

Directions for the First Preparatory Meeting; Update on Penguin

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Zapatista Army of National Liberation
Mexico.

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To: Organizations, movements, groups, collectives and persons who support the Sixth Declaration
From: The Sixth Committee of the EZLN

Compañeras and compañeros:

I am writing in order to inform you as to how the preparations are going for "the other campaign," or the national part of the Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona.

Concerning Expressions of Support

According to the latest report, as of July 31, 2005, we have received 2 letters with critical comments concerning the Sixth, warning about risks and dangers, and one criticizing the fact that we criticized López Obrador. In addition, the following have expressed support and noted they will be participating in the meetings for preparations for "the other campaign" in Mexico:

- 30 political organizations which characterize themselves as being of the left
- 32 indigenous and Indian Peoples of Mexico organizations
- 47 social organizations of the left
- 210 non-governmental, artistic and cultural organizations, groups and collectives
- 636 women, men, old ones, boys and girls, individually or from families, streets, barrios, neighborhoods, communities

As we have announced, we will be beginning a series of working meetings with these organizations, collectives and persons. The first of these will be this Saturday, August 6, 2005, with Mexican political organizations of the left. Afterwards, Saturday, August 13, with indigenous organizations; Saturday, August 20, with social organizations; with NGOs and collectives on Saturday, August 27; Saturday, September 3, with individual persons and delegates from families, streets, communities, neighborhoods, barrios; and, September 10 with everyone who was unable to attend any of the previous meetings. We are telling those who are unable to make any of the working meetings not to be sad - we shall be informing them regularly as to what is happening and being agreed to in each one of the meetings.

Concerning Where the Meetings Are To Be Held

The *compañeros, compañeras* and Zapatista support bases of the Tzeltal Selva region, gathered together in the Caracol of La Garrucha, have agreed to act as hosts for these working meetings in 6 different Zapatista communities of that region. The Zapatistas have been working on the minimal facilities for accommodation, food and work for those who have decided to walk with us.

Concerning How To Reach the Location of the First Meeting

In order to reach the first meeting - the one for political organizations - do the following: go to San Cristóbal de Las Casas; next, take the highway that goes to Comitán and Ocosingo; you will pass by a very large barracks and a federal army military instruction camp, and just a bit further there is a crossroads; the right takes you to Comitán, and you don't want that, instead take the one to the left, towards Ocosingo. Continue on; you will pass through Huixtán, Oxchuc, Cuxuljá, and you will arrive at Ocosingo; there, take the beltway towards the Selva Lacandona. Leaving Ocosingo, continue on towards La Garrucha, leaving behind the barracks the federal army has in Tonina and the jail which the Chiapas government built on the outskirts of Ocosingo. Next you'll pass by the Rio Jataté resort, and right there there's a large sign which says that the federal government paved the San Quintín highway and "the government of change follows through." Fine, then there's another crossroads: the right goes to Altamirano, don't take that, the left goes to San Quintín, that's the one you want. Continue on, delirious with joy and astonished by what Fox has done for Chiapas, but not that much, because just nearby the highway ends, and the dirt road begins (in other words, the government of change doesn't follow through). Continue on happily, but now dustier or muddier, depending on whether it's rained or not, wondering what was done with that money which they said was earmarked for Chiapas.

In a while, about an hour, you'll reach a town called Carmen Pataté. There you're going to see a banner which says: "Preparation Meetings for the Sexta. Information," but it's not there. Whatever you do, don't get discouraged, because you can stop there to go to the bathroom, to stretch your legs and to let them know that you've just arrived, and a guide might even go up with you. Now, continue on once again until you reach the village called San Miguel, and there there's going to be another banner which says "For the Sixth Meeting," and an arrow pointing to your left. Then follow the arrow and then, further along, you'll see another banner in another village which says "Here It Is." And then it is there, and you'll see a lot of hubbub, because you'll certainly be arriving late and the others are already there, and they'll all be looking at you with those "what time is this to arrive and we've been waiting for you for hours and we were just going to start without you" expressions on their faces. But don't be frightened, and just act like "the tardy left is the more original" (or something that rhymes with "tardy"), and then the *compañeros* will make you comfortable, and you'll see that all the Zapatistas are very happy that you've arrived, and we're going to make "joy", or a dance, with *cumbias* and *rancheras*, in order to welcome you, and then we're all going to get very serious and we're going to begin the meeting.

Note: If you don't find any of the banners with the words I've told you about, one of two things: either you totally took the wrong road, or we didn't manage to put up the banners. Then, like everything of any value in life, it will be a "mystery."

The estimated travel, or highway, times, are: from San Cristóbal to Ocosingo, about two hours, slowly, driving carefully because there are a lot of curves; from Ocosingo to Carmen Pataté, about one hour; from Carmen Pataté to right where the meeting is going to be, about less than one hour. Or about four hours from San Cristóbal de Las Casas.

Another thing: it's likely that you could run into some convoy of federal army artillery vehicles along the road, making patrols (the ones that Fox says aren't being carried out anymore), and the soldiers will be talking videos and pictures of you. So don't forget to wave and fix your hair a bit, because of that "revolutionary elegance against reactionary bad taste" thing.

Vale. Salud and welcome everyone.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.
By the Sixth Committee of the EZLN.
Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

Mexico, August of 2005.

Concerning How the Recurring PS, A.C. of C.V. Unlimited & Co., Continuing To Be Into Informing, Testifies As to the Latest Events Regarding the Alleged Penguin Allegedly Located In Allegedly Zapatista Lands, in the Selva Lacandona, Chiapas (or Some Distance From Antarctica). - Alright, then, I'm informing you that, following a scientific "penguinological" analysis, it has been determined, to an acceptable degree of certainty, that Penguin was a little rooster in his previous life. And so it might be expected that he would exhibit behaviors which might lead to confusing him with a rooster. This has, in fact, already occurred. Here it is:

It so happened that, while we were moving our camp from one place to another, we stopped in one of the Zapatista villages. Penguin had made the journey without getting tired and without one spot of mud. Although this was owing, of course, to the fact that he had made the entire trip in Erika's rucksack. Well, once they got to the community, Toñita and Erika took a piece of cloth, the kind we use to clean weapons, and they made what I would characterize as a "first prototype" of Penguin's bib. "It looks like an apron," I told them, and, while Penguin was looking down, looking surprised, I added: "You have to make others, several, in case they get dirty." "Like diapers," Toñita said to Erika. Meanwhile, Penguin was getting accustomed to his bib, and he was walking around, from one side to the other, staggering.

I believe it's only fair to tell you that there has been a marked improvement in Penguin's lurching. Even though he continues to stumble, he now does so with more style, with a discreet charm of which we all approve with ill-disguised pride.

Fine, it so happened that Penguin ran into one of the roosters there. And what happened happened. I believe the other rooster didn't realize that Penguin wasn't a rooster, but a penguin. And so he challenged him with a lot of cock-a-doodle-doo's and such. All the tradition of struggle of Penguin's ancestors must have been boiling in his blood, and he responded by facing down the alleged aggressor.

Penguin's upright stance is not the most suitable one for a cockfight, and so the other rooster charged him and pecked at him in the chest. Penguin fought just to stay on his feet (sometimes a gust of air is enough to knock him over), and so the peck sent him to the ground, leaving him spread out full length (which isn't much, because Penguin is tiny).

The silence became so heavy you could have touched it and protected yourself from the rain with it. The other rooster withdrew, strutting, satisfied with his devastating victory over Penguin. We were speechless, agape, flabbergasted, "freaked out," etceterados. And then Toñita and Erika went to help Penguin, to give him first aid and to console him with hugs and kisses. And then the rest of us went to give it to the impertinent rooster (even more than avenging Penguin, what we wanted was to throw him in a pot, because we'd been eating nothing but beans for a long time), when Penguin let out a cry (opinions are divided here: some say it was a karate yell, others say it was a penguin croak, and others say it was a "cock-a-doodle-doo," some of us hold that we clearly heard him singing "Now you can see the horizon..."), that was the equivalent of "quiet, everyone!," and everyone, in effect, including the aggressor rooster, was paralyzed. Making a ninja movement, Penguin got to his feet. There was as much amazement in all of us as there was mud in our boots. Penguin was unscathed. The bib (or apron) of fabric had acted as armor. Then Penguin charged the other rooster who, surprised and terrified, fled, not without first receiving a suitable amount of pecks. We all applauded Penguin (we didn't lift him up on our shoulders, because he's very small and he hardly fits on one shoulder), and that night he sat at the head of our table. And, even though he doesn't use a spoon, he wolfed down a generous portion of rice and beans, while we slapped him on his back, congratulating him, and we raised our glasses of bitter *pozol*, toasting his health. The news has spread like wildfire throughout the mountains of the Mexican Southeast, and now it's talked about in all the barracks, camps, villages, caracoles, Autonomous Municipalities and Good Government Juntas. And now I'm told that a *corrido* is being composed in his honor, and even a *cumbia* (Penguin, in fact, walks as if he's dancing a *cumbia*). Well, that's all for now. We shall continue to keep you informed. For the Zapatista System of Intergalactic Television: the Sup.

Intergalactic PS. - I forgot: as of July 31, in the International arena, messages of support, of encouragement and help have been received from political and social organizations, collectives and persons from Germany, Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, the United States, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Martinique, the Basque Country, Sweden and Uruguay.