  D. “The Fourth World War” 66
  E. Why the Zapatistas’ Fight? 69

Chapter V. Comparing and Contrasting 71
  A. The Plight of Latin American Children! 73
B. Law and Order

C. Media Control

Conclusion

Appendix I

Bibliography
**List of abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCRI-CG</td>
<td>Clandestine Indigenous Committee – General Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCOPA</td>
<td>Commission on Concordance &amp; Pacification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>UN Economic &amp; Social Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EZLN</td>
<td>The Zapatista National Liberation Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>National Liberation Forces (Mexico)</td>
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<td>GATT</td>
<td>General Agreement on Tariffs &amp; Trade</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>International Electro-Technical Commission</td>
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<td>IGO</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTELSAT</td>
<td>International Telecommunication &amp; Satellite Systems</td>
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<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organization for Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNCs</td>
<td>Multinational Companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAFTA</td>
<td>North American Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>Institutional Revolutionary Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOA</td>
<td>School of Americas</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific &amp; Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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I would like to begin by quoting Aristotle: "The roots of education are bitter but the fruits are sweet."

Whilst finishing my MA I went through "bitter" times but now the result is "sweet". I cannot describe my joy. All this would not have been possible without the help of my family, professors, friends and colleagues. To try to thank everyone who contributed to this paper is impossible, but I will just mention a few who helped me through their assistance and most importantly support.

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My sincere thanks are extended to my sister, Rima, and her husband, Basil, for helping me smile more whilst writing this paper.
ABSTRACT

Globalization in Latin America

From a Critical Perspective

The aim of this study is to analyse the comparative thought of two Latin American critics of globalisation, Eduardo Galeano and Subcomandante Marcos. Latin America in this case is taken to be a representative regime of the Third World or Developing Countries. We conclude by comparing the two critics and evaluating their contribution to an alter globalisation.
Introduction

Ever since the demise of the Soviet Union globalisation has spread rapidly generating with it much praise and criticism. One has to understand that globalisation is almost too complex to define. It is just like a long piece of rope threading its way through the world, but keeping in mind that a rope is made of many strands. The more strands a rope has, the stronger it is. These strands are the characteristics of globalisation: economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental.

This thesis deals with observations of representative reactions to globalisation in Latin America from the point of view of critical thought. Latin America interests me in the way globalisation is viewed from that part of the continent as representing the “Third World”. This thesis is inspired by the thought of two Latin American critics on globalisation: Eduardo Galeano, a historian, political analyst, journalist and author of many books and articles on globalisation in Latin America, and Subcomandante Marcos, an activist, a writer and the spokesperson for the Zapatista National Liberation Army in Chiapas, Mexico.

What both intellectuals have in common is their experiences of Latin America. Marcos is influenced by the local situation in Mexico, defending a minority, the Indians, and engaging in armed struggle – an activist. Whereas Galeano is more thorough when defining the effects of globalisation in Latin America, more of a theorist. Their books, articles and essays are written with deep emotion, strong opinion, affection, sentiment and reactions grounded to the globalised era the world is facing. Even if one is not a critic of globalisation it is easy to appreciate their work. Galeano is more straightforward and direct in his depiction of globalisation. This makes it easier for the reader to reach definite conclusions after reading his writings.
Marcos on the other hand speaks of globalisation indirectly most of the time, giving his own experiences as a primary source for criticism and condemnation. Yet, neither author bows to the fashions of contemporary criticism. Galeano and Marcos are both brilliant writers, each in his own, distinctive style.

The opening chapter of this thesis aims to give an overview of globalisation and its five characteristics: economical, political, social, cultural and environmental. Argentina is taken as an example of how a country can be a victim to globalisation. The impact globalisation has produced in general is also discussed as well as the Brazilian Lula program that aims to give a more balanced relationship of the developing and industrialised countries in the era of globalisation.

The second chapter is devoted to Galeano’s thought. This includes his background, as well as his writings on Latin American History. He is one of the most profound historians to write about Latin America. This chapter deals with his views on globalisation as well.

The following chapter gives a summary of Chiapan history. It examines the Zapatista struggle in the province of Chiapas from the uprising until the present. By knowing Chiapan history one can understand Marcos’ thought more by recognising the cause that led him to become an activist. Marcos’ thought is encompassed in the fourth chapter along with the findings about his identity which he keeps unknown. Furthermore, a selection of his essays and articles on globalisation are reviewed.

The final chapter aims to compare and contrast the perspectives of Galeano and Marcos. What the major common themes are as well as more points they make about globalisation. Furthermore, the conclusion contains remarks and comments on globalisation in Latin America as well as an analysis of Galeano and Marcos’ contribution to an alter globalisation.
Chapter I. Globalisation

A. Pertinent points

Globalisation has become such an ingrained and important phenomenon of the twenty-first century. It seems to be taking over the basics of our lives without us consciously seeing how year after year it is ruling more and more our present and future decisions about most economic issues.

The process of globalisation has wide ranging and long lasting effects, resulting in uneven global development benefiting the few and marginalizing the vast majority. Globalisation can be defined as “disorganised capitalism”. (Lash & Urry, 1996, p296) Thus “the complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics.” (Lash & Urry, 1996, p296) Globalisation is now continuing along with neo-colonialism and a capitalist market economy model to engulf the whole world. According to the IMF, globalisation is “the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through increasing cross-border transactions in goods and services and of international capital flows, and also through the more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology.” (Wolf, 1997, p9)

To scholars inspired by Karl Marx, globalisation is the expansion of the capitalist system around the world. (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p49) This IMF description of globalisation can be seen as a selfish flow of goods and services to serve the needs of the rich with complete disregard for the impact on the developing world.

The emergence of Latin America in globalisation had a tremendous effect on intellect thinking and triggered a backlash of writings. Its history has generated a
scholarly debate among schools of thought of intellectual critics. This study is an analysis of Eduardo Galeano and Subcomandante Marcos’ thought on globalisation in Latin America as one way of deepening our understanding of that part of the world. We can look at how the issues of globalisation are manifested in their writings that effected people in that continent. By understanding how these issues have shaped thought it is important to understand the circumstances.

B. Characteristics of Globalisation

Usually globalisation focuses on economic issues. However it has many other characteristics: political, cultural, social and environmental.

1. Economic

Globalisation is linked to neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism. It has been institutionalised in the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, and the WTO which are part of the underlying ethos of many Western Countries, in particular the United States.

“Neo-liberalism is the defining political economic paradigm of our time – it refers to the policies and processes whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit. Associated initially with Reagan and Thatcher, for the past two decades neo-liberalism has been the dominant global political economic trend adopted by political parties of the center and much of the traditional left as well as right. These parties and the policies they enact represent the immediate interests of extremely wealthy investors and less than one thousand large corporations.” (Chomsky, 1999, p7)

These policies are put in place by different international trade agreements and the World Bank. In the 1940s, when the Bank was conceived to try to “help” poor
countries to develop, its basic principle was that production and a capitalist model bring development that will eradicate poverty. In the last fifty years the World Bank has given loans to developing countries, but these loans are only one side of the coin. With the loans come the country’s obligation to develop certain areas, plant certain products, and quite frequently, buy military equipment. Most of the time these actions have not been favourable to the local people:

“The Bank’s charter affirms that it is a purely economic institution but the billions of dollars it lends are only part of the story; it has come to wield immense political power as well. As a supranational agency in an increasingly globalised world, from Africa to the new republics of the former Soviet Union, the Bank now has more to say about state policy than many states.” (George and Sabelli 1994, p1)

The World Bank then, like other big international, though ideologically Western institutions, can have an enormous power in politics. The power of western countries reaches further back than the twentieth century. We can trace the origin of globalisation to the discovery of America and the subsequent colonialism, slavery, industrial revolution and early capitalists’ need for labour, raw material and new markets. This power, linked to the belief in the racial superiority of Europeans, served to exploit people and land all over the world for the market needs, of white men. This lead to poverty and unequal development:

“It is generally held that economic development occurs in a succession of capitalist stages and that today’s underdeveloped countries are still in a stage, sometimes depicted as an original stage of history, through which the now-developed countries passed long ago. Yet even a modest acquaintance with history shows that underdevelopment is not original or traditional and that neither the past nor the present of the underdeveloped countries resemble in any important respect the past of the now-developed countries.” (Frank, 1970, p5)

This generally held idea of development is causing much damage to poor or “neo-poor” countries that try to survive in a daily battle of contradictions. These
contradictions have to do with internal and external pressures imposed on millions of people around the globe and the reality and practicality of everyday living.

a. A Victim of Globalisation

An unsuspected, “victim” of globalisation is Argentina in 2001. Corruption and inefficient management of government spending forced the Argentinian government to increase taxes to a level that was not sustainable by the economy – taxes could not be afforded by companies or people. By 2001 government was spending more than it was collecting (deficit) and at the same time forcing the Peso against the dollar to a “fixed” exchange rate (“Fixed Peg against the Dollar”) Confidence in Argentina’s economy was devastated, exemplified through $20 billion leaving the country – reducing the amount of investment capital in Argentina for it’s peoples’ future. Hence, Peso interest rates grew to an incredible 40% to 60% to attract investment into Argentina. By this time confidence in the currency and Argentinian economy disappeared, resulting in the collapse of the Peso - it lost more than half its value – Dollars kept flowing out of the country.


Argentina is a good example of the effects and results of reckless economical miscalculation of the IMF and the World Bank. This time it was “organized” by international finance, and the Argentinian government that collaborated with the national mafia and brought the country to its knees. The World Bank and IMF proved that they are the new rulers of the world, and they have created a new empire made of power, money, greed and injustice. With the aid of “financial sharks”, and their suggestions, Argentinian President Carlos Menem privatised almost everything,
“countries were expected to follow the IMF guidelines without debate.” (Stiglitz, 2002, p14) This led to hunger and riots in Argentina. “The World Bank talks about the poor but its policies have so far ensured their continued exclusion.” (George & Sabelli, 1994, p8) Before Argentina’s economic collapse, the World Bank gave loans to help Argentina “develop”. Today we can see the reality of these misconceptions and how at the core of the Bank ethos there are the few wealthy politicians and international businessmen, but the common people are absent:

“The World Bank projects have been known to dislocate entire communities, displace thousands of people, destroy forests, turn grassland to desert or concentrate land and wealth in the hands of a few rich farmers or entrepreneurs – all in the name of development. Since the 1980s, its “programme” loans designed to encourage widespread policy changes (better known as structural adjustment) have forcibly reoriented entire communities.” (George & Sabelli, 1994, p2)

Under the pressure of the IMF, President Menem gave control of the water supply to French companies, control of telecommunication to French and Spanish companies control, of Aerolineas Argentina to Iberia, the Spanish national airlines. Argentina has been the victim of what can be termed “economic terrorism”. This is the power of globalisation at its worst. The very rich are a minority in Argentina and have kept their savings and assets in Switzerland and Miami or other fiscal paradises; so that when the crisis hit the country they did not lose anything. Already in the 1990s a report about Argentina in the Washington Post stated that the “IMF-style reforms ‘have made life even more precarious for the poor.” (Robinson, 1991, p230) The millions of people that belong to the middle class, together with those already poor, became miserable overnight. Their money had no value any longer.

Today, the only future possible for the Argentinean people is to solidify their relationship with other countries like Brazil and Venezuela in order to avoid a new neo-colonialism from the USA. This is the only way to face and fight the struggle
America has in mind for Iraq is meant only to serve the interests of multinationals to establish their business in the new Iraq. Iraq is in a way the new symbol of the aggression of globalisation and its economic side. This is the reason behind a war that is mainly one of domination. Power is evident, but hidden behind a misleading language, racism. At the core of this war is the arrogance of western powers in trying to impose their economic and cultural system on other nations: Another example of arrogance was when US President Reagan directed American naval and air forces to turn on Libya in 1986” to bombard civilian urban targets, guided by the goal of “contributing to an international environment of peace, freedom and progress within which our democracy – and other free nations – can flourish.” (Chomsky 1994, p29)

The increasing power that international banks and multi-national companies have, enables them to take decisions that affect people’s lives radically. There is a growing mass of workers in low-paid and irregular employment all over the world, without a contract, without sick pay, holiday pay, without any rights as workers or as human beings. Work is dignity and people need to have the right to be able to work with dignity. For many politicians these workers do not count. Most of the time they do not vote but create the mass of people who consume, and here lies all their value.

When sovereign states are willing to integrate in terms of their goals, structures, programs and internal operations, it is political globalisation. States then assume responsibility for a wide range of activities, including education, health care, management of the economy and finance, welfare programs, retirement pensions, environmental protection and poverty alleviation. Thus a global common basic model of the state is applied, even though many states vary in the way they implement the basic model in concrete terms. (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p196)

In the past century the emergence of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)
against the neo-liberalist policy that globalizes only poverty and social exclusion. Social justice needs to be a priority to every country because without justice there will still be an exploitation of the poor in that country. Hence, without justice there can be no positive value in globalisation. The mechanism of globalisation as it is at the moment will only bring misery and injustice because of the decreasing role of politics in the free market. The economy needs to be controlled by the state, in order to stop multinationals from making decisions that undermine peoples’ ability to choose and participate in decisions that affect their lives. When, like presently, economics rule the world, the major danger is loss of democracy.

2. Political

In the last few years we have witnessed globalisation in its worst scenario. It has started to undermine democracy in the world because it has gone about in total disrespect of society, people and their rights. We can say in this respect that globalisation is in opposition to democracy even if in reality its language is filled with false democratic propaganda, and America has been its “spokesperson”: “The overall effect of American power on other societies has been to further liberty, pluralism and democracy” (Chomsky 1994, p18) This language can be traced to the propaganda for the war on Iraq. The ironies of this war, which aims to bring democracy, are first of all that democracy cannot be brought in with a war. Secondly, democracy can never be “brought in”, because democracy is a process and an act of consciousness from the people of a country and cannot be imposed from an outside authority. Democracy is the process of struggling for rights. “Rights are not established by words, but won and sustained by struggle.” (Chomsky, 1994, p400) Third, the kind of “democracy”
was part of political globalisation. IGOs are associations of countries with the objective to deal with significant issues that affect the association countries simultaneously in the sense they are mutually dependent on each other. A proportion of the 300 global IGOs and the majority of a thousand regional and sub-regional IGOs are focused on economic, technical or political matters. The United Nations is always active in conjunction with associated agencies (for example, UNESCO and ECOSOC) which form the core groups for a global political forum. Within these forums each state manages its international relationships. (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p196)

Critics of globalisation have castigated the WTO as a global monster whose authority strips states of their sovereign control over their national economies. (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p198) Yet, those in favour of globalisation argue that globalisation will boost economic well-being and overall standard of life. The question is why have national governments moved from an era whereby they sought to seize and exercise control over their economies, to an era in which ideas of competition, openness, privatization and deregulation have captured world economic thinking? Are these changes part of a continuing process of development and evolution? (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p212)

Today, in response to the high costs of control and the disillusionment with its effectiveness, governments are privatizing. The objective is to move away from government control as a substitute for the marketplace to a more efficient way to protect public life. This shift does not signal the end of government, but states have to plan less, and regulate less, allowing instead the frontiers of the market to expand. (Yergin & Stanislaw, 1998, p214) By this “shift” we are being controlled more by multinational corporations. However, why the working class is getting poorer and the rich richer? This gap in the world system seems yet to be addressed.
3. Social

Dani Rodrik (1997) states that globalisation is causing a deep fault line between groups who have the skills and mobility to prosper in international markets and those who do not have these advantages. The result is great tension between the market and social groups such as workers, pensioners, and environmentalists. The fact that “workers” can be more easily substituted for each other across national boundaries undermines what many conceive to be a post war social bargain between workers and employers, under which the former would receive a steady increase in wages and benefits in return for labour peace. (Rodrik, 1997, p221) Yet, this leads to greater instability in earnings and hours worked. Furthermore, workers now have to pay a larger share of cost improvements of working conditions and benefits (that is, they bear a greater incidence of nonwage costs). (Rodrik, 1997, p222)

Globalisation has made it exceedingly difficult for government to provide social insurance. “Social disintegration is not a spectator sport – those on the sidelines also get splashed with mud from the field.” (Rodrik, 1997, pp222-223) States have lost their original terms of reference, namely social responsibility and reduction of poverty. Economic growth and world power are ever diluting the prime objective of the state – Social responsibility.

4. Cultural

Globalisation is a cultural as well as an economic process. This tends to homogenise people in subtle ways, aided by the media that is in the hands of few powerful companies. For people across the globe can identify themselves with globalisation. Famous icons of Coca-Cola, blue jeans and McDonald’s can be found
everywhere. One can call it "Americanisation," or "Westernisation" or cultural imperialism. (Friedland, 1992, p297) Media is controlled by US or European firms spreading through the globe via images and sounds, and advertising to unprepared people who give way to their messages that are intended to increase the profits of capitalist companies.

Lewis Friedland points out that television soaps and movies is another tool to achieve cultural imperialism. The younger generation watch all the latest movies and unconsciously become "Americanised" forgetting their own cultural values. Moreover, media drives consumerism. If a company wants to sell a product it puts its ads in newspapers or on TV. What about channeling local and international news via our TV screens? By the late 1980s and early 1990s, CNN gained international prominence and was received in every major country in Europe, Asia, and Africa, including China and the former Soviet Union.

Friedland also states that the Gulf War placed CNN in the forefront of the broadcast world and increased the pressure on other players to enter the global news competition. Furthermore, the Gulf War demonstrated the strengths of international television as a medium of diplomacy and as a witness to events. At the same time, it demonstrated how world television could be bent to follow lines favourable to the dominant Western nations that are at the base of that system. (Friedland, 1992, p297)

A valid point Friedland makes is that during the events leading up to the war, CNN operated as a diplomatic seismograph. Immediately after the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, President Bush publicly referred to CNN on several occasions, and as the crisis moved closer to war, CNN became an unofficial line of communication within the US government. President Bush reportedly told reporters: "I learn more from CNN than I do from the CIA". (Friedland, 1992, p297) Moreover,
instead of releasing a standard “no comment” statement, the State Department, the Pentagon, and military spokespersons would regularly respond to questions with: “I don’t know anymore than what you saw on CNN”. (Friedland, 1992, p297)

Through the latest technology and satellite installations the US was managing the propaganda for war. Today, CNN international reaches a global audience of 53 million viewers in 138 nations; in the US, CNN reaches about 60 million households. As a twenty-four-hour service, it has changed the way television can be used. (Friedland, 1992, p299) Media communicates role models that destroy cultures across borders and accelerate the process of division – “globalisation” across the world. For this internationalization of the media would have been a benefit if countries did not bend the truth and create biased news channels entering our homes through our screens to brainwash the public.

5. Environmental

We are now in the era where it is taken for granted that one should think of the environment. Air pollution, acid rain, tropical deforestation and the thinning of the ozone layer affect the entire globe and contribute to environmental degradation. It makes no sense for states or environmentalists to attempt anything less than a global approach to such problems.

Air pollution used to be a result of factories and homes directly burning enormous quantities of coal. However, nowadays, smoke from factory stacks often evokes not horrified criticism but almost lyrical praise as a sign of the glorious progress that industrialization is bringing to the blessed people of the ever richer West. Not only was pollution not a global problem, for the most part it was not a problem at all. (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p371)
World environmentalism was initiated with a statement from the World Commission on Environment and Development, set up in 1983 as a body independent of states and even the United Nations. The statement illustrates the successes and failures of global environmental action and the severe problems facing the world at the end of the twentieth century, making a plea for “sustainable development” that balances economic growth with careful environmental management. (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p373)

In 1992, the largest IGO conference, Earth Summit, was accompanied by the most significant parallel nongovernmental conference ever. The UN Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was a declaration resulting from the summit that spells out a high degree of responsibility for states and citizens to protect the natural environment from unregulated or careless development. (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p373)

There has been such a steady escalation of awareness among national governments and multilateral institutions that it is impossible to separate economic issues from environmental issues. Poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems. (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p375)

a. Kyoto Protocol

With the world becoming more industrialized, the need to reduce global warming internationally was initiated through the Kyoto Protocol. This document is an amendment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), an international treaty on global warming. Some 141 countries, accounting for 55% of greenhouse gas emissions, have ratified the treaty, which
pledges to cut these emissions by 5.2% by 2012. The accord requires countries to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. But the world's top polluter – the US – has not signed the treaty. The US says the changes would be too costly to introduce and that the agreement is flawed. Australia also did not sign.

The protocol was negotiated in Kyoto, Japan in December 1997, opened for signature on March 16, 1998, and closed on March 15, 1999. The agreement came into force on February 16, 2005 following ratification by Russia on November 18, 2004. It aims to curb the air pollution blamed for global warming. It has come into force seven years after it was agreed in 1997. Among the Latin American states that signed the Kyoto protocol are Cuba, Costa Rica, El-Savador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Mexico and Uruguay. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol)

C. Impact of Globalisation

The cost of globalisation can be measured in terms of destabilization, selective access to education, famine, homologation, alienation, high unemployment and climate change. The world has been divided between the haves and have nots and in many ways globalisation can be seen as the other face of imperialism and can be linked to what Lenin called finance imperialism. O’Donnel (1987) writes, in his analysis of Lenin’s essay “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”:

“Finance imperialism that involved the export and investment of capital in poorer countries. This provided income and cheap labour. Lenin regarded finance capitalism as an aspect of a new stage in capitalism development, monopoly capitalism. Monopoly capitalism occurs when production is concentrated increasingly in to a few, large-scale enterprises.”
Concentrating the world production in the hands of few large enterprises excludes other participants from sharing the fruits of production. In this way profit is shared by a small number - politicians and financiers can dictate the terms of trade to the detriment of the world’s poorer countries and to the advantage of the powerful and prosperous.

Globalisation creates debts, debts create poverty and poverty creates deaths. This scenario is more common in poor countries but the negative aspects of globalisation are affecting rich countries as well: Even in Britain, which prides itself to have an international financial market, one in five children lives in poverty. To truly live in a globalised world we need to develop our “geographical imagination” and start looking at our lives as inter-dependent on other communities and other human beings. Someone starving in Africa should affect us as someone starving next door. A war in the Middle East is no different from a war in Europe, a child or young woman manufacturing our clothes for a miserable pay could be our friend, or son or daughter or ourselves, if we were born somewhere else. We should go against the idea that there are stable places, cultures and identities. Globalisation is making the world into a rigid place, where identities are fixed and stable, nations confined. Are nations not slowly becoming territories of identity conflicts? This idea of fixity and rootedness goes against the concept of culture as a process that cannot be fixed. Does globalisation amount to underdevelopment and imperialism by other means? Presently, it does.

We can see that it is important to understand global economic relations to find a connection between the rich and poor countries. The earth is like an organism and it needs to be balanced to function. World systems must be studied as a whole, because underdevelopment, or better, unequal development, is a consequence of the same
historical process that created Western capitalism. From someone that worked many years at the World Bank comes the most “unlikely” analysis of the negative effects of globalisation on communities and people. Stiglitz worked towards getting countries to make a transition to a market economy. This is what he wrote after his experience:

“I have written this book because while I was at the World Bank, I saw firsthand the devastating effect that globalisation can have on developing countries, and especially the poor within those countries. I believe that globalisation—the removal of barrier to free trade and the closer integration of national economies—can be a force for good and that it has the potential to enrich everyone in the world, particularly the poor. But I also believe that if this is to be the case, the way globalisation has been managed, including the international trade agreements that have played such a large role in removing those barriers and the policies that have been imposed on developing countries in the process of globalisation, need to be radically (my italics) rethought.” (Stiglitz, 2002, p10)

Globalisation needs to step down from the altar where it has been placed. To give but one example as explained earlier, the Argentinian collapse has taught the policy makers of the world that they need to listen to people, communities and nature in general. The people at the wheel of globalisation need to change direction to truly allow poorer countries to stand up and have a chance to provide a dignified life for their inhabitants: “by denying the instinct for freedom we will only prove that humans are a lethal mutation, an evolutionary dead end; by nurturing it, we may find ways to deal with dreadful human tragedies and problems that are awesome in scale.” (Chomsky, 1994, p401) Democracy needs to be at the centre of any changes in future policies, if we want to call this world truly globalised. Justice, freedom, dignity and responsibility need to become the ethical measures that should characterize globalisation.
D. Evolution of Globalisation

An effort to bring a more balanced relationship between the developed countries and the struggles of the developing states in this globalised era was pushed forward by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva through the Lula program that calls for the world's most powerful countries to work together to reduce global poverty, in the belief that the failure to do so is the root of instability. Da Silva was dissatisfied with aspects of globalisation that made the US the lone superpower in the process of globalisation. He wants to diversify the centers of economic power as he invisions a united South America that gains economic strength by drawing closer together in trade and collective bargaining much as the EU does. He also works to create a global coalition of not so rich countries and wants to push the IMF, the World Bank and the UN to become more democratic. In these endeavours he faces great odds because he sets himself against US interests. The US government has started a tough diplomacy to isolate da Silva from potential allies and destroy his ideas before they can gain momentum. (http://www.thenation.com/doc/20031201/greider)

Lula da Silva is an energetic world traveler who so far has succeeded in inducing South Africa and India to join Brazil in a new triangular dialogue whose emphasis is on technology and social issues like world famine. India's finance minister defined the purpose as promoting the economical and social interests of the Southern hemisphere. In the 2003 G-8 meeting in France, Lula proposed a small tax on the arms trade to finance hunger relief programs in developing countries, but the representatives of the world's eight most-powerful nations did not even refer to the proposal in the summit's closing statement. (http://americas.irc-online.org/articles/2003/0307trade.html)
Lula has even been courting China to become his next big partner. In October 2003, the two countries jointly launched an earth monitoring satellite. Moreover, Lula traveled to Peru and Colombia urging economic relations between these countries and the Southern common market anchored by Brazil and Argentina. He advanced a credit of $1 billion to embattled President Chavez of Venezuela. Also in mid-October Brazil joined Argentina in the Buenos Aires consensus as an alternative to the much despised Washington consensus which seeks to impose harsh economic rules on developing countries. To Lula the future must give the poorer countries the space to determine their own development strategies and social necessities.

In his visit to the UN General Assembly in 2003, he laid out a visionary proposal for eliminating worldwide hunger. In the summer of that year he went to Washington where he met President Bush who he says “is not the man I would like to see in the White House, but one with whom I have to get along.” What Lula has in mind is a muscular coalition of developing countries that could block draconian investment rules that multinational corporations keep pushing. In short Lula’s vision is for a multi-polar world with power dispersed from the center (the US) and shared more equitably with regional blocks and alliances. The idea is anathema to Washington, the European Community and Japan. (http://www.thenation.com/doc/20031201/greider)

Mexico’s Cancún was the place where Lula’s ambition collided head on with American power. He organized a coalition of 22 developing countries that stood their ground in the WTO negotiations and did not collapse under the pressure tactics of the US, Europe and Japan. Although the negotiations collapsed they demonstrated that unity means power. The US then began to threaten the Latin nations that stood with Lula at Cancún. The impoverished island nations of the Caribbean were told that their
newly negotiated trade agreements with the US would be cancelled. Central American countries were threatened with the loss of trade preferences already granted to their products. Peru and Columbia resigned from Lula’s group and within a few weeks Lula’s coalition of 22 nations had shrunk to 12 nations. It looked like a victory for the US but the reality was more complex. The Dominican Republic’s WTO Ambassador expressed admiration for Lula’s cause. Brazil and Argentina stood firm with Lula and turned down a lucrative trade offer. Together Brazil and Argentina account for two thirds of South America’s economic output. The only reason the US wanted a free trade agreement with South America was because of Brazil’s economic power, but the Brazilians had already seen what happened to Mexico in the mid-1990s and to Argentina in 2001.

Since the mid-1990s when people were optimistic toward globalisation, people’s opinions had changed dramatically, the Mexican economy had a catastrophic collapse despite Mexico’s adherence to NAFTA. In 1995 the Mexican Peso collapsed and the Mexican “miracle” (the effect of NAFTA on Mexico because of its short lived economic boom) suddenly fell apart. The same happened to Indonesia in 1997. Moreover, China and India became significant new actors on the economic scene. China’s entry to the WTO in 2001 tipped the balance of power within the global economy. China’s economy is three times that of Brazil’s and is destined to make China a world industrial power. However, Lula was backed by the Brazilian economy which is not thriving and is no longer an important opponent to the US as he once was. Like Brazil, China and India have no desire to be governed by rules devised by the US and Europe, and “China came on the scene with an economy too big to be bullied”. (http://www.thenation.com/doc/20031201/greider)

A more fundamental reason for political confrontation is that the prevailing
dogma of globalisation has failed catastrophically in developing countries. The Clinton Administration had a dubious economic policy of playing up to nations like China, India, Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia. Four of these countries have failed because of globalisation. Mexico in 1995, Indonesia in 1997, Brazil in 1998 and Argentina in 2001. In each instance incorrect management of “Wall Street style” finances was the reason. Globalisation as preached by the US became much less persuasive as financial scandals took place almost everywhere, including in the US.

Lula’s dream about uniting South American nations in a common cause is actually an old dream that started 200 years ago by Simón Bolívar. A “United States of South America seems to be destined to remain a dream, but Lula’s global coalition seems to be more promising especially if China joins because it would then acquire impressive power”. (http://www.thenation.com/doc/20031201/greider)

Lula sees that the future of globalisation may become more equitable if nations first accept intermediate organizations like regional trading blocks where governments would gain greater proximity to decision-making. The WTO would continue to exist but not halt the possibilities for progress as it is doing so now.

Since my thesis is about the thought of Galeano and Marcos, it reflects the negative much more than the positive about globalisation. If globalisation has had positive effects in Latin America they are glaringly absent from their writings.
Chapter II. The Thought of Eduardo Galeano

A. Background

Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan essayist, journalist, political analyst and historian, was born in Montevideo into a middle-class Catholic family of Welsh, German, Spanish and Italian ancestry. The author himself has denied that he is a historian: “I’m a writer obsessed with remembering, with remembering the past of America above all and above all that of Latin America, intimate land condemned to amnesia.” (http://www.progressive.org/int907.htm)

Galeano was educated in Uruguay until the age of 16. In his teens Galeano found odd jobs: He was a factory worker, a bill collector, a sign painter, a messenger, a typist, and a bank teller. At the age of 14 Galeano sold his first political cartoon to El Sol, the Socialist Party weekly, and in the 1960s he started his career as a journalist. He was the editor-in-chief of Marcha, an influential weekly journal, For a couple of years he edited the daily Época and worked as editor-in-chief of the University Press from 1965 to 1973. As a result of the military coup of 1973, he was imprisoned and then forced to leave Uruguay. In Argentina he founded and edited a cultural magazine, Crisis. Galeano who has received many awards for his distinguished writings, is one of the most renowned authors of Latin America. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduardo_Galeano)

After the military coup of 1976 in Argentina his name was added to the list of those condemned by the death squads and he moved to Spain. Galeano lived mainly on the Cataln coast and started to write his masterpiece, Memory of Fire that is a three-volume book. Galeano in this book compiles a couple of hundred short chapters,
each a mini story of a legend or historical event told in chronological order about the history of the Americas. At the beginning of 1985 Galeano returned to Montevideo. (http://www.multiworld.org/m_versity/althinkers/galeano.htm)

Eduardo Galeano and Subcomandante Marcos both write sharply about globalisation. The difference is that Galeano writes about its effect all over Latin America and records what he personally witnessed. Through his words he tries to make a difference. Subcomandante Marcos on the other hand writes about the Zapatista struggle in particular and his experiences and feelings in being an activist trying to save the people in Chiapas. Both intellectuals are strong critics of globalisation in Latin America.

B. Galeano speaks against globalisation

In an interview with Galeano, he speaks out against globalisation: “When a Latin American president in his speech says, ‘We are becoming part of the First World,’ in the first place he’s lying. Second, this is practically impossible. And in the third place, he should be in jail because this is an incitement to crime. If you say, “I want Montevideo to become Los Angeles,” you are inviting the destruction of Montevideo.”

“In this world, you have injustice on such a broad scale. The difference, the gap, between rich and poor people in material terms has been multiplied in these thirty years since I wrote Open Veins of Latin America.” (http://www.progressive.org/int907.htm) Even though Open Veins of Latin America was published in 1971, many still refer to it as an “encyclopedia“ of Latin American history. That book sought to provide a unified account of political economy in the Western Hemisphere in the five hundred years since colonialisation. Its well-
written text carefully evidenced the argument that a generation of “Dependency Theorists” were then elaborating: That “suggests that the wealthy nations of the world need a peripheral group of poorer states in order to remain wealthy.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependency_theory) It is interesting to state the origins of the dependency theory that became popular in the 1960s and 1970s, for it describes what is happening nowadays as we experience the era of globalisation.

“Dependency theory first emerged in the 1950s, advocated by Raul Prebisch whose research found that the wealth of poor nations tended to decrease when the wealth of rich nations increased. The theory quickly divided into diverse schools. Some, most notably Andre Gunder Frank, adapted it to (The economic and political theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that hold that human actions and institutions are economically determined and that class struggle is needed to create historical change and that capitalism will ultimately be superseded) Marxism. “Standard” dependency theory differs sharply from Marxism, however, arguing against internationalism and any hope of progress in less developed nations towards industrialization and a liberating revolution. Former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso wrote extensively on dependency theory while in political exile.” (http://www.absolueastronomy.com/encyclopedia/d/de/dependency_theory.htm)

*Open Veins of Latin America* earned Eduardo Galeano considerable popularity in Latin America. Unfairly, it gained the distinction of being banned by military governments in Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina, and of being selected by Isabel Allende as one of two indispensable volumes to carry with her as she was rushed into exile. She wrote the foreword to Galeano’s book.

**C. Historical Overview of Latin America**

Before continuing to discuss the history of Latin America, it is important to acquaint ourselves with the republics of the continent. The 20 republics are Argentina,
Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The term “Latin America” is also used to include Puerto Rico, the French West Indies, and other islands of the West Indies. Occasionally the term is used to include Belize, Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_America)

1. *Open Veins of Latin America*

To understand why Latin America is against globalisation one has to understand the ongoing pain it has lived through over centuries, first suffering from the Spaniards, then from the US imposing chosen dictators to govern it for the benefit of multinational companies. The best source in understanding Latin American history naturally comes from a native, Galeano. The book *Open Veins of Latin America* was written 25 years ago, and many countries tried to ban it; yet, it remains one of the most thorough references for Latin American history ever written.

Why is Latin America poor? It is not because of lack of natural resources. Latin America provides many of the raw products that have allowed the industrialized world to flourish. Even though Latin America is a very wealthy region, the people who live there do not benefit from this wealth. It is not because the people are lazy, but because they were forced to live under dictatorships imposed by Spanish colonialism, and later on, American hegemony.

Reading the book is shocking, horrifying, and saddening as Galeano states fact after fact of Latin American history. It was surprising to find out that so much suffering was imposed on the people of Latin America. Galeano has organized the
different facets of Latin American history according to the patterns of five centuries of exploitation. He emphasizes his concern over the natural resources Latin America has such as: gold and silver, cacao and cotton, rubber and coffee, sugar, fruit, hides and wool, petroleum, iron, nickel, manganese, copper, aluminum ore, nitrates, and tin. These are the veins that he traces through the body of the entire continent, up to the Rio Grande and throughout the Caribbean, all the way to their open ends where they empty into the pockets of the United States and Europe.

Gaetano begins his book by a quote: “Our defeat was always implicit in the victory of others; our wealth has always generated our poverty by nourishing the prosperity of others – the empires and their native overseers. In the colonial and neocolonial alchemy, gold changes into scrap metal and food into poison.” (Gaetano, 1997, p2)

*Open Veins of Latin America* reveals that the story of Latin America is one where complete waste is the rule. When the Spaniards first came to Latin America they destroyed the Indians and the flourishing civilizations of the Incas, Mayas and Aztecs just because these civilizations were not violent and did not invent the weaponry to resist the Spaniards.

“When the Spaniards invaded Latin America, the theocratic Inca empire was at its height, spreading all over what is now known as Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, taking in part of Columbia and Chile, And reaching northern Argentina and the Brazilian jungle. The Aztec confederation had achieved a high level of efficiency on the Valley of Mexico, and in Yucatan and Central America the remarkable civilization of the Mayas organized for work and war, persisted among peoples who succeeded them.” (Gaetano, 1997, p43)

The Conquistadores, the early Spanish conquerors of Latin America, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century slaughtered Indians by the thousands in the name of Christianity and the Catholic Church and in the name of greed and avarice. The
Indians did not know mining so that the gold and silver mines that the Spaniards found were untouched. They mined them so greedily and quickly that instant wealth grew around the mining areas. When the mines were depleted, this extreme wealth of the few was replaced by the utter poverty of the thousands and thousands of labourors the mining interests brought into the area. Mining was done essentially by slave labour on the part of the Indians and Africans brought into slavery. Their treatment was so brutal and cynical that they died like flies. Part of the harshness of this treatment was done in the name of religion. Indians and Africans had not heard of Jesus Christ, therefore they were heathens in the eyes of the Conquistadores and did not have any human rights. They had to be severely punished for their idolatry.

In the middle of the seventeenth century the North Americans fought the Indians in the US and Canada by distributing to the Indian population blankets that were infected with smallpox. The Indians unlike the Asians and Europeans who developed an immunity for this disease would simply suffer and die. Early in the eighteenth century, the Spaniards took this idea from the North-Americans and applied it in Latin America.

In 1781 Tupac Amaru, a direct descendent of the Inca emperors, laid siege to Cuzco. Tupac headed the broadest of messianic revolutionary movements. The rebellion broke out in Tinta Province that had been nearly depopulated by enforced service in the Cerro Rico mines. (Galeano, 1997, p44)

Tupac promised to return all the wealth that was taken by the invaders and after many victories and defeats he was captured and turned over to the Spaniards by one of his own chiefs.

"Tupac was tortured along with his wife, children and his chief aides in Cuzco's Plaza del Wacaypata. His tongue was cut off and his arms and legs were tied to four horses with the intention of quartering him, but his body would not break. In the end he was beheaded. His
head was sent to Tinta, one arm to Tungasuca and the other to Carabay, one leg to Santa Rosa and the other to Livitaca.” (Galeano, 1997, p45)

Latin America had fabulously fertile land. These lands were turned into single crop areas because this seemed to be more convenient to the white man. Instead of growing diverse crops that would feed the people and whose surplus could be exported; single crops were grown. Sugar cane in some areas, coffee in other areas, cocoa and bananas in yet other areas. Fantastic wealth was generated for as long as the land remained fertile. At the same time, every item other than what was grown had to be imported. There were very few immensely wealthy people and a majority of people who literally had nothing.

The Portuguese conquered a huge chunk of South America in the sixteenth century. They were already guaranteed ownership of the areas of Latin America that they themselves discover, in a treaty with Spain in 1494 endorsed by the Papacy. Eventually, they conquered half the continent of South America. (Galeano, 1997, pp15-16) Unlike Spain they united all their conquests in one political entity Brazil. They imported African slaves to work on coffee plantations letting the African and Indian workers die like flies.

In the seventeenth century the Portuguese discovered huge mines of gold in the Minas Gerais region. African and Indian workers were working under terrible conditions in the mines and were kept working until they could do it no more.

The Portuguese kept over exploiting the mines until all the gold was depleated and that took only a few decades. During this period the upper classes of the Minas Gerais region were the wealthiest people of the world, but suddenly they extracted everything. This is a prime example of over exploitation in Latin America. (Galeano, 1997, p51)
In 1822, Brazil gained its independence when it became a kingdom ruled by the son of the Portuguese monarch. Brazil broke all ties with the Portuguese crown in 1889 and became a republic. Furthermore, in the nineteenth century the dispossessed of Latin America fought against Spanish power. Even though peace came and landowners and businessmen increased their fortune, poverty grew among the masses and Latin America lived through an era of misery.

By 1820, most of Latin America became independent from Spain, but then fell under the influence of England. The English dominated Latin American economy by using the raw materials to their advantage, manufacturing them and then exporting the expensive finished products. However, by 1880 the US became the dominant power in Latin America and continues to be until this day. Galeano fairly antagonizes one toward the US when he writes about Latin America. In 1830 US relations with Latin America were strong, especially with Mexico. But by 1845 when the Mexican War ended. The US conquered Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Nevada, Utah and Colorado from Mexico.

In 1952 Fulgencio Batista took power in Cuba. He bowed down to US requests. (Galeano, 1997, p70) Galeano explains that the US would put dictators in Latin America to combat communism. For the US thought right wing dictatorships in Latin America were safer in combating the communism of the Soviet Union, than democracy.

When Fidel Castro took power in 1959, Cuba was selling almost all its sugar to the US. Castro changed Cuba’s US relations by taking an extreme stance against the US.

“The nation that buys commands, the nation that sells serves; it is necessary to balance trade in order to ensure freedom; the country that wants to die sells only to one country, and the country that wants to survive sells to more than one.” This was stated by Che Guevara at the
Alliance for Progress conference for Latin America in 1964. (Galeano, 1997, p70)

The history of Latin America is that of gross injustice and great waste. (Land depletion made the rich poor and the poor even poorer.) It is also a history of overt interference by the outside world especially when the US intended to further the interest of imperialism at the expense of the poor people who live in the regions of US influence. In the 1960s and 1970s, wages in some areas of Latin America were certainly the lowest in the world averaging less than $1 per day. Infant mortality was one of the highest in the world and life expectancy was shorter than in Africa.

Dictators would suppress the poor and let US companies in. The real governors were the American Ambassadors. Other dictators the US backed were Raphael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic who was toppled in 1962, Joao Goulart of Brazil who was overthrown in 1964, Francois Duvalier of Haiti who ruled as absolute dictator since the 1960s, (Duvalier passed on his position some twenty-five years later to his son who was then overthrown in the early 1990s), and Eduardo Pinochet of Chile who ruled from 1973 to 1990.

“In August of 1976 Orlando Letelier published an article describing the terror of the Pinochet dictatorship and the ‘economic liberty’ of small privileged groups as two sides of the same coin. Letelier, who had been a minister in Salvador Allende’s government, was exiled in the US. There he was blown into pieces shortly afterwards. He submitted in his article that it was absurd to talk of free competition in an economy such as Chile’s…” (Galeano, 1997, p270)

Galeano concludes his book by stating that Latin America is “not experiencing the infancy of capitalism but its vicious senility. Underdevelopment is not a stage of development but its consequence. Latin America’s underdevelopment arises from external development and continues to feed it.” (Galeano, 1997, p285)

After the demise of the Soviet Union, the US stopped supporting dictators. For
after the cold war globalisation surged forward. The US left the people to topple the authoritarian regimes in Latin America so that a new kind of "democracy", an "American democracy" would spring forth. For the US controlled Latin America in the name of democracy. Then Latin America was ruled by democratic presidents, all of whom were pro-US, but Latin America continued to be exploited as before. Until this day the US has control over the natural resources of Latin America via multinational companies using the concept of globalisation to their advantage.

Yet, because of the type of "democracy" the US is pushing for in Latin America, – and which we could call "chaotic democracy" – the US is favouring the thin layer of the rich at the expense of the vast multitudes who are in total destitution.

Galeano condemns those who accept a "reality" that rejects the poor, and would allow globalisation to reduce culture to entertainment, life to a spectacle, and news to advertising: "This is a form of violence against all the worlds that the worlds contains" which reminds us of what the Zapatistas call an alter globalisation: "one world with many worlds in it".

"The last U.N. report says that in 1999, 225 persons own a fortune equivalent to the total amount of what half of humanity earns. It's a very unjust distribution of bread and fishes. ... But at the same time, the world is equalizing in the habits it imposes. We are condemned to accept the global uniformisation, a sort of McDonaldisation of the entire world. This is a form of violence against all the worlds that the world contains. I usually say that I reject the idea of being obliged to choose between two possibilities: Either you die of hunger or you die of boredom. We are practicing each day – and we don't notice it because it's invisible, it's secret – a sort of massacre of our capacity to be diverse, to have so many different ways to live life, celebrate, eat, dance, dream, drink, think, and feel. It's like a forbidden rainbow. Now we are being more and more obliged to accept a single way. And this single way is being mainly produced in U.S. factories." Galeano (http://www.progressive.org/int907.htm)
D. *Upside Down*

In 1998, Galeano wrote *Upside Down* where he sets out to describe international politics at the turn of the millennium, including in his analysis a variety of social, cultural, and political interactions.

Galeano explains in *Upside Down* that the effect of globalization on Latin America is devastating. Every large city on the continent has thousands of homeless children whose numbers keep increasing at a great rate. The sex trade in children is increasing by leaps and bounds. The rich are getting fewer in number but their fortunes are greatly increasing at the expense of the vast majority who are getting poorer. The unemployment rate ranges from 20% to 40% and workers unions are either dissolved or getting weaker because any worker who gripes about his/her position can be readily fired and replaced at any wage because there are hundreds ready to take his/her place. Unemployment is breeding job insecurity, thus leading to a decline in pay. Furthermore with the advance of technology, fewer jobs are available. Galeano says that by the end of 1993 the Chrysler Corporation could make double the number of cars with the same number of people. Therefore, lack of jobs forces workers in developing countries to take on extremely low paid jobs. For example:

“McDonald’s gives its young customers toys made in Vietnamese sweatshops by women who earn eighty cents for a ten-hour shift with no breaks. Galeano comments that Vietnam defeated a U.S. military invasion. A quarter of a century after that, the country suffers humiliation in globalisation.” (Galeano, 1998, p173)

“The Gap sold shirts made in El Salvador. For every twenty-dollar shirt the Salvadoran workers got eighteen cents in 1995” (Galeano, 1998, p176) and “the price of a Disney T-shirt bearing a picture of Pocahontas is equivalent to a week’s wages for the worker in Haiti who sewed it at a rate of 375 T-shirts an hour.” (Galeano,
1998, p172) Breaking the barriers between the wealthy North and the poor South lead to an aggressive economical take-over of the unexploited poor “developing” markets through exploiting the low wage workers and marking “new territory” for “open Markets”, at the same time maintaining their sales tag at high prices globally for a ridiculously low cost. According to Galeano:

“Latin American countries are being “denationalized at a dizzying pace, with the exception of Cuba and Uruguay, where in a plebiscite at the end of 1992, 72% of the country voted to halt the sale of public enterprises. Presidents go about the world like traveling salesmen, selling what doesn’t belong to them.” (Galeano, 1998, p154)

There is evidence that globalisation has eliminated the characteristics of what every nation has i.e. cultural identity, patriotism and a sense of belonging. What the so-called “New World Order” has done is to turn everything into pure materialistic products. “My country is a product, I offer a product called Peru,” President Alberto Fujimori proclaimed on more than one occasion. (Galeano, 1998, p154) Galeano says that:

“profits are privatised and losses are socialised. In 1990, President Carlos Menem ordered Aerolmeas Argentinas to die. That profitable public enterprise was sold or, better put, given away to another public enterprise, Spain’s Iberia, which was a model of poor administration. The Argentine airline’s national and international routes were ceded for one-fifteenth of their value, and two Boeing 707 planes, still perfectly airworthy, were purchased for the modest price of $1.54 a piece.” (Galeano, 1998, p155)

Galeano points out that taxation has been modified so that the bulk of government budget comes from indirect taxes that hit rich and poor alike. Graduated income tax, (i.e. tax whose percentage increases with income) has been done away with and the rich run governments openly and unashamedly for their benefit. The effect is felt by the poor throwing them deeper into poverty and exposing them further to exploitation by the rich. For the purposes of this argument let me define “rich”. The
local rich employ the local poor, but more profoundly, the dominant global markets like the US and Western Europe exploit on a mass scale the poor, creating further "social pollution".

Galeano states that the crime rate is also growing to such an extent that the rich feel compelled to have their own private militia. The author points out the isolation of the rich caused by their wealth. They feel so threatened that they use armoured cars with bodyguards and do as little traveling by land as possible. The rich are even more isolated than the poor. They are in constant worry about being kidnapped, robbed or even murdered. The masses have no education and are politically ignorant. Public education has gone from bad to worse because of the taxation system. Galeano writes simply and clearly narrating tragedy after tragedy, making the reader feel what it is like to live in Latin America.

The author has nothing positive to say about globalization. Even democracy that has made some progress in Latin America over the past two decades brings to power the people who are most corrupt. This seems reasonable because if dictatorships keep power through fear, democracy gets power through money. Democracy increases the chances for globalisation rather than removes them. The best example is the US, the richest country in the world. It is becoming the largest catalyst to globalization in the world. Western democracies fuel globalization in non-democratic countries. The advantages of developed countries, mainly democracies, are paid for by developing countries through exploitation made easier by globalisation.
E. Further writings by Galeano

In Galeano's article 'Where People Voted Against Fear', he explains how Uruguay was a very progressive and vital country in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, where democracy was vibrant and military dictatorship was a remote possibility. Suddenly it became a country of dispirited and hopeless people run by politicians whose high-flown slogans are the opposite of what happens in reality.

"The country is unrecognizable, Uruguayans, so believing that even nihilism was beyond them, have started to believe, and with fervor. And today this melancholic and subdued people, who at first glance might be Argentines on Valium, are dancing on air." Galeano (http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Eduardo_Galeano/VotedAgainstFear_Uruguay.html)

Uruguay has become a country of emigrants and poor people where everything seems to stagnate and come to a standstill. Knowing that the country gave the vote to women before France did and enacted the eight-hour workday before the US, one is amazed at the negative changes it has undergone. (http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Eduardo_Galeano/VotedAgainstFear_Uruguay.html)

However, Uruguay is by no means a unique example, globalization is having the same effect in almost every country in the "Third World". Globalization is just not working. It is condemning people to perpetual impoverishment with no hope and nothing to look forward to. These countries are being squeezed by globalization the way Lloyd George, British prime minister in the First World War wanted to squeeze the Germans: "I will squeeze the lemon until the pips squeak".

Galeano has a dramatic and ironic way of depicting the ills of Latin America as he does in his book "Days and Nights of Love and War". This book is interesting
because it combines memoir, journalism and history of the struggles of Latin America under two decades of unimaginable violence and repression.

“A half a million Uruguayans outside their country. A million Paraguayans, half a million Chileans. The boats depart full of young people fleeing from prison, or grave, or hunger. To be alive is a risk; to think, a sin; to eat, a miracle. ... The first person killed by torture triggered a national scandal in Brazil in 1964. The tenth person to die of torture barely made the papers. Number fifty was accepted as ‘normal. ... The machine teaches you to accept the horror as you accept the cold of winter’”. (Galeano, 1983, p75)
Chapter III. The Zapatista National Liberation Army

To understand the thought of Subcomandante Marcos one should first understand the history of the Zapatista struggle that takes place in Chiapas, Mexico. His arrival came after General Abasalon Castellanos Dominguez became governor of Chiapas in 1982 and oversaw a dramatic increase in militarization to control land struggles. During his administration, 102 campesinos (peasants) were assassinated, 327 disappeared, 509 imprisoned, 427 kidnapped and tortured, 407 families expelled from their homes, and 54 communities overrun by security forces. (Hansen & Civil, 2002, p447) Subcomandante Marcos arrives on the scene with other activists from the National Liberation Forces (FLN) as chaos was in the rise in Chiapas. On November 17, 1983 the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) was founded with only a nucleus of six: three natives and three of mixed race (mestizos).

By the mid 1990s approximately 30% of the Zapatista combatants were female. Extraordinarily these women voluntarily renounced having a family to devote their lives to the armed struggle. A struggle for democracy, freedom, human dignity, land and fundamentally, for an end to free market reforms or, as many Mexicans referred to, “savage capitalism”. The actions and speeches of both the indigenous Comandantes, rooted in Maya traditions, and Subcomandante Marcos have provoked and inspired people in different countries to begin a new dialogue about many existing and new issues. (http://www.zapatistarevolution.com/article.html)

In 1986 Local leaders invited the EZLN to enter the community. These leaders took their title from the revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, a person who took up arms and became an activist in 1911, in the state of Morelos. His fight was for tierra y libertad (land and freedom) – for common ownership of land and the right of small
farmers to control their own villages. Since 1911, nothing has changed, it has only been reincarnated in these modern times as “Globalisation”. i.e. Modern Globalisation. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch1.htm)

Corrupt and fraudulent presidential elections take place on July 6, 1988 bringing PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari to power, at a time when the opposition candidate Cuauhtemoc Cardenas was leading in the polls. The vote-counting computers suddenly crashed and as if by magic, three days later, Salinas was declared the elected president. (Hansen & Civil, 2002, p447)

Due to escalating anger and frustration by the Zapatista people, the EZLN grew to 1,300 armed members in 1989 and in 1992 President Salinas modified article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, bringing to an end 75 years of land reform and leading the way for the privatization of ejidos (common people). Zapatista communities approved a military offensive by the EZLN and the Clandestine Indigenous Committee – General Command (CCRI-CG) to lead the struggle in 1993. In 1994, New Year’s Day, NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) was inaugurated, at the same time an armed uprising of 3,000 members of the EZLN came from the mountains of the Selva Lacandona and occupied several large towns, including the major town of San Cristobal de Las Casas, plus 100 ranches. By January 2 1994, only 24 hours after NAFTA was inaugurated, the army responded, bombing indigenous communities and killing 145 or more native people. (Marcos, 2002, p447) On “this” day – the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, Canada and the USA came into force – President Carlos Salinas celebrated Mexico’s new status as a First World country. However, the Zapatistas stated that the Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojolobal, Chol and other Mayan ethnic groups of Chiapas experienced the worst extremes of poverty in Mexico. Infant
mortality was twice the national average and malnutrition was prevalent in sixty-seven percent of the population. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch1.htm)

A. The Human Cost

In 1993, the year before the Zapatista uprising, roughly 30,000 people in Chiapas died of malnutrition, through hunger and diseases. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch1.htm) In Mexico where endemic racism, dating from the brutality and genocide of the Spanish conquistadors, still exits today, “the owners of the fincas (rural property) treat the Indians worse than they treat their animals”. The native population has systematically been expelled and excluded from their land for over 500 years in the pursuit of capitalism - to make way for profitable business. In this southeastern state, the government and a minority of corporations extract the majority if not all the wealth - oil, electric energy, tropical timber, cattle, corn, cocoa, coffee and bananas. Rather than bringing “development” and social justice, they bring “death and disease, landlessness, divisions within communities and loss of culture. These realities will only be intensified under NAFTA” which the Zapatistas have denounced as a “death sentence” for the indigenous and farming population of Mexico. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)

It was in January 1995 that the Chase Manhattan Emerging Markets Group internal report stated:

“While Chiapas, in our opinion, does not pose a fundamental threat to Mexican political stability, it is perceived so by many in the investment community. The government will need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate effective control of the national territory and of security policy.” (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)

With NAFTA becoming a fact of life and the increasing levels of foreign
investment in Mexico, a government priority has been the ability to prove to foreign investors that they will find a favorable climate for their business. This favorable climate has to do with the removal of people who do not serve the interests of multinational corporations, and with seeing the people as an obstacle to economic growth and the extraction of resources. According to Ian Chambers, director of the Office for Central America of the International Labour Organisation (of the UN):

"The indigenous population of the world, estimated at 300 million, live in zones which have 60% of the natural resources of the planet. Therefore the multiple conflicts due to the use and final destination of their lands as determined by the interests of governments and companies are not surprising. The exploitation of natural resources (oil and minerals) and tourism are the principal industries which threaten indigenous territories in America." (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)

Chiapas possesses primary materials indispensable for the production and consumption needs of global capitalism. Chiapan oil accounts for 81.2% of Mexico’s crude exports. Chiapas provides 55% of Mexico's hydroelectricity. The Chiapan jungle is considered to be one of the few regions in the world where dams of significant size can be constructed. Chiapas also contains valuable timber, land, uranium, water and other resources. Appendix I includes a map of Chiapas.

The state is the focus for numerous investment projects by multinational corporations. These include Nestle which is expanding its milk production factory in Chiapas, biotechnology companies like Monsanto and Novartis, and the UK company Xenova which is negotiating terms with the government to gain access to potentially useful plants, insects and micro-organisms to patent worldwide. Moreover, a major project entitled “Conservation International” is financed by Exxon, Ford Motor Company, United Airlines, Intel, Walt Disney, Pulsar and McDonalds. Companies
potentially interested in the Chiapan wealth – Oil, are Shell, Exxon, Amoco, Texaco, Chevron, Mobil Oil, Arco, AGIP, Enron, and Nippon Oil, amongst others. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)

B. The Environmental Cost

In terms of biodiversity Chiapas is the richest state in Mexico, and one of the richest for its geographical size in the world, with many ecosystems within a small area. For example, the Lacandon, a hot steamy tropical rain forest, contains over 3,500 species of plant, 500 species of vertebrates, and thousands of insects and other animal groups. The Los Altos comprises the globally rare tropical pine forest. The ecosystems are under heavy pressure. The Lacandon jungle and the Los Altos (highlands) form the backdrop of the conflict.

The environmental pressure comes from four sides: the conflict, multinational corporations, migration of displaced peoples and local entrepreneurs. The effect of seventy thousand troops moving into the area has led to deforestation for the construction and location of army barracks. The villagers who fear the loss of their crops by the army relocated their maize fields away from villages and onto less fertile mountainsides where soil erosion is creating a local ecological disaster. Deliberately, the army polluted the environment, like rivers and streams to harass villages. It was reported, defoliating chemicals have been used by the army (like the US in the Vietnam War) during the conflict. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)

During the month of April 1998 there were more than seven hundred forest fires burning, covering thousands of hectares. When interviewed, the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Fish (SEMARNAP) said the fires were “accidents or farmers crop-clearing fires burning out of control”. The ministry never
elaborated what counted as a "political" fire. However, fire bombs were reported to be dropped by the army into remote forested areas. Further degrading the environment of the area. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)

Multinational corporations have the natural wealth of Chiapas within their short and long term business plans including; oil production, extraction of high value rainforest timber, and the wasteful chipping of old-growth forest. Six hundred and eighty thousand hectares of forest in Chiapas are lost per annum. In addition, according to SEMARNAP, the Lacandon is a "very important" source of live animals for the illegal wildlife trade by local entrepreneurs.

Before 1940, the population of Lacandon was only a few hundred, as they were pushed from their small plots of land by larger, mostly non-indigenous landowners, the natives were squeezed further towards the east. The east of Chiapas is the Lacandon - the ultimate frontier. There is nowhere further to push. Now there are tens of thousands of people, of many languages, all of whom since the 1950s have settled amongst the fragile environment, trees, insects and natural diseases of the rainforest. As they were further and further squeezed into a corner away from their roots and original homes, they rose up against the government. The fate of the remaining Lacandon rainforest and the Los Altos rests upon the outcome of the conflict. If the Mexican authorities reign continues, the natural resources will be stripped away by expendable workers for the benefit of the multinational corporations. When the natural resources are depleted by these companies, they will pull out, leaving behind a human and ecological tragedy. If the Zapatistas prevail, there is the chance of a future that reconciles both the desperate human needs in Chiapas, and the unique diversity of species that have co-evolved and co-habited the ecosystems of Chiapas. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)
C. Arms Industry

The military aggression in Chiapas is supported by the US and British arms industry. Since 1994, $235 million worth of arms and military equipment have been sold and donated to Mexico by the US alone. This includes heavy military equipment like 103 UNIH “Huey” helicopters, four surveillance planes, plus hi-tech electronics, night-vision, electronic-control and satellite equipment. Tear gas made by a US company was used against Zapatista villagers during a military raid of the community of Diez de Abril in April 1998. Mexican graduates of the School of the Americas (SOA) in Fort Benning, Georgia (one of the most renowned military schools in the US, famous for its expertise in counter-insurgency techniques) have played a key role in the low intensity war in Chiapas. In 1991 and 1995, an average of twenty-eight Mexicans attended the courses. Their number soared in 1996 to 241. (http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/ch14.htm)

During the mid 1990s peace went “off and on” with no benefits to either side. In 1997 a paramilitary group linked with the PRI attacked a church, killing 45, including women and children in the community of Acteal. Ernesto Zedillo, elected president in 1994 denied the existence of paramilitaries in Chiapas. However, the Mexican Army began to disarm the EZLN leaving the paramilitary groups still armed. “Over 1000 troops and police invaded four communities destroying records and arresting community leaders.” (Hansen & Civil, 2002, p450) NGOs estimated 1500 fatalities at the hands of paramilitaries, despite Ernesto Zedillo denials.
D. San Andres Accords

The accords of the San Andres Agreements outline the fundamental demands of Mexico’s indigenous peoples. These minimum demands were agreed upon at the National Indigenous Forum in January 1996. Representatives of the 56 indigenous peoples met with the Zapatistas to express their needs and demands. The primary points included: 1) Recognition of indigenous people’s right to self-determination. 2) Freedom as a vehicle to achieve self-determination, a collective right to have diversity respected, and a control over native territories and resources. 3) Recognition of the “community” as a public entity and a legal character, not only in the agrarian area, but in all municipalities, rural and urban. At the time, only municipal agencies have official recognition; urban neighborhoods, un-incorporated villages and rural centers do not have any type of representation. 4) The indigenous peoples propose to reinforce the municipality as an institution. The institution must be adapted (customized) in a realistic manner to the particular situation of indigenous peoples. They should have the right to designate freely their representatives as well as their organizations of municipal government. 5) The indigenous peoples propose the right for municipalities to co-associate as indigenous communities in order to coordinate and plan their actions. 6) In order to solve the national agrarian problem it is necessary to reform Article 27 of the Constitution. This article should recover the spirit of Emilano Zapata summarized in the basic demand: the lands should be owned by those who work them. (http://zapatistas.net/accords/)
E. The Political Struggle

1. Indigenous Rights

Following several months of debates and negotiations between the EZLN, several hundred indigenous leaders and the government, the constitutional proposals were born via the accords of San Andres. In February 1996 the agreements/accords were signed by the Zapatistas and the Mexican government. The foundation of the agreements arose from the concepts of indigenous autonomy, as expressed through self-determination, territory and community. However, the government never converted the agreements into law, collapsing the dialogue between the government and the EZLN et al. Then in November 1996, the Cocopa, Commission on Concordance and Pacification, intervened. The EZLN and the government agreed to entrust the Cocopa with drafting a new proposal. The resulting constitutional proposal was among the most important set of conditions that were being dealt with for a resumption of the dialogue. The Cocopa document proposed several far-reaching changes concerning indigenous rights but lacked many elements of the original agreements of San Andres, particularly the issue of land reform and distribution. On November 29, 1996 the EZLN accepted the proposal of the Cocopa but the government responded on December 19th with a counter-proposal. (http://www.ezln.org/archivo/Cocopa/Cocopa970304.en.htm)

Subcomandante Marcos stresses these agreements because currently the indigenous peoples have no constitutionally guaranteed rights as “peoples.” Their “historic significance” is recognized in Article 4 of the Constitution but they have no collective rights to self-determination over their homelands. If the San Andres Agreements were converted into Constitutional law, indigenous peoples for the first
time in Mexico’s history would have the right to self-determination and to have their
diversity respected. They would have control over the resources of their lands:
recognition of the “community” as a public entity. They would have the
right to organize the municipalities in their territories according to their tradi-
tional forms of governance and to elect their own representatives as well.
(http://www.ezln.org/documentos/1997/19970111.en.htm)

2. Mexican government’s counter-proposal on Indigenous Rights

The Zapatistas stated that their “particular considerations” for rejecting the
document were centered on Article 4, where three central aspects of autonomy are
nullified: 1) The capacity of the indigenous peoples for self-government. 2) The
capacity to apply internal normative systems. 3) The collective access to the use and
enjoyment of natural resources on their lands and territories. Moreover the Zapatistas
stated that the counter-proposal “reducing indigenous peoples to secondary status”;
“is based upon an ethnocentric, discriminatory and racist conception;” and “reveals
clearly an ignorance of indigenous peoples, of legal techniques, of the Constitution

3. The Zapatista Struggle Goes On

The year 2000, Vincente Fox assumed the presidency of Mexico and the
Zapatistas broke a five-months long silence, calling on the government to meet three
demands before peace talks resume: withdraw troops from seven of 250 military
encampments in Chiapas, release all Zapatista political prisoners and implement the
San Andres Accords. Fox responded by dismantling checkpoints through the state. Then over a five months period he gradually dismantled the seven army encampments, turning two into social service centers, and released most of the political prisoners. On December 5, 2000, Fox introduced constitutional reforms to implement the San Andres Accords, with secret commentary to Congress encouraging the gutting of reforms to prevent any substantial change in the status quo.

The following February the Zapatistas including Subcomandante Marcos, marched into Mexico City demanding government compliance to the San Andres Accords. On March 11, 2001 the Zapatistas arrived in Mexico City where 250,000 people gathered to greet them. This was regarded as a world event. Yet, the senate unanimously approved a mutilated version of the Cocopa Law. Three days later the Chamber of deputies approved the law introduced by former President Ernesto Zedillo by a vote of 360 to 60. The approved law was known as the Zedillo law, introduced by Zedillo in 1998 and rejected by the EZLN. Indigenous groups throughout Mexico rejected the new law and began national mobilization in support of the original Cocopa Law. (Hansen & Civil, 2002, p451)

By 2001 the Zapatistas thought that it was not enough to stop engaging in dialogue with the government as they believed they were getting nowhere. The EZLN continued on with the struggle. The EZLN then decided to carry out, alone and unilaterally, the San Andres Accords regarding indigenous rights and culture. For four years, from the middle of 2001 to the middle of 2005, the EZLN have devoted themselves to this and to other matters as well.

During these four years the EZLN handed over to the Good Government Juntas (born in August 2003, and, through them, self-learning and the exercise of "govern obeying" continued) and the Autonomous Municipalities the aid and contacts
that they had gained throughout Mexico and the world at large during the years of war and resistance. Also, the EZLN built economic and political support, allowing the Zapatista communities to make progress with fewer difficulties like helping communities build their autonomy and improve their living conditions. The EZLN state indigenous communities that have improved their living conditions whether in health, education, food or housing, were those that are in Zapatista territory.

Writer Justin Podur highlights the Zapatista’s contribution to democratic self-governance in Chiapas:

“For some 10 years, the Zapatistas have inspired people all over the world. The Zapatistas’ ‘Autonomous Municipalities’, in particular, have been models of community organization and democratic self-governance. These municipalities managed to provide not only better basic services (health, education, culture, infrastructure) than the Mexican state ever had, but they did so in spite of violent opposition by the (US-backed) state and the paramilitary auxiliaries it employed.

The democratic decision-making processes within the municipalities... were examples from which movements all over the world tried to learn.

It was therefore a surprise for many when the Zapatistas announced the ‘death’ of the Autonomous Municipalities, scheduled for August 8, 2003, to be followed by a ‘birth’ of something new on August 9 – all of which was to coincide with a big party. Supporters from all over Mexico and the world traveled to the Zapatista rebel municipality of Oventic, in the highlands of Chiapas, to witness the rebirth of the autonomous communities from August 8-10, 2003.”

(http://www.organicconsumers.org/chiapas/aguascalientes.cfm)

From August 2003 until the middle of 2005, the EZLN leadership has no longer involved itself in giving orders in civil matters, but it has accompanied and helped the authorities who are democratically elected by the people. It has also kept watch on the aid received and consumed, keeping the people, as well as national and international civil society well informed.

The Zapatistas believe the villages have improved. Now there are more compañeros and compañeras who are learning how to govern. Slowly, more of the
Zapatista women leaders were starting to leave the task of governing. But there is still a “lack of respect for the compañeras”, and they need to participate more in the struggle, as well as through the Good Government Juntas. Cooperation has been improved between Autonomous Municipalities, official authorities and other organizations in overcoming potential issues and problems. Also dramatic improvement in the management of projects, and the fair distribution of such projects were enacted. Aid given by civil society from all over the world has become more equitable. Crucially, health and education have improved as well, although a lot more progress needs to be made. The same is true for housing and food. In some areas there has been positive progress with issues of land rights, because the lands recovered from the finqueros (large ranch owners) are being distributed. However, areas continue to suffer from a lack of land to cultivate. Great advances have been made in the support and direction provided by national and international civil society, previously everyone did whatever they wanted. Now the Good Government Juntas are directing and prioritising them to where the greatest need exists. Similarly the EZLN say, everywhere there are more compañeros and compañeras, they are learning to relate to people from other parts of Mexico and the World. “They are learning to respect and to demand respect. They are learning that there are many worlds, and that everyone has their place, their time and their way, and therefore there must be mutual respect between everyone.” (http://www.ezln.org/documentos/2005/sexta1.en.htm)

On June 6, 2005, the EZLN released their Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona stating that they will help and support all people and organizations resisting and struggling against neoliberalism and for humanity. They also state that the:

“The EZLN maintains its commitment to an offensive ceasefire, and it will not make any attack against government forces or any offensive
military movements.

The EZLN still maintains its commitment to insisting on the path of political struggle through this peaceful initiative that we are now undertaking. The EZLN continues, therefore, in its resolve to not establish any kind of secret relations with either national political-military organizations or those from other countries.

The EZLN reaffirms its commitment to defend, support and obey the Zapatista indigenous communities of which it is composed, and which are its supreme command, and – without interfering in their internal democratic processes – will, to the best of its abilities, contribute to the strengthening of their autonomy, good government and improvement in their living conditions. In other words, what we are going to do in Mexico and in the world, we are going to do without arms, with a civil and peaceful movement, and without neglecting nor ceasing to support our communities.” (http://www.ezln.org/documentos/2005/sexta3.en.htm)

The economy needs to be controlled again to give the possibility to men and women to decide and choose their destiny and not to feel like a leaf in the wind. The novelty of the Zapatista movement is that all the different indigenous ethnicities are fighting together against the same enemy. They claim they can unite and recognize all differences among them. They fight to protect their identity through their various languages, traditions and religions.
Chapter IV. The Thought of Subcomandante Marcos

Subcomandante Marcos' identity is unknown. No one can recognize him under the black ski mask and pipe that have become his trademark. The leader and spokesman of Mexico's Zapatista National Liberation Movement has been described by many as a true national leader, a historic figure who speaks for the poor and dispossessed. Marcos came from far away to fight for the cause of the oppressed in Chiapas and from this small ethnicity he was able to make the cause spread into one of worldwide interest and many ethnicities. His writings are full of indications that he was repelled by injustice, and hope that if the oppressed came together they can accomplish a great deal. The role of women in the Zapatista movement has been essential. For they often were in leadership positions and the men accepted readily being led by a woman in battle.

The fact the Zapatista movement attracted worldwide interest is both surprising and revealing. After all, Chiapas is a remote province in Mexico with few signs of modern civilization. Its people are largely uneducated Indians. But through cooperation with each other they forced the Mexican government to take a new look at their oppression, poverty and exploitation. Marcos blames globalization for most of the ills in Chiapas, as he points out globalization enriches the few who own financial and industrial institutions, but condemns the many to permanent impoverishment and exploitation.

Exploitation was possibly tolerated in the nineteenth century when it was accepted as the norm. Even then, workers were constantly coming together to form labour unions. Governments were forced to recognize labour parties as legal. But it angers one greatly to find so much exploitation and injustice in the twenty-first
century because there is so much activism for human rights everywhere. What makes globalization nowadays especially harmful and frustrating is that the oppressed and exploited cannot point their finger at a concrete enemy. Their oppressor seems to be a set of abstractions against which they can do nothing such as brutal capitalism and multinational corporations.

A. Unknown Identity

For many, Marcos who is being dubbed as the new Ernesto “Che” Guevara is the main weapon in that struggle. But very little is known about the man behind the mask whom former President Ernesto Zedillo once accused of being “a foreigner and a professional guerrilla”.

Yet, Marcos says he will take the mask off once the conflict is over, because it is crucial to his role in the struggle. “Once the mask is gone, so is Marcos,” he once said in an interview. However, Marcos wrote in his book Our Sword is Our Weapon that he did actually take off the mask once in front of the people in Chiapas.

Journalist and writer, Naomi Klein, wrote:

“Marcos, the quintessential anti-leader, insists that his black mask is a mirror, so that ‘Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristobal, a Jew in Germany, a Gypsy in Poland, a Mohawk in Quebec, a pacifist in Bosnia, a single woman on the Metro at 10pm, a peasant without land, a gang member in the slums, an unemployed worker, an unhappy student and, of course, a Zapatista in the mountains.’ In other words, he says, he is us: we are the leader we’ve been looking for.” (Klein, 2001, p455)

The Mexican authorities say that Marcos’ real name is Rafael Sebastian Guillen, a 47-year-old who was born in the northern state of Tamaulipas. They also
Berlin, London, and Austin Texas. At the same time Zapatista Solidarity groups implemented both direct solidarity and local resistance. On 8-9 December, 2001, a World March and European Meeting took place in Barcelona as a campaign against neoliberal globalisation and against the war (this protest was after the September 11 attacks in the US). (http://www.marsch2000.de/barcelona.htm) Moreover, Marcos on March 11, 2001, headed a 15-day march from the Lacandon jungle to the heart of Mexico City for government compliance with the San Andres Accords. He was greeted by 250,000 people. Another demonstration took place on March 16 2002, the biggest ever globalisation protest took place including over 300,000 marchers. The demonstration at the European Union summit in Barcelona was at least as large as the one in July, 2001, at the G-7 meeting in Genoa. (http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/role/globdem/globprot/2002/0317demo.htm)

B. A Selection of Essays and Articles

Marcos’ selected writings in the first section of his book *Our Sword is Our Weapon*, bring a strong feeling of actually being there in the Chiapas Province, vividly experiencing the poverty and deprivation of women and children there.

Marcos’ description of the economic situation of Chiapas is well illustrated in his article: “A Storm and a Prophecy”. (Marcos, 1994, p22-p37) Chiapas supplies 55% of the electric power in Mexico, less than one third of the homes in the Chiapas Province have electricity. He also points out that the 92,000 tonnes of petroleum produced daily and the 517 billion cubic feet of gas go elsewhere with no profit to the local population. The 2750 tonnes of honey produced in Chiapas go to the US and
say he used to teach philosophy at Mexico City’s National Autonomous University, and that in 1983 he moved to the southern state of Chiapas to work with Indian communities in the region.

Marcos has revealed he comes from middle-class parents, and that he once lived in Mexico City. Both his parents were schoolteachers. (Marcos, 2004, p13) He says he does not know if his mother recognises him behind the mask. But showing the sense of humour for which he is renowned, he adds: “though they say a mother cannot be fooled”. Furthermore, Marcos said that he has been married for five years; his wife’s name remains unknown. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1214676.stm)

Marcos through the Zapatista movement is known to be the initiator of many anti-globalisation protests in the world. The novelty of the Zapatista movement is that all the different indigenous ethnicities are fighting together against the same enemy. What they say is that they can be together even if different. They fight to protect their identity through their various languages, traditions and religions.

In January 1996, the Zapatistas called for an intercontinental meeting for humanity and against neo-liberalism, which attracted huge numbers. In the summer of that year over 3,000 activists from at least 40 countries met in Chiapas, to engage in a collaborative process which addressed important issues such as community development. The process resulted in having another successful meeting in Europe: the Second Intercontinental Encounter was set in Spain, in July 1997. Continuing conversations took place on a global scale regarding capitalism and building alternatives. This second meeting provided positive cooperation in the building of an international network of communication and resistance, out of which the People’s Global Action against Free Trade was founded. Regional meetings were also held in
Europe for the enjoyment of the “First World” leaving nothing for the Chiapans to enjoy.

“Welcome you have arrived to the poorest state of the country: Chiapas. . . .

Chiapas has a total area of 75, 634.4 square kilometers, some 7.5 million hectares. It is the eighth largest state in Mexico and is divided into III townships. For the purposes of looting, it is organized into nine economic regions. . . .

There are 7 hotel rooms for every 1000 tourists, while there are 0.3 hospital beds per thousand Chipaneco citizens. Leave the calculations and drive on, noticing the three police officials in berets jogging along the shoulder of the road. Drive by the Public Security station and continue, passing hotels, restaurants, large stores, and heading toward the exit to Comitan. Leaving San Cristobal behind, you will see the famous San Cristobal caves, surrounded by a leafy forest. Do you see the sign? No, you are not mistaken; the army administers this natural park! Without leaving your uncertainty behind, drive on...

” (Marcos, 1994, pp26-27)

Marcos writes this article in a way that makes it easy to visualize Chiapas as if it were in front of the reader. It also gives one a sense of indignation at the great injustice committed against the people of Chiapas.

When reading about the hardships the Zapatistas go through, it very important to be able to understand their definition of democracy. Marcos continuously speaks out for democracy at every election that takes place in Mexico, however, disappointed with his governments’ vision on democracy, on many occasions he writes stating his anger toward the government at the injustice it is bringing to Chiapas. He believes:

“[For us] democracy is much more than an electoral contest or putting the alternative party in power. But it is also an electoral contest if it is clean, fair, honest and plural...That’s why we say that electoral democracy doesn’t make a democracy, but is an important part of it... We think that the elections represent, for millions of people, a space for a dignified and respectable struggle... In the Zapatista idea, democracy is something that is constructed from below and with everyone, including those that think differently than us. Democracy is the exercise of power by the people all the time and in all places.” – Subcomandante Marcos, Zapatista Army of National Liberation, Mexico, June 2000 (http://www.narconews.com/marcos1.html)
In the article “A Message from Marcos Before the July 2, 2000 Elections” Marcos addresses the Mexican people and governments around the world. Marcos points out that the voter in the 2000 elections is not respected. He states “Modernity” does not mean the country’s passage to democracy, to government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The exercise of political power does not pass from the political class to the citizens, but rather to the publicists, editors, anchors and commentators.

“If sometimes it is said that governing can happen through the media, today this has been inverted so that now one is governed (and the government is disputed) in and by the media, the substitution of the citizen by the radio and the TV. This is not democracy. It is virtual government and the virtual change of government. The government palaces, the legislative halls and the polling places are already not in their real homes, but rather in news programming. … The problem is that, more than a few times, this coverage is not fair (the official party demolishes the others in times and in stellar hours), and it is not a political position that is broadcast, but rather they opt for scandal, insult, defamation or banal gossip. More still, very often the communicator becomes the judge of what he communicates, and ‘decides’ what and how he is going to inform.” (http://www.narconews.com/marcos1.html)

Marcos does not want to put the media aside, but he stresses the need for honesty, fairness and responsibility by the communicators that should be projected in the political arena the media is leading. He expresses much frustration with the Mexican government using the media to bend the truth to their advantage especially when it gives the public a false image of the Zapatistas so that the powerful can exploit Chiapas to the full.
C. Philosophical works

It is interesting to comment on Marcos' philosophical and literary writings. The second part of the essay "It Continues Raining Here" is very intriguing. Marcos tries to describe love to a two-year-old boy, Pedrito. Talking about how a man loves a woman and the complications of such love. He relates love to a boy buttoning his shirt and talks about buttoning it from the bottom up because there is always an extra button without a buttonhole. When one reads this essay, one gets a real feel for the complication and diversity of love.

"Well, when a man loves a woman... well it's not that easy to explain as, say, what you need to do so you have no extra buttons when you have buttoned your shirt, which can be a complicated thing if you don't pay attention and do it with care. For example, I use a 'from the bottom up' technique, which in addition to being a concept of political science, is very good for buttoning up." (Marcos, 1998, p272)

The second part of the essay "Closing Words at the National Encuentro in Defense of Cultural Heritage: To Plant the Tree of Tomorrow" is another of his pleasant philosophizing writings which is artistic, humorous and quite enjoyable.

It is the story of a man considered as a fool by everyone in his village who planted trees which will only grow after decades, whereas the other villagers were busy planting crops that they harvest yearly. People living more than a century later suddenly discovered the grown trees that gave them great pleasure and comfort.

"To plant the tree of tomorrow, that is what we (the Zapatistas) want. We know that in these frenetic times of 'realistic' politics, of fallen banners, of polls substituting for democracy, of neo-liberal criminals who call for crusades against what they are hiding and who feeds them, of chameleon-like-metamorphoses, saying we want to plant the tree of tomorrow sounds foolish and crazy; but nevertheless, to us it not a phrase born of drama or obsolete utopianism." (Marcos, 1999, p282)
This goes to show that planning for the remote future may be superior to planning for immediate gains.

In the last section of Marcos' book *Our Sword is Our Weapon*, his writings seem rather too philosophical, especially where he writes mostly of characters such as the beetle Durito, Old Don Antonio, the sea and the ancient gods of indigenous lore.

"Once upon a time, there was a cloud who very tiny and lonely and used to stray far from the big clouds. She was very little, barely a wisp of a cloud. And whenever the big clouds made themselves rain so as to paint the mountains green, the little cloud would come flying to offer her services. But they scorned her because she was so small." From the essay: "The Tale of the Little Wisp of a Cloud". (Marcos, 1997, p347)

It is like seeing an ultra-modern painting where possibly only the one who painted it can understand it's meaning fully. It was difficult to keep up my interest for long periods, contrary to his writings about Mexican society and its problems that are extremely clear and stimulating, and full of attention-grabbing observations.

D. "The Fourth World War"

Going back to Marcos' political writings, Marcos once again takes the subject of globalization in his article "The Fourth World War". To Marcos the Third World War was what is generally known as the Cold War. It ended in 1990 with the demise of the Soviet Union. Although the process of disintegration was not violent and did not result in deaths and destruction of property, it amounted to erasing a superpower from the political map. To him the Fourth World War started with the 1990 Gulf War when it was felt that the US is the only superpower. The most important characteristic of the Fourth World War is globalization, a process that seeks to obliterate all cultural differences among men. Only one language is worth knowing: the language of
computers, contrary to what people think would be the English language. All cultural aspects that make a French person French or an Italian Italian, are being destroyed, because they are barriers that prevent people from entering the globalised market. Nowadays, the question is no longer to produce for a particular market, the French for example, but to produce for a World market, in which people consume the same product independently of the country or region to which they belong. Only one type of individual is worthwhile: the consumer with his/her many credit cards and great purchasing capacity. The indigenous of Chiapas who do not even speak Spanish and where the majority are not even literate are not worth living. Globalization proceeds to exploit their petroleum and uranium with complete unconcern with what would happen to them. In terms of globalization, it's even better for the indigenous to die than to live the life of a mere nuisance to be eliminated.

Marcos states that the Fourth World War is producing "fragmentation". The world is paradoxically, not becoming one. It is breaking up into many pieces, because people are trying to search for local identity and this is leading to fragmentation. Since there is so much globalisation, fragmentation as a reaction to globalisation is failing to make everyone uniform. He points out that "these fragments must be organized into a common denominator. It is what we call a 'financial bomb.'" This is because it works against the wishes of the multinational companies. Furthermore, this means cultural history, the history of traditions, clashes with globalisation and is the "bad guy" of this war. This is especially serious in Europe where there are nations with deeply ingrained traditions. Not everything can be translated into the language of the computer and the market.

Another argument Marcos makes is that armies in many states are playing the role of the police. In Mexico the army is doing more police work, like fighting drug
trafficking. Marcos says that national armies turn into local police in the manner of a US comic book: a Super Cop for example. When the army in former Yugoslavia was reorganized, turned into a local police force, and NATO became its “Super Cop”. The point is no longer to defend the nation. For when the enemy of national stability is drug trafficking, and drug trafficking is international in nature, national armies that operate under the banner of national stability accept international aid or global interference from other countries. The problem of reorganising national armies is essentially a global problem. In the case of Latin America, this was implied by the Hemispheric Defense System put in place by the Organisation of American States, (OAS). According to President Menem, all countries of Latin America need to unite against threats. To Marcos this would mean destroying the national consciousness of the armies. The article makes the argument that any country can consider anything a threat to its domestic security. For example, the neo-liberals can easily decide that the indigenous uprising in Chiapas threatens the security of North America as a whole. They can decide as well that any uprising anywhere, (just like Vietnam, Iraq or Palestine), is also a threat.

The article concludes by stating that even if Mexico wants to make Chiapas into a desert or a huge shopping center, the indigenous would say “no”, “that land is their mother, it is the depository of culture, history lives there, and the dead live there.”

It is very interesting how he defines the third and fourth world war. Although this is an unconventional definition, Marcos makes an argument whereby globalization is another war. It is a war to keep one superpower, the US, dictating its will and way of life to the world.

“The concept on which globalization is based is what we call ‘neo-liberalism’, a new religion which is going to permit this process
to be carried out. With this Fourth World War, once again, territories are being conquered, enemies are being destroyed and the conquest of these territories is being administered. ...

The problem is, what territories are being conquered and reorganized, and who is the enemy? Given that the previous enemy disappeared, we are saying that humanity is now the enemy. The Fourth World War is destroying humanity as globalization is universalizing the market, and everything human which opposes the logic of the market is an enemy and must be destroyed.” Marcos (http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/auto/fourth.html)

As Marcos conveys, war can also be based on violence other than killing people. For if the environment is damaged, jobs and hope taken away, political corruption unchecked, and people are stripped of their cultural identity, this is a war by the rich against everyone else.

E. Why the Zapatistas Fight?

In many of Marcos’ writings one can feel the impact globalisation had on the local identities in Chiapas. In his essay “Why We Use the Weapon of Resistance?” (Marcos, 1999, pp166-174) Marcos explains that the Zapatistas fight to be what they are, their respect of “different” and “other” selves as well as fair pay for the products they sell. Oftentimes they receive ten times less than the market price, for example, in coffee and livestock.

“We the Zapatistas, are fighting for good homes, good food, good health, a good price for our work, good lands, good education, respect for the culture, the right to information, liberty, independence, justice, democracy, and peace. Yes, we are fighting for that, but for everyone, not just for ourselves. ...

We Zapatistas say: ‘I am as I am and you are as you are. Lets build a world where I can be, and not have to cease being me, where you can be, and not have to cease being you, and where neither I nor you will force another to be like either me or you.’ So when the Zapatistas say. ‘A world where many worlds fit,’ they are saying, more or less, ‘Everyone do your own thing.’ ...

We have other arms, the arm of the word. We also have the arm of our
culture, of being what we are.” (Marcos, 1999, pp167-169)

The home of the indigenous is a single room with dirt floor, a tin roof, and walls made out of sticks or mud. Seeing a doctor is a dream and education for children is nearly non-existent. However, they accept living in these conditions in the hope that the future will be different, and the powerful will not take advantage of the indigenous. The essay points out that the Mexican government tried to buy them out of the resistance but when they refused, they were threatened. As Marcos says:

“If you would like me to sum it up, I would tell you that in the same way we became soldiers so that one day soldiers would no longer be necessary, we also remain poor, so that one day there will no longer be poverty. It is for this that we use the weapon of resistance.” (Marcos, 1999, p168)
Chapter V. Comparing and Contrasting

Eduardo Galeano and Subcomandante Marcos are both revolutionary figures who write very vividly about the injustice that surrounds them. Galeano, a historian, political analyst, journalist and author of many books and articles on globalisation in Latin America has the same opinion as Subcomandante Marcos, an activist, a political analyst, a writer and the spokesman for the Zapatista Liberation Army. Even though they are both fighters against injustice, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, they fight in different ways. Galeano does so through his writing and Marcos through both being an activist and writer. They are both very convincing as they speak out of first hand experience.

Galeano is easier to read because he takes his time to set his ideas with vivid illustrations that clarify what he wants to say. On the other hand, in Open Veins of Latin America, it is somewhat confusing that he does not stick to chronology, and jumps without warning from one historical period to another and from one land area to another. However, he is so intent on making his point clear that the examples he gives seem to be racing with one another to make themselves manifest. Still, Open Veins of Latin America is one of the most gripping books one can read. One is made to see injustice after injustice so vividly that one gets angry at the Spaniards, Portuguese, the English and the Americans and white man generally. One cannot help but sympathise with the Mayas, Aztecs and Incas.

In Upside Down, a contemporary book about globalisation, Galeano relates the devastating effects globalisation has on Latin America including high unemployment rate, high sex trade, extreme poverty, and the thousands of children that are left homeless. Furthermore, the author points out the main characterisation of
modern society namely that a person’s value is only in what he has, never in what he is. This seems to make people go to great lengths in trying to fool everybody as to how wealthy they are. In that book there is an unforgettable scene of a young man who goes to the supermarket. He gets a cart and fills it up with the most expensive items and drives it around the supermarket for a few hours so that everybody could behold how wealthy he is because of the items he bought, only to leave the cart in the supermarket and walk out when no one was paying attention. Galeano also makes the point that the rich are just as unhappy and isolated as the poor. They only go out in armoured vehicles for very definite purposes and come back home as soon as possible so as to decrease the risk of being robbed, kidnapped or even murdered. In this chapter the major common themes Galeano and Marcos have on globalisation are linked together.

Subcomandante Marcos is far more of an activist than Galeano. He expresses his beliefs more by acting them out than writing about them. He has been seen in many parts of the world trying to enhance the cause of the Zapatistas and he is instrumental in putting the EZLN on the international scene. The wide support that the movement has gained in other countries and continents is largely due to his effort. Not only is he an active ideologue, he is an actual fighter carrying a rifle like any other classical revolutionary fighter from the past.

In his writings he displays before his readers a tableau of utter injustice, poverty, misery, illness and illiteracy, which is as gripping in its way as anything in Galeano. Marcos also emphasizes the role played by women in the movement even as fighters with the rifle. One is deeply touched by the seeming absence of any difference between men and women in times of crisis because their roles in everything are alike. Marcos and Galeano write about “globalisation” while skillfully
avoiding the word. In Galeano’s book *Upside Down* it is mentioned but a handful of times. In Marcos’ writings it is mentioned even less. Marcos especially is often very indirect in his written work against globalisation.

A. The Plight of Latin American Children!

Galeano and Marcos write extensively about children in Latin America. The main preoccupation by both authors is with the hardship children endure. Galeano makes the argument that children should be at school because the government has “given thought to” educational plans rather than eliminated them. Nearly half the population in Latin America is made up of children and adolescents. Every hour a hundred people die of hunger or disease in that region. (Galeano, 1998, p.13) From an early age children take on responsibility for the breadwinning activity, accepting cheap labour in export industries like stitching clothes for sports clothing for multinational corporate industries.

Galeano says that children in Latin America are “little slaves in the family of economy or in the informal sector of the global economy, where they occupy the rung of the world labour market.” (Galeano, 1998, p14)

So many negative feelings about globalisation in Latin America are generated by the effect it has on children. According to Galeano’s book *Upside Down*, children work: in garbage dumps in Mexico City, Manilla or Lagos; in the Java sea they dive for pearls; hunt diamonds in the mines of the Congo; harvest cotton and get poisoned from pesticides in Guatemala; harvest coffee in Colombia and Tanzania and also get poisoned from pesticides. They perform many jobs that a child should not do.

Apart from child labour hunger still drives many to thievery, begging and

The Western mindset of a healthy and growing economy is "keeping a cap on inflation". In addition, in the age of western consumerism, the consumer has an ever-increasing demand for more cheap products. Cheaper is better for the West. Cheap equals low inflation, a healthy economy, a growing economy! The desire for "cheap", i.e. low inflation is a catalyst for human greed. Making false promises to get what they want. The idea of a healthy economy is based on low inflation. This creates a richer lifestyle for the West and a sour lifestyle for the developing countries. The ultimate goal, is "everything for free", i.e. the lowest price ever. Developing countries are therefore "farms" to satisfy the Western desire for more that costs less.

"Capitalism's Dr. Frankenstein has created a monster that walks on its own, and nobody can stop it. It is a superstate over and above all others, an invisible power that governs us all even though it was elected by no one. In this world there is too much misery but there is also too much money, and wealth doesn't know what to do with itself. In other times, finance capital broadened the consumer market by extending credit. It served the real economy, which in order to exist needed to grow. Today, utterly bloated finance capital has put the productive system to work for it, while it plays with the real economy like a cat with a mouse." (Galeano, 1998, p158)

In Chiapas, 72 out of every 100 children do not finish first grade and even when they do finish it they are faced with another problem as more than half the schools only go up to third grade and have one teacher for all the classes. In this province it is common to see children carrying corn, wood, cooking or washing clothes during school hours. "This is what capitalism leaves as payment for everything that it takes away." (Marcos, 2002, p. 25) "Payment" is the natural resource of Latin America. It takes away the people's human rights as it contributes to enhancing the standard of living in the developed West, and undermining it in
developing countries. According to Galeano, “if a person earns a thousand dollars and another earns nothing, each of them appears to earn five hundred dollars when one calculates per capita income”. (Galeano, 1998, p35) In reality, someone is earning a thousand dollars and a child is earning $1 and without that child, the rich would not be getting richer and the poor would not be getting poorer.

Galeano and Marcos point out that children of Latin America have been robbed of their childhood and replaced with capitalism, stripping them of shelter, food and security. This is why there are so many voices against globalisation in Latin America. Surprisingly, I found a published letter Marcos wrote to Galeano on Children’s Day, May 11, 1995. When one reads the letter, one feels the loneliness Marcos lives just to protect the indigenous. His letter speaks with great sorrow about the children of Chiapas.

“Thanks to the supreme government, Mexican children celebrate their day in the mountains far from home and in unhygienic conditions. There is no party, but there is great poverty: they have no place to relieve their hunger and despair. The supreme government claims it hasn’t expelled these children from their homes; it only deployed thousands of soldiers in their lands. But with these soldiers came drunkenness, prostitution, robbery, torture and hostilities. The supreme government says soldiers have come to defend our ‘national sovereignty’. They’re ‘defending’ Mexico against Mexicans”. (Marcos, 2002, p259)

B. Law and Order

From another angle, the two authors point out the high crime rate in Latin America. In Colombia, ninety-seven out of a hundred crimes are never solved. Buenos Aires has similar proportions become police commit most of the crimes and kill young people. Even after democracy was restored in 1983 up to the middle of 1997, the police shot 314 suspicious boys. After that the press revealed that nobody
knew where the 5000 officers on the payroll were. Argentines and Uruguayans would seldom go to the police if they had problems, this forced many Uruguayans to take the law into their own hands and sign up for shooting lessons. (Galeano, 1998, p81)

Latin America suffers from lack of law enforcement. Criminals are set free, and the innocent are guilty until proven innocent. Both authors state that the police in Latin America are not meant to protect the people but to enforce political goals, and to maintain power in its place. “While Power jails its opponents and lets criminals go free, Civil society questions Power’s lack of accountability and the jailing of political prisoners.” (Marcos, 2002, p123)

Marcos negotiated the release of some of the political prisoners taken by the Mexican government under the President Fox. In his writings he strongly condemns the misleading façade the government shows to the world. The National Zapatista Liberation Army is given a false projection as being a rebel group fighting without a cause.

C. Media Control

“Advertising enjoins everyone to consume, while the economy prohibits the vast majority”. (Galeano, 1998, p26)

Due to the lack of education in Latin America TV programs have become the source of information and “deformation” to children, in stages brainwashing them politically and culturally. There are 1.2 billion TV sets in the world. (Galeano, 1998, p295) Both writers say that the media is a tool that manipulates people into consumerism and biased opinions when it comes to political matters. Media plays a large role as being the key that opens the door to promote globalisation.
Marcos points out that right wing intellectuals echo advertising slogans that flood the world markets in exchange for recognition and support of certain media and governments, and "espouse the free market creed." Marcos has also written on many occasions how the media has mislead the public about the EZLN by twisting the reality of the Chiapas struggle to benefit the Mexican government in exploiting natural resources like petroleum and coffee. As Marcos says: "Chiapas bleeds coffee," and if one combines the petroleum in Chiapas and Guatemala, it can be as much, or more than the petroleum in Saudi Arabia.

"The problem isn't why the global economy is inevitable, but why almost everyone agrees that it is. Just as the economy is becoming increasingly global, so is culture and information. How are we to prevent vast media and communications companies like CNN or News Corporation, Microsoft or AT&T, from spinning their worldwide web?" Subcomandante Marcos http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Mexico/Ideas_weapons.html

Galeano's writing makes us starkly aware of the problems Latin America has endured from one tragedy to the next. As we read him further we get more and more angry and hopeless. He makes it seem that there is no solution in sight and no hope whereas Marcos through his activism seems never to give up thinking that his actions will eventually have positive impact. With Galeano it's like entering a long dark tunnel with no opening in sight whereas Marcos keeps hoping that through revolutionary radical activism solutions might be attainable.
Conclusion

Globalisation is a very important and major process that has been left to go its own way in the world economy. It has resulted in uneven global development that has benefited but few and marginalized a great many. Globalisation is linked strongly with liberalisation and neo-liberism, and has been institutionalised in the WTO and multinational companies which play a major role in it.

The principle behind globalisation is deregulation or limitation of political interference in the market, and political behaviour favouring the market. Starting already in the seventies with President Nixon we see now many politicians applying this principle. President Bush in the past set an example of the way he is connected with the multinationals when he did not support the limitation on gas emission, undermining the whole Kyoto Treaty.

The Zapatista insurgency was one of the first in the world to fight the growing power of global capitalism that de-stabilises numerous communities around the world. The situation indigenous people are facing now is a continuation of that conquest that is presently exploiting them in new ways, with a different name: “globalisation”. The exploiters are hidden behind desks all over the world where decisions made by few executives in fashionable boardrooms affect the lives of countless millions, usually tragically.

Chiapas is a prelude for a wider crisis, the human crisis. The Zapatistas are fighting not only for their rights and their cause but for a problem that each of us in a way or another is facing or going to face in the near future. Indigenous people in Chiapas are struggling to keep their identity or what is left of it. Many of them over the years left the mountains and went to look for work in the cities, due to the extreme poverty of their communities. Like many other people in underdeveloped countries
they have lost control of their productive capacity (agricultural, art, craft etc.) and the means of production. The fact that they were and still are forced to leave their land by external causes makes them lose contact with their community, severing them violently from their home and background.

The ones who remained tried to find ways of surviving and holding together in the community. The Chiapas revolt is against globalisation, the secession of the rich North from the Poor South is a tale of lost identity due to globalisation. The same happened in the Czech Republic and the former Yugoslavia. Those countries were dismembered in order to separate the rich parts from the poor and better compete with the global market by leaving the poorest and “slowest” parts of those countries out of the “Big Game”.

Globalisation in Latin America has been almost always negative. The countries of this continent need to renegotiate the terms with the industrialized nations to seek ways of eliminating its worst abusers of child labour. On the other hand, the Western countries have to be sensitive to the needs of the people of the Third World. This could be done through non-governmental organizations and a fresh look at changing the rigid rules. There seems to be a gap that needs to be addressed which will bring a more balanced relationship that is less obscured. President da Silva is trying to achieve that with Lula program which is a good start and has initiated the need to address poverty in developing countries. Lula’s experiment with collective bargaining should be kept up and extended to more countries. For if the Latin American countries could unite and negotiate collectively with the industrialized world then they can come to more favourable terms where their interests would be better served. Then there can be hope for globalisation to be more balanced. For trying to stop globalisation completely is not a realistic way to make the World a
better place, taking into consideration the fast pace globalisation is spreading nowadays especially with the US using all its power, wealth and military might to apply it. As Galeano argues, globalisation “is a form of violence against all the worlds that the world contains” and Marcos states we need “a world with many worlds in it” as an alter globalisation is very true. Each culture should be able to keep its identity rather than be lost in “Westernization” or “Americanization”. Presently it’s quick gain for the North at the expense of the South’s pain. Therefore, the quickest way to keep the poor from getting poorer is to press on for new guidelines and global rules that have not yet been addressed.

Eduardo Galeano states that through his writings he could make a difference and indeed he did. As a famous writer very widely read, Galeano made many people aware of the negative aspects of globalisation. On the other hand, Subcomandante Marcos continues to try to make a difference in the world through the EZLN even if the results are slow. But he believes things will move forward in the end. The EZLN’s Sixth Declaration does show that progress in Chiapas has indeed been made.

Furthermore, Marcos became a symbol of sincere standing against globalisation making people aware through his actions such as initiating global protests against globalisation. Many marches included hundreds of thousands of people, showing that Marcos through the Zapatista movement is reaching worldwide fame. The movement started with a small ethnic group and ended up mushrooming into one of worldwide interest and many ethnicities. The fact that at each meeting of the G7 or G8 huge demonstrations opposed to globalisation take place, is due in part to the influence that the Zapatista movement has come to have.

Both authors write with cogent analysis, wit, humour and compassion for the poor. Like Che Guevara who excused himself by saying “It’s not my fault that reality
is Marxist,” Galeano and Marcos exude confidence in the lasting validity of the theoretical constants behind their views. Neither author bows to the fashions of contemporary criticism. They both write so brilliantly, but in different styles. Each has a way of writing all his own.

Through Galeano we understand the circumstances the Latin Americans are forced to live by due to globalisation, but he does not give a solution to the current status quo of globalisation. This is disappointing because after reading Galeano we feel a sense of loss of hope as if the world has reached a dead end and is forever going to be abused. Marcos on the other hand tries to find hope. He tried implementing the San Andres accords. When that did not go too well he set up the Good Government Committees that was run by the Zapatistas and after that was going smoothly he turned them over to the indigenous of Chiapas. However, Marcos focuses mostly on Mexico which is not surprising as he is the spokesperson for the Zapatista National Liberation Army.

There are two aspects to Marxism, the revolutionary and the ideological although Marcos does not articulate an ideology, his activism reminds us of the revolutionary side of Marxism. Marcos’ perpetual revolutionary actions remind us of revolutionary Marxists who from very small beginnings kept on trying until they attained their aims. When Lenin lived outside Russia before 1917, no one thought that his activism would lead anywhere. He was at the margin of the Marxist movement, but when he came back to Russia in April 1917 he achieved the greatest revolution in the twentieth century six months later. Marcos did not articulate a theory of class struggle, he implicitly believed in the class struggle because he stood up for an impoverished marginalized ethnic group and was instrumental in their armed struggle against the Mexican government and multinational companies. As a man of action
Marcos is not unlike Marxists who believe in the class struggle. Also Marcos cannot be seen as a “scientific” Marxist because he did not spell out an ideology that believes that the prime mover of history is the class struggle.

As for Galeano, it is manifest his heart is on the “left”. As an intellectual and prolific writer he spells out the woes of Latin America quite convincingly. He makes his readers angry against the rich and favourable toward the poor exploited masses. If he is a Marxist he might be classified as a “moral” Marxist who believes in the unfairness of exploitation of man by man just like Marcos. Although Galeano does not put much stalk in scientific Marxism, his writings have an effect similar to the writings of scientific Marxists. Since he is not an activist he cannot be classified as a revolutionary Marxist. Furthermore, Galeano is neither a dogmatist nor a pragmatist, he merely describes and tries to understand the troubles of Latin America. It is as if they were an unending chain of tragedies. On the other hand, Marcos is a pragmatist as he does not have an articulated ideology but is active every time he thinks his activism would lead to something better.

Writing this thesis shed light on aspects of Latin America I was not aware of. I am surprised at the extent of the disturbing conditions Galeano and Marcos write about. The poor of Latin America and the difficulties they live through have not been addressed by globalisation. It is thought that capitalism and democracy go hand in hand, if this is true what would be the meaning of free expression if people do not have enough to lead a life with a minimum standard of civilized existence and independence. In order for democracy to flourish it needs to be supported by good education and a larger flourishing middle class.
Appendix I: Map of Chiapas

(http://www.travelchiapas.com/map/map-2.php)

In 1824 Chiapas separated from Guatemala.
Bibliography

Books


Lynne Reiner.


Web Resources


