

Reinventing Revolution: The changing nature of Latin American Social Movements



Seminar paper from the year 2006 in the subject Politics - Political Theory and the History of Ideas Journal, grade: 1,7, University of Wales, Aberystwyth (International Politics Department), course: Citizenship in Latin America, language: English, abstract: Our Revolution, which has been heterodox in its forms and manifestations, has nevertheless followed the general lines of all the great historical events of this century characterized by anticolonial struggles and the transition towards socialism. Che Guevara: Cuba: Exception or Vanguard, 1961 We are a product of five hundred years of struggle: first, led by insurgents against slavery during the War of Independence with Spain () They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads. () But today we say: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! General Command of the EZLN: War! First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, 1993. FORTY-TWO YEARS LIE BETWEEN THESE TWO STATEMENTS, the statements of two Latin-American revolutionaries, equal in charisma, and by a mere coincidence both renowned for the smoking materials perpetually accompanying their every moves. Yet far more lies between Che Guevara and Marcos than that the former was a cigar-addict whilst the latter goes nowhere without his pipe. This essay is no contrast between the two. It is neither a character-sketch of Che, nor an analysis of Marcos poetry and prose, as the first would be ideal for psychologists, whilst the second task would be better performed in a literature department. Instead, I shall undertake to try and describe the changing fibre of revolutionary social movements in Latin America over the last forty years, explaining how Che Guevara's legacy, paired with the Sandinistas and other influences led to the emergence of the Zapatistas in today's Mexico. In saying this, I shall state here in the introduction

that through the research for this essay my initial sympathies towards the Zapatistas, which I developed while seeing them in action in and talking to them in Chiapas, have strengthened. I maintain that it is better to state openly an opinion than to try and conceal it. However, in keeping with Sir Karl Popper, the objectivity should rest not with the person researching, as such a thing is impossible, but in the methodology employed. The methodology in this essay consists in taking Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas as preceding case studies, as steps in the history of revolutions towards the Mexican Zapatistas.

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