

Zapatistas



Who are the Zapatistas?

- **A group of Mexicans who support improved rights & living conditions for Mexico's indigenous people**
- **Zapatistas are known for harassment and sabotage against the government**
- **Named after...**

Emiliano Zapata

- The Zapatistas get their name from one of the leaders of the Mexican Revolution, **Emiliano Zapata**.
- Zapata is a Mexican symbol for rising up against a gov't that oppresses the people
- Zapata DID NOT CREATE the Zapatistas
his lifetime achievements inspired the name of the group



What are the Zapatistas known for?

Guerilla Warfare

- guerra = "war" in Spanish
- guerrilla = "small war" in Spanish

What is Guerrilla Warfare?

- Sudden, unexpected acts carried about by groups that fight using “hit and run” tactics



- Small groups attack the formal army



Chiapas

- Uprisings are mainly in the Mexican state of Chiapas
- Chiapas is a resource-rich state in southern Mexico:
 - Produces over half of Mexico's hydroelectric power
 - 2nd largest petroleum producing state
 - Largest coffee exporting state
- So what's the big deal there?...



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What's the Big Deal?

What are they fighting for?

- Chiapas has the worst rates of poverty in Mexico:
 - 3/4 of its people are malnourished, half live in dwellings with dirt floors
 - 19% of the population has no income
 - 39% earn less \$3 a day

What's the Big Deal?

- Chiapas is a huge contributor to the global economy (water and oil) BUT it's getting little in return
 - Huge division between rich & poor in the state

NAFTA & the Zapatistas...

- 1994—North American Free Trade Agreement came into effect & allowed free trade between US, Canada, and Mexico
- Some people in Mexico did not like this plan:
 - Thought that NAFTA would allow cheap farm goods to come into Mexico from the US
 - Thought NAFTA benefited the wealthy and hurt the poor Native American farmers by lowering prices of crops like coffee and corn
 - Farmers in Mexico would not be able to compete with the cheaper food

NAFTA & the Zapatistas...

- On the day NAFTA took effect, the Zapatistas took over 7 towns in their part of Mexico (state of Chiapas)
- Mexican army was sent to remove the Zapatistas
- Fighting lasted for several weeks, & cease-fire eventually ended the fighting
- Zapatistas did not go away...

Armed Takeover in Chiapas

01/01/94



Zapatistas' Concerns

- Agreements between the Zapatistas & the government have not solved the peoples' problems
- They argue that the indigenous people of Mexico need more help to improve healthcare, housing education, & jobs

Latest Developments

- March 2001: Zapatistas marched to Mexico City and addressed Congress
- Encouraged the passage of an Indigenous Rights Bill
 - Unfortunately, the bill was unsuccessful due to Congress radically changing it and denying indigenous people certain rights

Latest Developments

- January 2003: Rose up armed with machetes denouncing neoliberalism (free trade policies), ecotourism, foreign investment, and plans for war with Iraq
- Have aggressively detained several foreigners in an effort to deter foreign investment

Latest Developments

- Zapatistas now use the Internet and cell phones to maintain a sophisticated communications network. The Zapatista Web site attracts thousands of visitors

Zapatistas Writing Prompt

There are different opinions on exactly what the Zapatistas fight for. I want you to take a stand and write either in **FAVOR** of the Zapatistas or **AGAINST** them. So, do you think of the Zapatistas more as:

- A freedom fighting group that fights for the rights of poor farmers and indigenous people
- OR**
- A terrorist group who is attempting to overthrow the Mexican government through violence and other illegal activities.