



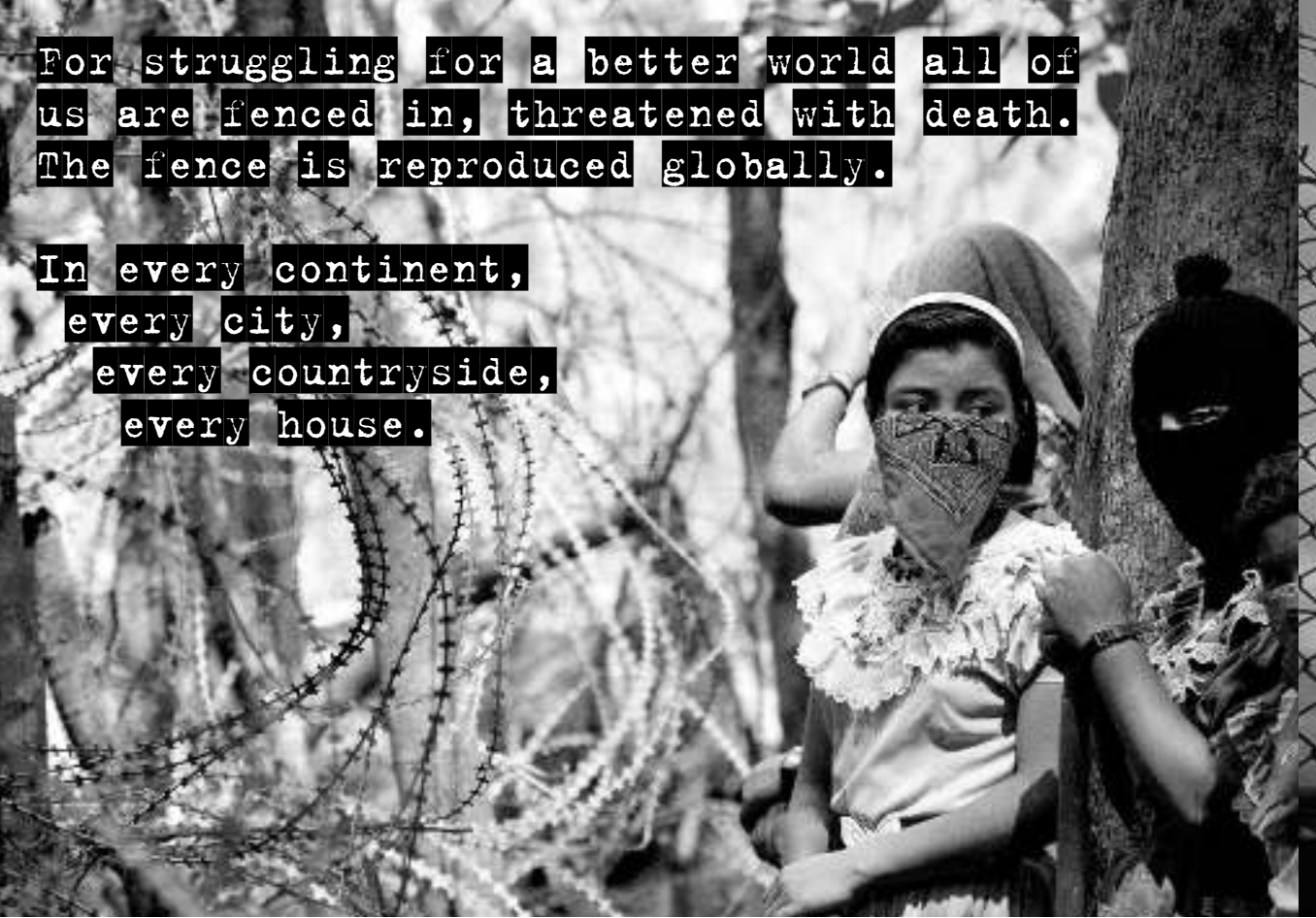
we are everywhere

edited by
Notes from Nowhere

the irresistible rise of global anticapitalism

For struggling for a better world all of us are fenced in, threatened with death. The fence is reproduced globally.

In every continent,
every city,
every countryside,
every house.





Power's fence of war
closes in on the rebels,
for whom humanity
is always grateful.



But fences are broken.





The rebels, whom history repeatedly has given
the length of its long trajectory,

struggle and the fence is broken.



The rebels search each other out. They walk toward one another.





They find each other and
together break other fences.

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Captions for front cover and opening photo essay: see page 521

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Foreword

We are Everywhere is the first book to truly capture and embody the exuberant creativity and radical intellect of the protest movements opposing neoliberalism around the world.

This book is not just about these movements; it is genuinely *of* these movements, in the best possible way. It is the only project I have seen to emerge so authentically from the movement's own culture, mirroring its core values of decentralization and radical democracy in its own structure and tone. By allowing activists to tell their own personal stories, focusing on glimpses instead of top-down official history, the stories somehow become instantly iconic. If a book could be a carnival instead of a linear narrative, it would read like this.

Because of the unique process behind the book, I have no doubt that *We are Everywhere* will be claimed by thousands of activists around the world as a cultural creation that is truly their own. But this is not just an activist book. There is an

insatiable appetite outside activist circles for information about what this movement really stands for. Many claim to be answering this question but this book will do something much more valuable: allow a general readership to catch an unmediated glimpse of what it looks like from the inside, and what it feels like to be there.

Naomi Klein, author of *No Logo*

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Foreword by Naomi Klein

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Opening Salvo

"Never again will a single story be told as if it is the only one."

– John Berger

We are Everywhere falls somewhere between an activist anthology and a grassroots history, agitational collage and direct action manual. It traces the anticapitalist movements from their emergence in 1994 to the present, documenting the rise of an unprecedented global rebellion – a rebellion which is in constant flux, which swaps ideas and tactics across oceans, shares strategies between cultures and continents, gathers in swarms and dissolves, only to swarm again elsewhere.

But this is a movement of untold stories, for those from below are not those who get to write history, even though we are the ones making it.

The powerful look at our diversity and see only miscellany. The media report that we don't know what we're talking about, we have no solutions, we represent nobody, we should be ignored. If they would stay quiet for a while, they might begin to hear the many different accents, timbres, voices, and languages in which we are telling our myriad stories.

We wanted a way to document, broadcast, and amplify these unheard stories coming from the grassroots movements that have woven a global fabric of struggle during the last decade. And so we came together as an editorial collective,

Notes from Nowhere, to produce this book.

But how does one begin to tell the history of a movement with no name, no manifesto, and no leaders?

The answer is that you tell it the way you live it. Just as there is no single banner we march behind, no little red book, and no doctrine to adhere to, there is no single narrative here. Rather than one dominant political voice, one dogma, one party line, we present you with a collision of subjectivities. These are moments both intimate and public, charged with inspiration, fear, humour, the everyday, and the historic.

Like this movement, we relish intimacy, subjectivity, and diversity, and we think that personal stories have as much (if not more) to teach us as any manifesto. In this, we differ from many past traditions of struggle. We are part of a new, radical, transformative politics based on direct democracy; one that values our individual voices, our hopes, our joys, our doubts, our disasters, and requires no sacrifice from us except that we sacrifice our fear. And so this book subverts the conventional reporting of such movements, taking as its starting point the experiences of those actually involved.

The book is divided into seven sections, each introduced with essays on key characteristics of the movement, written by the editors. After each essay comes a series of stories, in roughly chronological order, which show the progression of the movement as it emerges, comes together, and matures. Interspersed among these texts are do-it-yourself guides to direct action.

Running throughout the book is a historical timeline. We

chose to begin with the Zapatistas as we see their uprising on 1 January 1994 as heralding a new era of resistance movements, and we come full circle, ending with their retaking of San Cristóbal de las Casas on 1 January 2003. It reveals the sheer scale and number of undocumented struggles that go on, almost daily, all around the world.

We are Everywhere does not, and could not, seek to present a packaged whole or complete overview, and its limitations, its editorial choices, are our own. In following a few threads of this complex, dispersed, and centreless web, the threads that we began to pull were the ones closest to us, which wove through our own memories and experiences. As we followed them, we realized that there were many places we couldn't reach, where barriers of language, culture, and distance prevented us from hearing the voices of those directly involved. Inevitably, this was particularly true of the global South, and, in some cases, we have only been able to translate these movements through the voices of Northern visitors working with those movements. Whenever possible, these pieces have been read and commented on by the social movements themselves before making their way into the book.

The Zapatistas have taught us through their struggle founded on radical notions of dialogue and participation to embark on a rebellion which listens. In this spirit, we produced in the summer of 2001 a 100-page preview booklet, *Notes from Everywhere*, which we gave for free to activists at gatherings and actions in 11 countries on three continents, soliciting critiques, feedback, and further contributions. We

continue that dialogue through our website.

When we started to bring these stories together, we were excited to confirm what we'd always suspected – that separate movements converge, recognize each other as allies, and struggle together.

So where do you fit into all of this? Well, the Zapatistas, from behind their masks, are saying not "Do as we do", but rather, "We are you".

But don't forget that what you hold in your hand is only a book. As Gerrard Winstanley, one of the English Diggers – who through exemplary direct action demanded the abolishment of private property and encouraged the poor to reclaim the commons – wrote in 1649: "Thoughts and words ran in me that words and writing were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing."

Notes From Nowhere

Spring 2003

www.WeAreEverywhere.org

“If you listen carefully to the celebrating voices, those of the rich and the powerful in their corporate offices and government buildings, you can pick up a nervous undertone. If you watch the policy-makers closely, you may notice that the smiles are often thin and the hands that hold champagne glasses sometimes twitch, involuntarily.

If you listen even more carefully, you can discover why. In the background you can hear another set of voices – those from below – far, far more numerous. These are voices the powerful do not want to hear, but they are having a harder and harder time ignoring them.

Some of these voices are quiet and determined, talking together in bare tenements. Some are singing and reciting poetry in the plazas, or stirring young hearts with old tales deep in the forests.

Some are discussing,
planning their future,
inventing lines or
chanting in the streets.

All are talking about
revolution, whether they
use that term or not.”

– Harry Cleaver

This book wouldn't exist if it wasn't
for the tireless, unsung efforts of
people everywhere working for no
reward except the sweet knowledge that
they are in the right place, at the right
time in history, doing the right thing.
This book is for them.



“If you listen carefully to the celebrating voices, those of the rich and the powerful in their corporate offices and government buildings, you can pick up a nervous undertone. If you watch the policy-makers closely, you may notice that the smiles are often thin and the hands that hold champagne glasses sometimes twitch, involuntarily.

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Some are
planning
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chanting



"It is not only by shooting bullets in the battlefields that tyranny is overthrown, but also by hurling ideas of redemption, words of freedom and terrible anathemas against the hangmen that people bring down dictators and empires ..."

– **Emiliano Zapata, Mexican revolutionary, 1914**

The new century is three days old when the Mexican army encampment of Amador Hernandez, nestled deep in the Lacandón jungle of Chiapas in the country's southeast, comes under attack from the air. The air force of the indigenous Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) swoops down in its hundreds on the unprepared troops.

This is an army of paper aeroplanes which soar, curve, and dive in the dappled forest sunlight. Some are caught in the teeth of the barbed-wire fence. Some fall to the forest floor, and are silenced. But many are well-thrown – they rise, dip, bank, and swerve past the bracken and black plastic sheeting straight into the army dormitories.

They are heavily armed with words of resistance and launched over the fence around the base by the local people, indigenous Tzeltals. For weeks, months now, they have been chanting, singing, crying to the troops – that they want peace. They want the low-flying military aircraft to stop terrorizing their village. They don't want the army to build a road through their forest. They want

their rights, their dignity as indigenous people. But their voices are lost in the damp canopy of forest as the camp commanders drown them out by blasting military marches, Musak, and the William Tell Overture over the PA system. And the soldiers are just children, far from home, frightened of the Zapatistas, who the state Governor has warned are about to launch a violent attack on the base.

But now, finally, the Tzeltal voices have penetrated the fence of power with their message of resistance to the federal troops, and lampooned the hyped threat of Zapatista violence. On each plane is written the words: "Wake up! Open your eyes so you can see ... Soldiers, we know that poverty has made you sell your lives and your souls. I also am poor, as are millions. But you are worse off, for defending our exploiters."

A year and a half later on a shimmering hot day in July 2001, Air Force One carries George W Bush into Christopher Columbus airport in the Italian city of Genoa for the G8 summit, where the eight most powerful men in the world are gathering to decide the fate of six billion human beings. They meet behind a vast, reinforced fence which marks the heavily militarized 'red zone', where democratic law has been suspended, expressing opinions on the fate of the global economy rendered illegal, and protest forbidden. It exists to keep 300,000 protesters

away from the eyes and ears of the G8.

And so the Zapatista air force launches its second attack. These paper aeroplanes, covered with messages of resistance and colourful images of Zapatista rebels, have been carefully constructed by the small hands of school children in Oventic, an autonomous Zapatista community in the highlands of Chiapas, and posted to activists in Genoa. Arms curve, planes rise and fall, littering the ground inside and outside the red zone.

Once again, rebel voices breach the fence of the powerful.

But what is it that connects the Genoa protesters and the Zapatistas? To uncover the character of the world's largest social movement, you must follow the flight of a paper aeroplane, from the Lacandón jungle in southeastern Mexico to the streets of the Italian port city of Genoa. It's a paper aeroplane carrying a message of hope, and of resistance.

Breaking fences

"Borders crumble; they won't hold together on their own; we have to shore them up constantly. They are fortified and patrolled by armed guards, these fences that divide a party of elegant diners on one side from the children on the other whose thin legs curve like wishbones, whose large eyes peer through the barbed wire at so much food – there is no wall high enough to make good in such a neighbourhood. For this, of course, is what the fences divide."

– Barbara Kingsolver, *Small Wonder*, Harper Collins, 2002

The fence surrounding the military base in Chiapas is the same fence that surrounds the G8 meeting in Genoa. It's the fence that divides the powerful from the powerless, those whose voices decree, from those whose voices are silenced. And it is replicated everywhere.

For the fence surrounds gated communities of rich neighbourhoods from Washington to Johannesburg – islands of prosperity that float in seas of poverty. It surrounds vast estates of land in Brazil, keeping millions who live in poverty from growing food. It's patrolled by armed guards who keep the downtrodden and the disaffected out of shopping malls. It's hung with signs warning you to 'Keep out' of places where your mother and grandmother played freely. This fence stretches across borders between rich and poor worlds. For the unlucky poor who are caught trying to cross into the rich world, the fence encloses the detention centres where refugees live behind razor wire.

Built to keep all the ordinary people of the world out of the way, out of sight, far from the decision-makers and at the mercy of their policies, this fence also separates us from those things which are our birthright as human beings – land, shelter, culture, good health, nourishment, clean air, water. For in a world entranced by profit, public space is privatized, land fenced off, seeds, medicines and genes patented, water metered, and democracy turned into purchasing power. The fences are also inside us. Interior borders run through our atomized minds and hearts, telling us we should look out only for ourselves, that we are alone.

*"THIS IS AN UPRISING AS BIG AS THE
REVOLUTION THAT SHOOK THE WORLD
BETWEEN 1890 AND 1920. BEWARE."*

– Asian Vice-President of Goldman Sachs

But borders, enclosures, fences, walls, silences are being torn down, punctured, invaded by human hands, warm bodies, strong voices which call out the most revolutionary of messages: "You are not alone!"

For we are everywhere.

We are in Seattle, Prague, Genoa, and Washington. We are in Buenos Aires, Bangalore, Manila, Durban, and Quito. Many of these place names have been made iconic by protest, symbols of resistance and hope in a world which increasingly offers little room for either.

The Zapatistas have joined with thousands around the world who believe that fences are made to be broken. Refugees detained in the Australian desert tear down prison fences, and are secreted to safety by supporters outside. The poor, rural landless of Brazil cut the wire that keeps them out of vast uncultivated plantations and swarm onto the properties of rich, absentee landlords, claim the land, create settlements, and begin to farm. Protesters in Québec City tear down the fence known as the 'wall of shame' surrounding the summit meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and raise their voices in a joyful yell as it buckles under the weight of those dancing on its bent back, engulfed in euphoria even while

the toxic blooms of tear gas hit. The radical guerrilla electricians in South Africa break the fence of privatization that keeps the poor from having electricity by installing illegal connections themselves. Peasant women across Asia gather to freely swap seed, defying the fences of market logic that would have them go into debt to buy commercial seed. "Keep the seeds in your hands, sister!" they declare.

Those who tear down fences are part of the largest globally interconnected social movement of our time. Over the last ten years, our protests have erupted on continent after continent, fuelled by extremes of wealth and poverty, by military repression, by environmental breakdown, by ever-diminishing power to control our own lives and resources. We are furious at the increasingly thin sham of democracy, sick of the lies of consumer capitalism, ruled by ever more powerful corporations. We are the globalization of resistance. But where we came from, what we have done, who we are, and what we want have remained untold. These are our stories.

An army of dreamers

"And you, are you so forgetful of your past, is there no echo in your soul of your poets' songs, your dreamers' dreams, your rebels' calls?" – Emma Goldman

Depending on who you ask, the resistance began 510 years ago when the indigenous of the Americas fought Columbus, or 700 years ago when Robin Hood rode through the forests

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