

Tales From The Planet

john johnson

Campesinos Attack the Mexican Congress

Hundreds of well organized campesinos (agricultural workers) stormed and broke into the Mexican Congress on December 10th, forcing many of the congressmen to run for their lives.

The campesinos are extremely desperate because of the worsening conditions in the agricultural sectors of Mexico and the lack of forthcoming solutions by the legislature. Thousands attended a protest at the Congressional building, parking 6 tractors in the front entrance to the building, spreading manure and throwing rotten vegetables against the walls. The group was accompanied by two pigs, named after President Vincente Fox and of Secretary of Foreign Relations Jorge C. Gutman.

Four horse riders along with scores of campesinos broke the glass facade, entered the building and headed towards the auditorium where congress was in session. Despite promptings by the President of the Mexican Congress to the legislators to remain calm, many panicked and ran to the back of the building where they desperately tried to climb over the fence. A spokesperson of the campesinos said "Esto fue solo una probadita" which translates into "This was just a little taste."

Many Mexican analysts blame this situation on the economic globalization policies of the USA and its support by the Fox Administration. There are rumors in Mexico of an impending mass devaluation of the peso. This could be the spark for another Mexican revolution that would make the one in 1917 look like a Sunday picnic.

—From an article by Hector Carreon in *La Voz de Aztlan*

<http://www.aztlan.net/campesinos.htm>

Emma Goldman still fightin' at UC Berkeley

"Emma Goldman is a woman of great ability and personal magnetism, and her persuasive powers are such to make her an exceedingly dangerous woman," Francis Gaffey, the United States Attorney in New York, wrote in 1917.

Now her words are the source of deep consternation once again, this time at the University of California, which has housed Goldman's papers for the past 23 years. In an unusual showdown over freedom of expression, university officials had refused to allow a fund-raising appeal for the Emma Goldman Papers Project to be mailed because it quoted Goldman on the subjects of suppression of free speech and her opposition to war. In one of the quotations, from 1915, Goldman called on people "not yet overcome by war madness to raise their voice of protest, to call the attention of the people to the crime and outrage which are about to be perpetrated on them."

In the other, from 1902, she warned that free-speech advocates "shall soon be obliged to meet in cellars, or in darkened rooms with closed doors, and speak in whispers lest our next-door neighbors should hear that [which] free-born citizens dare not speak in the open."

Berkeley officials said the quotations could be construed as a political statement by the university in opposition to United States policy toward Iraq. Candace S. Falk the director of the project and author of the appeal, acknowledged

that the excerpts were selected because of their present-day resonance. But Dr. Falk said they reflected Goldman's views, not the university's policies. Falk and the Project staff fought off the attempted censorship and the UC administration recently reversed its position according to an article in the Asheville Global Report.

More Gardens! in New York City

The grassroots coalition More Gardens! is initiating an emergency campaign to preserve threatened community gardens and to begin an era of cooperation among community gardeners to create even more gardens.

Community gardens are the revolutionary fruits of caring neighbors, taking back our land one seed at a time. Most of the community gardens were created in the 1970s as a response to the city government's systematic abandonment of all critical services; firehouses, hospitals and police stations disappeared from the barrios and ghettos. This allowed the poorest of neighborhoods to be burnt down by greedy landlords and filled up with garbage, rats, needles, and broken glass.

The community gardeners brought safety, food, beauty, fresh air, and *comunidad* back to their streets and people. The More Gardens! Coalition was formed in 1999 as a proactive response to the city's announced intention to sell off ALL 750 then-existing community gardens.

In a shockingly short-sighted approach to city planning, land containing gardens was going to be made available for luxury housing development. More Gardens! uses direct action as a main tactic in our work, and this is what sets us apart from other garden and greening groups in our city.

Direct Actions have included tree-sits, office occupations and most important, direct non-violent occupation and defense of gardens threatened by bulldozers and development. While most community gardens have been protected by legal and public campaigns, many remain threatened by development. More Gardens! has already begun working with some of the most affected community gardeners to find out more about the developments planned for their garden sites.

More Gardens! is launching an emergency, grassroots campaign to accomplish the following: Work with members of the 150 gardens threatened with development to organize community-based garden preservation campaigns; compile and disseminate information on government development programs and private developers to provide to garden supporters and the media; put a "Bulldozer Hotline" into place. The hotline will be the one number that community gardeners can call-day or night-when a bulldozing seems imminent. More Gardens! always needs more help. Please come and participate in a world we want to create—one which is sustainable and makes peas grow!

For current action alerts, fundraising events, and more details please see the More Gardens! web site—www.moregardens.org or contact Aresh at 212.533.8019 or 917.518.9987, or write 79 Clinton Street #17, NY, NY 10002.

—From a longer article by Aresh

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