

Durito's May Day Postcard

After traveling to Mexico City to find Fidel Velázquez, Durito participated, with hundreds of thousands of workers, in the May Day protests that went on despite government opposition. While the dominant theme of the protests was clearly opposition to the neoliberal austerity programs put in place in the wake of the Peso Crisis and the \$50 billion investor bailout engineered by the International Monetary Fund, President Bill Clinton, and President Ernesto Zedillo, there was also tremendous support expressed for the Zapatistas in their struggle with the government. This communiqué recounts a postcard Durito sent back from Mexico City telling of the demonstrations.

To the national weekly *Proceso*
To the national newspaper *El Financiero*
To the national newspaper *La Jornada*
To the local newspaper of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, *Tiempo*
May 5, 1995

Sirs:

Here go letters for the indicated recipients. I would appreciate your addition of some special stamps and elegant envelopes. Today's celebration promises to be bloody.¹ The absence of Durito and the continuing heavy rain promise skirmishes instead of a formal battle. The problem is getting worse because no one wants to be the French. It is obvious that this is another *sexenio*.²

Vale. Salud, and congratulations for May 10th to all those who still have a mother.³

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

P.S. that gives an account of Durito's travels and advice.

Durito has sent me a postcard. It contains a photo of him, with Pegasus on his left and the Monument of the Revolution on his right. The caption reads, "Which is slower? The left or the right?" Durito writes, in the postcard, that he failed to find Fidel Velázquez, but that he took part in the May Day march. He

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- 1 The Mexican defeat of the French at the Battle of Puebla in 1862 is celebrated on May 5th.
- 2 The *sexenio* is the six-year term of office of the Mexican Presidency.
- 3 Mother's Day is celebrated in Mexico on May 10th.

recounts the following: that when he passed in front of the American Embassy he cried out, “Dodgers Sí, Yankees No!” (Durito didn’t know that Valenzuela is now with the San Diego Padres);⁴ that he doesn’t remember when he entered the Zócalo or when he left;⁵ that a man, after observing him for a long time, approached him and said, “Excuse me, I don’t mean to offend, but I cannot resist the temptation to say that you look remarkably like a scarab”; and that there were a whole lot of people there. “EVERYBODY was there,” said Durito, and added, with his eternal tendency to state the obvious, “The only thing missing was a revolution.”

P.S. that explains the delay in consultations within Zapatista communities.

We are confused with respect to the government proposal: we are not sure what is meant by the declaration of Gurría, this agent of foreign sales, who brags about his duties as Secretary of Foreign Relations, while he demands the regrouping of Zapatista “insurgents.” Insofar as he thinks that the conflict in Chiapas is a “war of ink,” does he refer only to those Zapatistas who know how to read and write?⁶ If this is the case, then the three locations where they want the Zapatistas to concentrate are far too many and it will be much cheaper for the government to care only for the literate.⁷ If you don’t believe me, ask the ever-pleasing Del Valle, who laughs at the way our representatives speak Spanish.⁸

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4 Fernando Valenzuela, a famous baseball player from Mexico, played for the Los Angeles Dodgers, sparking an enthusiasm among many Mexican fans known as “Fernandomania.”

5 The Zócalo is the large plaza facing the Presidential Palace in Mexico City.

6 Speaking to 150 businessmen at the World Trade Center in New York, José Angel Gurría said, “The shooting lasted ten days, and ever since the war has been a war of ink, of the written word and a war on the Internet.” See, “Chiapas es Guerra de Tinta e Internet,” *La Reforma*, April 26, 1995.

7 The government proposal made at the end of the first new round of talks on April 23, 1995 included a demand that all Zapatista forces be concentrated in three locations. In return, the government offered to provide food, housing, healthcare and a partial pullback of its troops. The EZLN returned from their communities to the second round of talks with a firm rejection of the proposal. Instead, they demanded that the Mexican government withdraw its troops to where they had been before the February 1995 offensive.

8 José Del Valle was one of the Mexican government representatives at the negotiations. During the negotiations, he and government representatives were often insulting and disdainful of their indigenous counterparts. See Marcos’ letter to the press published in *La Jornada* on February 10, 1996, and included in this volume as “The Riddle.” See also “The Story of the Hot Foot and the Cold Foot.”