

Guendalizaá: The reconstruction of the “We”

by Arturo Guerrero Osorio

The Zapotec word Guendalizá or Guelaguetza means “familiarity”, “friendship” or “neighborhood”; It is mutual help and is expressed when an person is with the others in the crucial moments of life, the happy and the sad. It is a cultural pattern that comes from the deepest roots from the towns of Oaxaca, Mexico (let’s think about 11 thousand years ago). Today, in the Oaxaca Isthmus and other places of the region (under other names, such as “communality” or “kazuaro luu yetzi keriu”) it is the daily flag – not ideological but concrete– of reasoning and acting collectively to wake up from the democratic, economic and patriarchal nightmare that the West imposed on us and also to build a path of our own. Guendalizá is the aesthetic principle – if we understand this term in its etymology: to have a common experience, as Michel Maffesoli pointed out– of communal life, implies an reciprocity ethic and shared joy. Guendalizá is the Oaxacan way of creating a “We”.

Liberal thought contaminated us and stripped us in the most vulgar and brazen way. We have become “individuals” for more than 500 years, atoms that dream themselves as equals, free and in competition. But now we claim our quality of “binni”, that is, of “people”, in the strict sense of the term. Here democracy has no reason to be, for us this illusion means the imposition of a minority on the majority, as long as it has a slave base (and this is proven from ancient Greece to the current United States of America). Autonomy is neither a conceptual nor a political option because it is equally phantasmagoric (who is autonomous from oxygen or the other?).

This video speaks of the communal-determination that is reborn

at a limit time, when the earth shakes and leaves thousands of families in the most horrible misery in the rain and the burning sun. From people who saw their house collapse while running to save their lives and their loved ones, during one of the largest earthquakes that have occurred in Mexico. And their decision was to come together and appeal to his tradition: the assembly and the joint work, the loving listening, the disappearance of the "I" for the "we" emerged. The communal-determination that occurs when the bet is the guendalizá. From a town that knows that the guendalizá is not perfect or total, but that it is true that it found a path that is its path in itself."



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