Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

Person: Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

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Description Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos is the spokesperson and leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation. Marcos' identity remains something of a mystery although the Mexican government has claimed he is in fact Rafael Sebastian Guillen Vicente, a philosophy graduate and former professor at the Xochimilco campus of Mexico City's Universidad Autonoma Metropolitans (UAM). While Marcos is one of the few non-Indigenous members of the EZLN, he is also one of its founding members. Marcos arrived in Chiapas in 1983 as a member of an urban-based guerrilla group known as the Forces of National Liberation (FLN) determined to foment revolution amongst the Mayan peoples of Mexico's poorest state. Instead, Marcos found himself transformed by the realities of Indigenous life, a process which led to a very different appreciation of political action and organizing, based in the needs of Indigenous communities while remaining committed to the national and international dimensions of the struggle for "democracy, liberty, and justice."

Following the Zapatista uprising, Marcos became an icon for many in the global justice movement. Owing in part to his dramatic, eloquent speech, and powerful, poetic writing, he has played a key role in articulating a profound spirit of opposition to global neo-liberalism.

Suggested Reading:

Marcos, Subcomandante Insurgente. 2001. *Our word is our weapon*. Toronto: Seven Stories Press.

Stavans, Ilan. 2002. Unmasking Marcos. In *The Zapatista reader*. ed. Tom Hayden, 386-95. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press.

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