FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Conflict in Chiapas: Understanding the Modern Mayan World
Worth H. Weller
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The precarious political situation of the indigenous people of Chiapas is the topic of this personal investigation by a veteran photojournalist and writer from Indiana. After two decades of covering news stories in other Latin American countries, Weller fell in love with the people and beauty of this mountainous region in southeastern Mexico. In an act of solidarity with the people's long standing struggle for justice and the right to maintain their traditional Mayan culture, he delivers a first hand account of the lessons learned and the questions that were raised as a result of his travels in Chiapas.

Important to this story is the role that the EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army) has played in bringing the political issues and humanitarian concerns of the Mayan Indians to the attention of Weller and other members of the media and activists worldwide. In particular, the EZLN's January 1, 1994 armed rebellion against the brutal and discriminatory policies of the Mexican government serves as a background for Weller's hypotheses and conclusions about a movement that seeks to end the century's old oppression of a traditional agrarian way of life.

Approaching his analysis with a sympathetic eye, Weller's genuine intention is to educate readers about the true story behind the sometimes misleading media headlines. Though his writing style shifts in tone from a journalistic one to personal travel narrative to occasionally academic diction, the prose is generally to the point. Rather than writing a long treatise on his observations, Weller has delivered an introduction to some of the more serious issues, and with them, a hint at the contradictions and problems that arise when westerners attempt to write about grassroots revolutionary movements in places where they bear the inevitable baggage of the white outsider.

Though potentially valuable to some readers, Weller's paralleling of Native American resistance movements in South Dakota with those he found in Chiapas seems like an afterthought better explored in an additional text, rather than in the epilogue of this one. What is very useful, however, is the chapter "Further Readings and Resources," which Weller supplements with his own reviews for the benefit of those that may wish to follow this book

with their own textual or internet research. Also included are his own glossy black and white and color photographs, which in themselves tell much about the world he describes and may well be his best talent.

Holly Wren Spaulding