

Tales from the Planet

Fifth Estate Collective

Resistance to Genocide

While some celebrated the 510th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the western hemisphere, thousands of others protested his legacy of genocide and enslavement. In Chiapas, more than 50 peasant and civil organizations organized 12 roadblocks. In Colorado, in opposition to an annual Italian (white) pride pro-Columbus march, AIM mobilized nearly 2500 people to march from the four directions with red, black, yellow and white flags to the state capitol to "Transform Columbus Day", while hundreds of anarchists confronted the parade in solidarity. In Arizona and Sonora, 250 people marched on the U.S./Mexico border to show their opposition to border policies, the takeover and separation of indigenous lands, and the subjugation of indigenous people. Native Americans and others converged on Washington, DC where someone defaced a statue of Columbus.

Ecuador Anti-FTAA Actions

Thousands of small-scale farmers, indigenous groups, students, and activists from around Latin America came together in Quito, Ecuador in early November to protest plans for a US-backed free trade agreement which would tear down so called trade barriers from Alaska to Argentina starting in 2005. Trade Ministers from around the Western Hemisphere were in Quito for a two-day meeting on a preliminary accord for the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA, ALCA in Spanish).

Despite heavy police repression, determined demonstrators persisted, shouting that the free trade zone would turn Latin America into a US colony. At least 60 people, part of a march on the meeting venue, were injured in clashes with military and police forces who used tear gas and fired guns at the protesters. At one point, a police platoon joined the protests in demanding that the 34 Trade Ministers agree to receive a delegation from the demonstrators carrying a declaration of opposition to the FTAA.

65 protesters, including activists from all over the Americas, managed to get into the hotel, guarded by heavily armed special forces soldiers. Activists from Latin America took turns making speeches and reading statements from their groups denouncing the FTAA. Many Trade Ministers smirked as the US was denounced time and time again, while US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick was visibly uncomfortable. Last to speak formally was Maria Elena, a Nicaraguan farm worker leader. She read the formal declaration from the outside demonstration: "this is not a consultation or a dialog, this is a statement of implacable opposition to the FTAA by all the peoples' of the Americas." An American embarrassed and ridiculed Zoellick for not being able to speak or understand Spanish.

New York teens revolt against Police State

On Halloween in East Aurora, NY, as many as 200 high school students threw eggs and bottles at the cops in response to an incendiary flier urging property destruction against the notoriously abusive local police force.

Seven teens were arrested for disorderly conduct, and one for a felony egg ambush. Although reaction to events have been mixed, many parents have sided with the youth in their condemnation of police behavior.

Political Prisoner Denied Medical Treatment

October 23, 2002—Robert “Seth” Hayes is a former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army and a political prisoner who has been jailed for the past 30 years. On October 3rd, 2002, he was moved against his will from the hospital ward where he had been receiving treatment for Hepatitis C and type 2 Diabetes to the general prison population in Clinton Correctional Facility (CCF) in Dannemora, New York. Supporters are asked to contact administrators responsible for the transfer to demand proper medical care for Hayes and all other Diabetic prisoners. Contact the Robert “Seth” Hayes Emergency Medical Committee at (514) 848-7585, or rshemco2@yahoo.ca for prison officials’ contact information.

To offer support to Hayes, write him at: Robert “Seth” Hayes #74A-2280, Clinton Correctional Facility, Box 2001, Dannemora, New York, 12929, USA.

US Spy Base Blockaded

On October 24th, the US Spy Base at Menwith Hill in Yorkshire, England was blockaded. Protesters locked on to two entrance access gates starting at 5 am. The blockade lasted 4 and a half hours, targeting three scheduled shift changes. 750 to 1000 staff arriving for work at the base were turned away. No arrests were made.

Menwith Hill is a US spy base that monitors communications in Europe and the Middle East. It is a hub of intelligence procurement for the so-called War against Terror and the planned bombing of Iraq and is one of the key bases for the global spy system Echelon. 3,000 people, including US intelligence officers and support personnel from the UK, work at Menwith Hill.

Forest Activists Crash Timber Baron Conference

On November 8th Dallas, Texas, the 110th annual conference of the North American Wholesale Lumber Association (NAWLA) was joyfully disrupted by forest activists from Texas and Cascadia, who hung a three-story banner from the seventh story of the hotel’s atrium. The banner was timed to coincide with a workshop hosted by (Corporate Forest Raper) Boise on how to build your corporate environmental image. It read: NAWLA AND BOISE: LUMBERING TOWARDS EXTINCTION. Activists then crashed a fancy luncheon with a twelve-piece revolutionary marching band, where they threw sawdust in the air and passed out leaflets to the stunned attendees. Outside the hotel, bridges, boxes and billboards were plastered with poster-sized wheatpastes declaring, “NAWLA = Blood Timber”.

Fifth Estate seeks short reports from actions against war, capital, authority, and to create a better world. The deadline for the next issue is February 1st.

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