

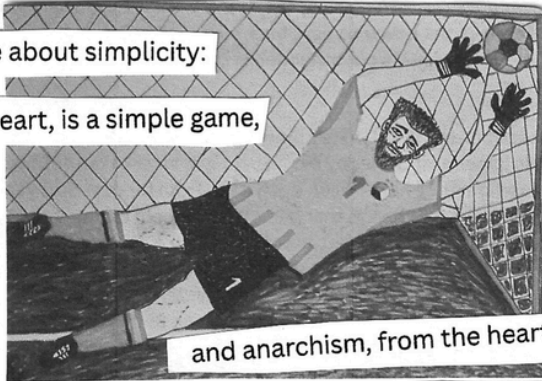
# "Pitched Battles"

By: Carlos Fernández

There are certain powerful ways in which the football field, or pitch, duplicates the social field. First, as history; it is a location of social activity. Nationalities, classes, and smaller social identities act out passionately on and around the pitch. Next, as collective formation; groups assemble into myriad shapes on and off the pitch, as elsewhere in societies. Football can touch off the powerful emotions that drive affiliations like teams, fan clubs, hooligan gangs, and beyond. Third, as style, the ways individuals and their communities or societies state their uniqueness; in football, this occurs mostly in the styles of play. Maybe most famously, Brazil produced a fluid kind of game obviously developed from capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian martial art. Fourth and most importantly, the football field reproduces the interdependence that characterizes the social; when people enthusiastically participate in the sport, they redefine it and themselves. ...

It seems to be about simplicity:

Football, at its heart, is a simple game,

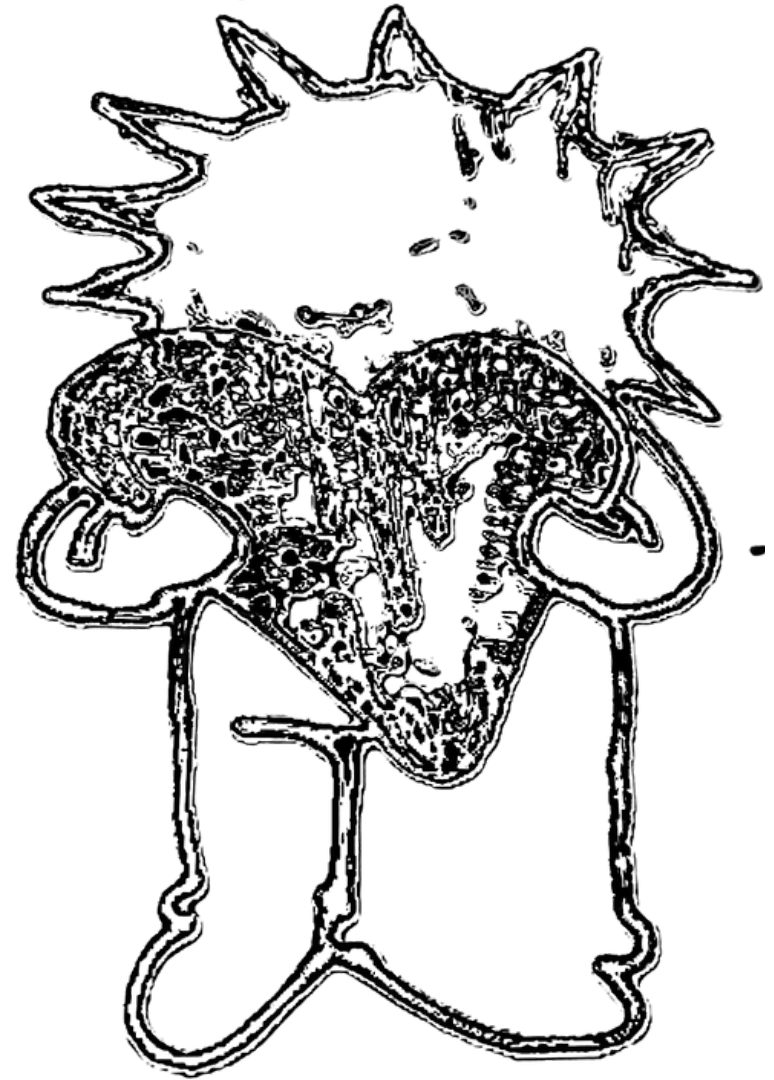


and anarchism, from the heart, is a simple wish.

The sport's fundamental ease has taken it around the world and dragged us with it. It's one of the most wonderful things when we meet someone new at a game, or our bonds strengthen at dinner or a bar after we play. If the football field is essentially a meeting place for play, it must then extend to wherever people enjoy being with each other. That's where anarchy might start, or at least where it can blossom. When the idea of self-organization can be made obvious by how a goal is scored or how a team trains, anarchism seems like no great feat. Bringing football and anarchism together is a natural, symbiotic thing. The pitch, what Gramsci called a "great open-air kingdom of human loyalty," needs to be made ours. ...

Football is a quintessential team sport. There are team events in track and field, skiing or archery, but most of them are summaries of individual performances. In football—like in other quintessential team sports: basketball, volleyball, hockey, etc.—there is no individual performance independent from the team. Even the success of long individual dribbles usually depends on teammates leading defenders astray, opening up space, etc. Likewise, free kick specialists could not score if teammates had not been fouled within reasonable distance to the goal. It is not surprising that the performances of individual players often vary significantly with different teams: some excel in their clubs but disappoint in their national sides, some improve greatly when they change their team, etc. At the same time, there is not only space for individual skill and creativity, but the success of the team is dependent on these qualities.

# Autonomous Football League Reading Group Zine Vol. 1



A collection of excerpts from  
recent reading groups



MAKING OUR LIVES TOGETHER.

We must resist the racist order of the United States that invites us to make ourselves more desirable to the imperialist power by participating in Amerikkkan antiblackness against Black people whom they have stolen everything from for over 500 years. We will not be tricked into believing the lies that paint Black people as criminals. This lie is how they fill jails with Black people, the same lies that ICE uses to make us criminals and fill up detention prisons with our families. We recognize that the same WHITE racist colonial genocidal imperialist power that has brought us violence and stolen our lands, is the same that has enslaved and killed Black people here in the United States. So who is the criminal? We won't separate ourselves from the other oppressed peoples within the United States but will struggle alongside all poor and unemployed peoples. We will struggle alongside Black people, Arab people, Trans people, LGBTQ+ people, incarcerated people, people struggling from addiction, peoples of different abilities, and the indigenous nations of this land in the struggle against imperialism and towards

. We also don't need your welcome to come here and work. We will come anyway. We recognize that we DO have the power to fight back by withholding our labor power alongside our other neighbors.

Somos mal agradecidos.  
We are ungrateful.

With papers or not, we must withdraw from collaborating with the imperial project of the United States by never forgetting that we are NOT here to sustain the economy of this empire. Here, they exploit us, and steal our wages. We recognize that the stealing of wages is not considered a crime because the laws are made for and by the bosses. We are not proud to labor here.

By: Maria Alexandra Garcia  
Shellyne Rodriguez

"Ungrateful Immigrants"



The aim was not to prevent or disrupt the World Cup, but to use the event to spotlight social woes (not least for international football fans) with the help of artistic interventions and street football tournaments. There was also a march under the slogan "The Festival is Not Worth the Tears in the Favelas." It was organized by favela residents who wanted to bring the protests against the militarization of their neighborhoods from the city's periphery to the rich parts of town where the tourists gathered. The march went from the Copacabana to the favela of Pavão-Pavãozinho. Participants carried coffins and crosses made out of cardboard and displayed images of police violence and of people murdered in the favelas, almost all of them young Black males. The police met the protests with little concern for the law. Alleged ringleaders were preemptively arrested and accused of forming "terrorist" organizations. Security forces responded with particular violence to all protests in the vicinity of the Maracanã Stadium.

"Our World Cup Happens in the Streets!"

The [2013] protests [against the upcoming world cup] that did occur were diverse. In Rio, a march to the Maracanã Stadium was held under the motto "There Won't Be a World Cup." It was stopped by police using tear gas, pepper spray, and rubber bullets. Protesters smashed windows and threw rocks and Molotov cocktails. Four rallies were organized under the motto:

By: Gese Koberling

"Neither a Raving Festival Nor a Stormy Protest: After the World Cup, Social Movements in Brazil Draw Mixed Conclusions"

Even if the numbers of people participating in the 2014 protests were lower than expected, the 2013 protests did have an impact on the public reception of the World Cup. No matter how much the media tried to stir up a World Cup frenzy, it was never felt on the streets. Protests such as "This Is Not Our World Cup" clearly resonated with many Brazilians. It was hard to have a conversation about the World Cup without someone pointing out that it was only the white upper class who could afford to attend games in the stadiums. Despite their great love for football, Brazilians agreed that the money that had been spent on the tournament should have rather been invested in health services and education. FIFA's disregard for human rights was seen as a disgrace. Football no longer functioned as a national umbrella that made class differences in Brazil disappear. This unifying function had been undermined for years, with ticket prices constantly rising and supporter groups being harassed by the police. The expenses for the World Cup and the submission to FIFA's demands were seen as a logical consequence of this development. Instead of football concealing social contradictions, it was now highlighting them. The people's reception of the World Cup made it clear that these contradictions were no longer accepted.