

Zapatista Army of National Liberation

Mexico

May 25, 2005

To: Massimo Moratti, President of the Milan International F.C. Milan, Italy

From: Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos EZLN Chiapas, Mexico

Don Massimo,

We have received the letter in which you inform us that your football team, the International F.C., has accepted the fraternal challenge we made to you. We appreciate the kindness and honesty of your response. We have learned through the media of statements by the Inter's management, coaching staff and players. They are all simply more examples of the nobility of your hearts. Know that we are delighted to have met you along our now long path and that it is an honor for us to be a part of the bridge which unites two dignified lands: Italy and Mexico.

I am letting you know that, in addition to being spokesperson for the EZLN, I have been unanimously designated Head Coach and put in charge of Intergalactic Relations for the zapatista football team (well, in truth no one else wanted to accept the job). In this role I should, perhaps, make use of this letter to move forward in fixing details about the match.

Perhaps, for example, I might suggest that, instead of the football game being limited to one match, there could be 2. One in Mexico and another in Italy. Or one going and one on return. And the trophy known the world over as "The Pozol of Mud" would be fought for.

And perhaps I might propose to you that the game in Mexico would be played, with you as visitors, in the Mexican 68 Olympic Stadium, in CU, in DF, and the stadium receipts would be for the indigenous displaced by paramilitaries in Los Altos of Chiapas. Although then, obviously, I would have to send a letter to the UNAM university community (students, teachers, researchers, manual and administrative workers) asking them to lend us the stadium, not without previously solemnly promising them that we wouldn't ask them to remain silent . . . and then imposing Don Porfirio's word on them. And perhaps we might agree, given that you would already be in Mexico, that we would hold another game in Guadalajara, Jalisco, and that the proceeds would go to provide legal help for the young altermundistas unjustly imprisoned in the jails of that Mexican province and to all the political prisoners throughout the country. Transportation would not be a problem, because I have read that someone here in Mexico, generous as before, has offered his help.

And perhaps, if you are in agreement, for the games in Mexico the EZLN would turn to Diego Armando Maradona and ask him to be referee; to Javier El Vasco Aguirre and to Jorge Valdano and ask them to act as assistant referees (or linesmen); and to Sócrates, midfielder who was from Brazil, to be 4th referee. And perhaps we might invite those two intergalactics who

11.5. POPULAR GROUPS:

THE ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

"Zapatista Rebels and Inter Milan"

In 2005, Subcomandante Marcos wrote to Milan International Futbol Club president Massimo Moratti with an invitation for Inter to play a friendly match, as a gesture of appreciation and solidarity, against the EZLN Football Club.⁵ Marcos proposed the Argentine star Diego Maradona as referee.

travel with Uruguayan passports: Eduardo Galeano and Mario Benedetti to do the play by play of the game for the Zapatista System of Intergalactic Television ("the only television which is read"). In Italy, Gianni Mina and Pedro Luis Sullo could be the commentators.

And, perhaps, in order to differentiate ourselves from the objectification of women which is promoted at football games and in commercials, the EZLN would ask the national lesbian-gay community, especially transvestites and transsexuals, to organize themselves and to amuse the respectable with ingenious pirouettes during the games in Mexico. That way, in addition to prompting TV censorship, scandalizing the ultra-right and disconcerting the Inter ranks, they would raise the morale and spirits of our team. There are not just 2 sexes, and there is not just one world, and it is always advisable for those who are persecuted for their differences to share happiness and support without ceasing to be different.

Rushing headlong now, we might play another game in Los Angeles, in California, the US, where their governor (who substitutes steroids for his lack of neurons) is carrying out a criminal policy against Latin migrants. All the receipts from that match would be earmarked for legal advice for the undocumented in the USA and to jail the thugs from the "Minuteman Project." In addition, the zapatista "dream team" would carry a large banner saying "Freedom for Mumia Abu Jamal and Leonard Peltier."

It is quite likely that Bush would not allow our spring-summer model ski masks to create a sensation in Hollywood, so the meeting could be moved to the dignified Cuban soil, in front of the military base which the US government maintains, illegally and illegitimately, in Guantánamo. In this case each delegation (from the Inter and from the Ezeta) would commit themselves to taking at least one kilo of food and medicines for each of their members, as a symbol of protest against the blockade the Cuban people are suffering.

And perhaps I might propose to you that the return games would be in Italy, with you as the home team (and us as well, since it is known that Italian sentiment is primarily pro-zapatista). One could be in Milan, in your stadium, and the other wherever you decide (it could be in Rome, because "all games lead to Rome" . . . or is it "all roads lead to Rome?" . . . ah well, it's the same). Some of the receipts would be to help migrants of different nationalities who are being criminalized by the governments of the European Union and the rest for whatever you decide. But we would certainly need at least one day in order to go to Genoa to paint caracolitos on the statue of Christopher Columbus (note: the likely fine for damages to monuments would be covered by Inter) and in order to take a flower of remembrance to the place where the young altermundist Carlo Giuliani fell (note: we would take care of the flower).

And, if we are already in the Europe, we could play a game in Euzkal Herria in the Basque Country. If "An Opportunity for the Word" couldn't happen, then we'd try for "An Opportunity for the Kick." We would demonstrate in front of the head office of the racists from the BBVA-Bancomer who are trying to criminalize the humanitarian aid received by the indigenous communities (perhaps in order to divert attention from the criminal proceedings against them for "tax evasion, secret accounts, illegal pension funds, secret contributions to political campaigns, bribes in order to buy banks in Latin America and wrongful appropriation of goods"—Carlos Fernández-Vega. "Mexico, S.A." in *La Jornada* 2S/V/05). Hmm . . . It looks like there's going to be 7 games now (which isn't bad, because that way we can compete for the audience for the European Cup, the Liberators and the qualifiers for the World Cup). The one which wins 4 of the 7 games will win "The Pozol of Mud" (note: if the zapatista team loses more than 3 games, the tournament will be canceled).

Too many? Fine, Don Massimo, you're right, perhaps it's better to leave it at 2 games (one in Mexico and the other in Italy), because we don't want to tarnish the Inter's record too badly with the certain defeats we're proposing.

Perhaps, in order to balance your evident disadvantage a bit, I might pass on to you some secret information. For example, the zapatista team is mixed (that is, there are men and women); we play with so-called "miner's" boots (they have steel toes, which is why they puncture balls); according to our uses and customs, the game is only over when none of the players of either team is left standing (that is, they are high resistance); the EZLN can reinforce itself at its discretion (that is, the Mexicans "Bofo" Bautista and Maribel "Marigol" Domínguez can appear in the lineup . . . if they accept). And we have designed a chameleon-like uniform (if we're losing, black and blue stripes appear on our shirts, confusing our rivals, the referee . . . and the public). And also we've been practicing, with relative success, two new plays: the "marquiña avanti fortiori" (note: translated into gastronomical terms it would be something like a pizza and guacamole sandwich) and the "marquiña caracolliña con variante inversa" (note: the equivalent of spaghetti with stewed beans, but spoiled).

With all this (and a few other surprises), we might, perhaps, revolutionize world football, and then, perhaps, football would no longer be just a business, and once again it would be an entertaining game. A game made, as you put it so well, of true feelings.

Perhaps . . . Nonetheless, this is just to reiterate to you and to your family, to all the men and women of the Inter and the nerazzurro fans, our appreciation and admiration for you (although I'm warning you that, in front of the goalposts, there will be neither mercy nor compassion). As to all the rest, well . . . perhaps . . . but . . .

Vale. Salud and may the green-white-red that clothes our dignities soon find themselves on both lands.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos (D. T. Z.)
(designing plays on a chalkboard and fighting with Durito because he's insisting that, instead of the traditional 4-2-4, we should present 1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1, which, he says, is confusing).
Mexico, May of 2005.

P.S. for the Mexican Federation of Football, the Real Madrid, the Bayern Munich, the Osasuna, the Ajax, Liverpool and the Ferretería González team—I'm sorry, but I have an exclusive contract with the Ezetaelene.

P.S. in the tone and volume of a sports announcer—The Sup, using the tactics of the Uruguayan Obdulio Varela in the final against Brazil (World Cup, Maracanã Stadium, Rio de Janeiro, 7/16/1950), ball in hand, having traveled as if in slow motion (since May of 2001), from the zapatista goalpost. After complaining to the referee about the illegitimacy of the goal, he puts the ball in the center of the field. He turns around to look at his compañeros and they exchange glances and silences. With the scorecard, the bets and the entire system against them, NO ONE has any hope for the zapatistas. It starts to rain. A watch reads almost 6. Everything appears ready for the game to resume . . .

F. C. Internazionale Milano

Dear Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos,

I am exceedingly pleased to have the privilege of writing in response to your extremely pleasant and kind challenge. I am addressing you, and through you to all the EZLN, in order to thank you for the opportunity you have given all of us to experience this special relationship. Allow me also to express my thoughts in response to your very, very kind letter. We will play. We will play our game, and I thank you for that. It will be a great match. Perhaps in a field, like we did as children, perhaps surrounded by giant trees. Or in a stadium, in the capital or on a rectangle drawn out in chalk on the earth, with the dust rising up until it makes us cough. Exhausted, but happy.

Since we are in agreement, we will bring the balls and you the bitter pozol. If you accept, we will begin discussing the organization with the respective representatives and managers. We hope we can play soon. I think we could send a good group of players to Mexico, we'll see about the timing. Let us know what location would be best. Whether in DF or San Cristóbal, or in a community or a Caracol. Football can be an instrument for achieving important objectives, but it is something that turns us all into children and all equals. Dreamers all. We imagine great things, and we take pleasure

in the small ones: a dribble, a scissors kick, a header, all make us happy. And we discover later that these small things are made of true feelings.

Dear Subcomandante, I am happy and proud to have known you and to have developed this relationship with the indigenous peoples of Mexico, in the name of the men and women of the FC Internazionale. The Inter peoples, like this football society, will try to always be close to you, exactly as you, with your example, are close to us. The game will truly be a simple and important moment. Every revolution begins from its own penalty area and ends in the opponent's goalpost. With so very much admiration and affection, I am sending you and all the zapatista indigenous men and women, my most personal best wishes, as well as those of my wife, my children and the nerazzurro peoples.

Un abrazo,

Massimo Moratti

[translated by irlandesa]⁶

Unfortunately, the match was never actually played—but EZLN's futbol team did find chances to compete on the pitch against international teams. The Easton Cowboys, an anarchist team (whose sign-up sheet said players should bring boots, shin pads, and sideburns) representing the Plough, a neighborhood pub in inner-city Bristol, England, in 1999 became the first European football team to travel to Chiapas, but that is another story.⁷

ADDITIONAL READING

Simpson, Will, & Malcolm McMahon. *Freedom through Football: The Story of the Easton Cowboys and Cowgirls*. Bristol: Tangent Books, Ltd., 2012.