



# Notes from everywhere



What you hold in your hand is a sample of a future book project entitled "We Are Everywhere: the irresistible rise of global anticapitalism." Written and edited entirely by activists, the book will celebrate, document, and explore the recent rise of the global movements against capitalism and for life, autonomy, land, dignity and justice. This project will never be able to tell all the many stories of this movement; it will simply be able to give a taste of rebellion to those who may have never realized that beneath the slogans, under the bandanas, and beyond the mass actions are some extraordinary words and voices.

The Zapatistas, whose indigenous uprising inspired the world, have taught us, through their struggle founded on radical notions of dialogue and participation, to embark on a rebellion that listens. In this spirit we have produced this booklet, "Notes from Everywhere," to give you a peek at our project so far, as well as to ask you for critique, ideas and contributions.

Books don't often change the world, but stories do. We look forward to reading yours and being able to transmit more of these voices from below whose words rise up and remind us that this movement of movements is utterly irresistible.

**Please send your submissions before the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001 to:**

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# One No and Many Yesses

## An introduction

"The highest expression of dignity can be summed up in a single word. 'No.'"

-Dai Qing, woman resisting 3 Gorges dam in China

Part of the beauty of this movement of movements which is emerging all over the world, united by a common "no" and striving towards "many yesses," is that it is impossible to define from a single perspective. Although the "no" is a clear rejection of capitalism, the refusal of a world where profits are more important than people and the planet, the "many yesses" are spoken by many tongues, in many places, with many different stories, ideals, and experiences. The "yesses" refer to the multitude of positive alternatives to a system that imposes the misery of monoculture onto every corner of the planet,

making everywhere look and feel like everywhere else. The same food, the same insecurity, the same clothes, the same misery, the same restaurants, the same hunger, the same hotels, the same homelessness, the same shopping malls filled with the same deadening musik.

While the president of the Nabisco Corporation is "looking forward to the day when Arabs and Americans, Latins and Scandinavians will be munching Ritz crackers as enthusiastically as they already drink Coke or brush their teeth with Colgate." these movements see progress very differently: Progress is defined by the amount of diversity and differentiation within society; progress is when an Indian farmer shares tips about pulling up genetically modified crops with a British environmentalist; progress is realising that the alternatives to capitalism for a landless Brazilian peasant are very different than for an unemployed worker living in the suburbs of Paris; progress is many worlds in one world.

This book does not desire to find commonality or to present a complete overview; it's simply an attempt at bringing together some of the stories which have inspired us and helped us continue, against the odds, to struggle for a better world. It was conceived as a way to translate, broadcast, and amplify these many yesses, this sense of extraordinary possibility that is being created by the multitude of irresistible uprisings which are taking place everywhere. Most of these stories are united only by the desire of their authors to disobey those who tell us that the law of the market is sacrosanct

"It has to start somewhere

It has to start sometime

What better place than here

What better place than now..."

--Guerrilla Radio, Rage Against The Machine, The Battle of Los Angeles.

movements originate? Some say it began on November 30, 1999, as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) tried to meet in a city reeking of tear gas and paralysed by tens of thousands of demonstrators. Others think it started on New Year's Day, 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect and the Zapatistas emerged from the mountain mist of southeastern Mexico, declaring war on the Mexican army and neoliberalism.

Still others believe it was the spectacular defeat of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) in 1998 that spearheaded it, or that it was the global street party in May 1998 which sowed the seeds of global resistance. But the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s austerity programs have triggered widespread rioting from the mid 70's onwards in the global South.

Resistance is nothing new, and the movement's exact origins are perhaps only interesting if one thinks that history marches forward in a straight

line. But we are learning that history is a fluid creation, made up of many stories, which take on different shapes when viewed from different angles. It is through these stories that we can begin to recognise our differences, and to understand that to replace capitalism with another singular global system is as absurd as leaving the present system in its place.

'Democracy used to be a good thing, but now it has gotten into the hands of the wrong people.' - Fortune Magazine

Resistance may not be new, but the desire for positions of power and formations of political parties which marked uprisings of the past have given way to new and diverse social movements, which no longer aspire to take power, but rather, to dissolve it, creating spaces for face-to-face direct democracy. "Participate, don't spectate;" "Listen, don't preach;" "Talk to someone who doesn't look like you," - these are cries that are now echoing from Seattle to Bangalore, from Porto Alegre to Genoa, from London to San Cristóbal.

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## EXCERPTS FROM: THE RESTLESS MARGINS

### Key moments of the global movement 1994-2001

**[1994 January 1]** Indigenous Zapatista rebels occupy seven cities in Chiapas, Mexico, crying "¡Ya Basta!" (Enough!), on the same day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) comes into effect.

**[February 3]** Thousands of Indian villagers gather on the banks of the Narmada River to celebrate victory in their year-long campaign to halt the Maheshwar hydropower dam.

**[April 15]** The treaty establishing the World Trade Organisation is signed in



Even tactical forms are changing and becoming more fluid; linear marches are being replaced by the multifaceted, self-organised forces of direct action. Whether it's the Brazilian landless peasants (MST) squatting huge tracts of empty land and building cooperative farms and communities, Reclaim the Streets taking over a motorway for a street party, or Indian peasants banning politicians from their villages under penalty of being tied to a tree - direct action is the order of the day. It's about taking control of our own lives and collectively deciding the future of our communities, without the mediation of politicians and bureaucrats. The dispersal of power into the hands of the people themselves is at the very heart of this movement.

"The right to remember does not figure among the human rights consecrated by the United Nations, but now more than ever we must insist on it and act on it...

When it's truly alive, memory doesn't

contemplate history, it invites us to make it." Eduardo Galeano, *Upside-Down*

One of the most potent annihilators of resistance is forgetting, the eradication of collective memory. The breathtaking thrill of participating in a quasi-insurrectional experience becomes harder and harder to remember as time passes. Newspaper cuttings, which have the insidious power of spectacularising the events and colonising our memory, are often all that remain. "History," says Howard Zinn, "is written from records left by the privileged", and those records detail the triumphs of power and the conquest of capitalism rather than the consistent acts of individual and collective resistance which illuminate our past and shape our future.

For this reason, though we in the global North might not forget events from Seattle, Prague, Québec City, or Genoa, the mass mobilisations and radical movements of the global South, which have inspired our encounters and actions, have

remained invisible to us. "We are Everywhere" will attempt to redress this balance, bringing to light some of these often-unacknowledged uprisings. As these voices mingle with the voices on the Northern streets, we begin to see that a unique revolutionary situation is emerging, where seemingly separate movements converge and the wave of global resistance becomes a tsunami. We have begun to recognise each other as allies, to struggle together, to take actions which cause turbulence thousands of miles away, as well as create ripples which lap at our neighbour's doorstep. Together, our hope is

reignited, hope that everything can be transformed, hope that we have the power to reclaim memory from those who would impose oblivion, hope that history belongs to us if only we believe we can make it with our own hands.

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time... But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."  
Lilla Watson, A Brisbane based Aboriginal educator and activist.

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Marrakesh, Morocco. Trade representatives from 120 countries sign on, presumably having read its 22,000 pages and lugged around all 395 pounds of it.

**[1995 March 14]** An indigenous man of the Hagahai people from Papua New Guinea's remote highlands becomes the first person to cease to own his genetic material, patented by

the U.S. National Institute of Health.  
**[May 14]** The first Reclaim the Streets street party occupies Camden High Street in London. The street party, which brings together the spirit of carnival and rebellion, is a tactic that spreads to much of the global North, rejuvenating street protest.  
**[November-December]** In protest against the French government's



*In January 1996, the Zapatistas sent an invitation - for an intercontinental meeting - which concluded with the words "It is not necessary to conquer the world. It is sufficient to make it anew." The response was overwhelming. On July 27 of that year over 3,000 grassroots activists from over 40 countries spanning 5 continents gathered in Chiapas, Mexico with the aim of engaging in a collective process which raised important questions, shared stories of struggle, and started to look for some answers. Here are extracts from Subcommandante Marcos' closing remarks of the First Intercontinental Encuentro for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism:*

## Tomorrow begins today

When this dream that awakens today in La Realidad began to be dreamed by us, we thought it would be a failure. We thought that, maybe, we could gather here a few dozen people from a handful of continents. We were wrong. As always, we were wrong. It wasn't a few dozen, but thousands of human beings, those who came from the five continents to find themselves in the reality at the close of the twentieth century.

The word born within these mountains, these Zapatista mountains, found the ears of those who could listen, care for, and launch it anew, so that it might travel far away and circle the world. The sheer lunacy of calling to the five continents to reflect clearly on our past, our present, and our future, found that it wasn't alone in its delirium. Soon lunacies from the whole planet began to work on bringing the dream to rest in La Realidad.

Who are they who dare to let their dreams meet with all the dreams of the world? What is happening in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast that finds an echo and a mirror in the streets of Europe, the suburbs of Asia, the countryside of América, the townships of Africa, and the houses of Oceania? What is it that is happening with the peoples of these five continents who, so we are all told, only



encounter each other to compete or make war?  
Wasn't this turn of the century synonymous with  
despair, bitterness, and cynicism? From where and  
how did all these dreams come to La Realidad?

May Europe speak and recount the long bridge of  
its gaze, crossing the Atlantic and history in order  
to rediscover itself in La Realidad. May Asia speak  
and explain the gigantic leap of its heart to arrive  
and beat in La Realidad. May Africa speak and  
describe the long sailing of its restless image to  
come to reflect upon itself in La Realidad. May  
Oceania speak and tell of the multiple flight of its  
thought to come to rest in La Realidad. May  
America speak and remember its swelling hope to  
come to renew itself in La Realidad. May the five  
continents speak and everyone listen. May  
humanity suspend for a moment its silence of  
shame and anguish.

May humanity speak.

May humanity listen....

Each country,  
each city,

each countryside,  
each house,  
each person,  
each is a large or small battleground.

On the one side is neoliberalism with all its  
repressive power and all its machinery of death; on  
the other side is the human being.

In any place in the world, anytime, any man or  
woman rebels to the point of tearing off the clothes  
that resignation has woven for them and cynicism  
has dyed grey. Any man or woman, of whatever  
colour, in whatever tongue, speaks and says to  
himself, to herself: Enough is enough! – ¡Ya Basta!

For struggling for a better world all of us are  
fenced in, threatened with death. The fence is  
reproduced globally. In every continent, every city,  
every countryside, every house. Power's fence of  
war closes in on the rebels, for whom humanity is  
always grateful.

But fences are broken.

In every house,

in every countryside,  
in every city,  
in every state,  
in every country,  
on every continent,  
the rebels, whom history repeatedly has given the  
length of its long trajectory, struggle and the fence  
is broken. The rebels search each other out. They  
walk toward one another. They find each other and  
together break other fences.

In the countrysides and cities, in the states, in the  
nations, on the continents, the rebels begin to  
recognise each other, to know themselves as equals  
and different. They continue on their fatiguing  
walk, walking as it is now necessary to walk, that is  
to say, struggling...

A reality spoke to them then. Rebels from the five  
continents heard it and set off walking. Some of  
the best rebels from the five continents arrived in  
the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. All of  
10 them brought their ideas, their hearts, their

worlds. They came to La Realidad to find  
themselves in others' ideas, in others' reasons, in  
others' worlds.

A world made of many worlds found itself these  
days in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.  
A world made of many worlds opened a space and  
established its right to exist, raised the banner of  
being necessary, stuck itself in the middle of  
earth's reality to announce a better future.  
But what next?

A new number in the useless enumeration of the  
numerous international orders?

A new scheme that calms and alleviates the  
anguish of having no solution?

A global program for world revolution?

A utopian theory so that it can maintain a prudent  
distance from the reality that anguishes us?

A scheme that assures each of us a position, a task,  
a title, and no work?

The echo goes, a reflected image of the possible and  
forgotten: the possibility and necessity of speaking



The Brazilian landless peasants movement (MST) reclaims another piece of land.



Zapatista women have been at the forefront of resistance against the Mexican army. Chiapas, Mexico.

and listening; not an echo that fades away, or a force that decreases after reaching its apogee. Let it be an echo that breaks barriers and re-echoes. Let it be an echo of our own smallness, of the local and particular, which reverberates in an echo of our own greatness, the intercontinental and galactic. An echo that recognises the existence of the other and does not overpower or attempt to silence it. An echo of this rebel voice transforming itself and renewing itself in other voices.

An echo that turns itself into many voices, into a network of voices that, before Power's deafness, opts to speak to itself, knowing itself to be one and many. Let it be a network of voices that resist the war that the Power wages on them. A network of voices that not only speak, but also struggle and resist for humanity and against neoliberalism.

The world, with the many worlds that the world needs, continues. Humanity, recognising itself to be plural, different, inclusive, tolerant of itself, full of hope, continues. The human and rebel voice,

consulted on the five continents in order to become a network of voices and of resistances, continues.

**We declare:**

**That we will make a collective network of all our particular struggles and resistances. An intercontinental network of resistance against neoliberalism, an intercontinental network of resistance for humanity.**

**This intercontinental network of resistance, recognising differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistances around the world.**

**This intercontinental network of resistance is not an organising structure; it doesn't have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist.**

*[This is an edited version of the original Zapatista declaration - August 3 1996]*

*During the first encuentro, it was agreed to hold a second one in Europe the following summer to continue conversations on a global scale about fighting capitalism and building alternatives. This is a story of some of those who came and what they did, a story about the attempt to extend the practice developed in Zapatista communities to a world scale, a story about the strengthening of solidarity as a common journey on the path of resistance.*

## **Dreaming of a Reality: Where The Past And Future Meet The Present**

Imagine for a moment marching up a hill, lit only by starlight and a distant bonfire on a hot night in August, in Andalucia, near the very tip of southern Spain. Looking at the stars, you point out the red twinkle of Mars to the comrade whose arm you entwine. She comes from the opposite end of Europe. Behind you lies an agriculture estate, left derelict by its owner but now seized by agricultural workers. Behind you hundreds of comrades try and ford the shallow river in the dark. On either side, olive groves stretch up the hills in neat rows, the red soil now dark and cool.

Someone on the road ahead starts singing "A Las Barricadas" (To the Barricades) in Spanish. Slowly this is taken up by others behind and ahead, in Italian, Turkish, and other languages, sometimes just hummed or whistled by those who don't know the words. The Spanish version is familiar to me from a scratchy recording an Italian comrade passed on to me on tape. The original recording is of 500,000 people singing this working class anthem at a rally of the anarchist CNT in Barcelona, July 1936, days after the revolution there.

Those on this road have gathered from all over the world, over 50 countries in all. They have temporarily left the struggles in their own

countries to come here to dream of a new reality together. Here the weather-beaten features of a male campesino from Brazil are found beside the sunburned features of an 18-year-old female squatter from Berlin. Do you feel you are imagining something impossible, something from a Hollywood blockbuster or the past? Then add one more detail, a gasp goes up from those on the road, for overhead, a shooting star briefly appears. Were it not for the collective gasp, each of us may have imagined this was a vision we alone were seeing. But no, we look around and realize we are marching, seeing, and dreaming together.

In our modern world the Power tells us such dreams are no longer possible. History has ended, there is no dream, just the reality of alienation, work, and obedience. Yet the scene above is not from a film or from a history book; it took place on the evening of August the 2<sup>nd</sup> 1997. This was the "Second Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism." I could describe it in cold, political terms alone but this would miss the "for humanity" part and in truth for every day we discussed

organising "against neoliberalism" we spent another "for humanity".

The encounter was organised without a central committee through cooperation on a continental level. News of it flowed along many paths in many languages. It made huge leaps via the internet and fax, and smaller ones via leaflets, pamphlets, on radio shows, in photo exhibitions, and during a million conversations. In various ways, the news of the encounter-to-be was put into the hands of those marching in Derry in February 1997 against the massacre of civilians by the British army there 25 years earlier; landless campesinos occupying land in Brazil; refugees from the Western Sahara in camps in Southern Algeria; anti-road protesters in Britain; First Nation activists in Canada, those running a "pirate university" for workers in Turkey; environmental campaigners in Columbia; academics in South Africa; anarchists in Poland - the list goes on and on. It echoed right down to the Zapatista villages in the mountains and jungle of the Mexican Southeast where the idea of the first encounter had come from.

## Flowing to Spain

And so in July people from everywhere came on boats, by plane, by car and bus and train, even a few by bicycle. Alongside this came longer messages bearing titles like “Resistance to Neoliberalism: A View from South Africa” as dozens of papers began to arrive to be translated and circulated. As we got closer, the streams started to merge until a river of people arrived from the Metro station to fill the public buses to San Sebastián de los Reyes, a small and dusty town outside Madrid.

The opening ceremonies were held in a nearby bull-ring, Plaza de Toros, where two delegates from the Zapatista communities read out greetings in which they prophetically warned us that “As companions in the struggle for harmony in our world, we say that it is necessary to put up with heat, thirst, and tiredness, like a farmer who puts up with everything because he has faith in his work in the fields.” These were indeed prophetic words for the week ahead of us.

16 We split up for discussions on a variety of issues, which were held in five different locations in the

Spanish state. I set out for the train station alongside others heading north to Barcelona for the economics and culture group. We travelled overnight on a specially chartered train to Barcelona. Many of us felt Barcelona was a fitting location, the centre of the anarchist revolution that had swept much of Spain some 61 years earlier, a revolution that in the last few years had become a point of redefinition for sections of the left.

Arriving at 8.00 in the morning we first formed a cordon through the train station for the security of the Zapatista delegates who had travelled with us. Then we marched in a long column through the streets, at one point passing under a squat from the roof of which large exploding fireworks were being fired in welcome. This brought the neighbours out on their balconies along the route to wonder what this motley, tired, and unwashed sample of the world's population were up to.

One of the strange features of our group was how many of the delegates sleeping on mats in school halls were equipped with portable computers, digital cameras, and other playthings.



But with these we succeeded in putting up on-the-spot accounts and pictures of the encounter in process.

The sub-group I worked with dealt with the issue of how to form the network of information between struggles. The call for this network had emerged from the previous encounter in Chiapas and was contained in the closing statement.

*“That we will make a network of communication among all our struggles and resistance's... this intercontinental network of alternative communication will search to weave the channels so that words may travel all the roads that resist.”*

Most of us had experience in communication, from pirate radio and small circulation magazines to regional TV stations. We decided to work in English and Spanish as everyone there had a working knowledge of one of these languages.

We began by rejecting the traditional pyramid structure of news media where local sources feed up to region level, which feed to national and perhaps the global level before news trickled down again to other regions. In discussing what a network without a centre could look like (but recognising that some people have more time and resources to dedicate to the flow of information than others), we

liberalisation of labour laws in an unpopular effort to reform the welfare system, 5 million union members and students go on strike, demanding that telecommunications and all other services not be privatised, and that more funding be allocated to overcrowded state universities. The French government eventually backs down.

**[December 13]** Students, professors and university staff in Managua, Nicaragua, rejecting proposed tuition hikes and administrative fees, demand that the government abide by the constitution and allocate 6% of the national budget for university education. Riot police break up demonstrations at the National Assembly with tear gas followed by



came to use the human brain as an analogy. Here the many nodes have major paths that carry information between them but it is possible for any two nodes to form a connection and for any connection to improve in speed and the amount of information it can carry if this is needed. Therefore many minor paths also exist. There is also a two way flow of information and feedback on the information that is sent.

This image flowed out of what the network already is, in practice. The network we described is an organic one already in existence and already growing. Our role was more to begin a description of it and come up with ways to develop this existence and improve the flow of information.

We considered, for instance, the path a communique from Subcomandante Marcos might take after he has written it in the heights of some ceiba tree in the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. Perhaps it goes on horseback to the nearest settlement, from there by car to San Cristóbal where it is typed onto a computer,

**18** translated and suddenly takes more paths, perhaps

by fax to newspapers and solidarity groups on the one hand, on the other it jumps onto the internet and runs down the telephone lines to listserves like Chiapas 95. Here it replicates hundreds of times and make its way onto a desktop in Ireland where it jumps onto web pages and more lists but also gets printed out and stuck up as a poster in a bookshop or reproduced and distributed in the Mexico Bulletin. Simultaneously it has arrived in Istanbul, where it is also printed out and travels by bus to some distant town and a union meeting. Multiply this path by thousands and consider all the alternatives and we see the network already exists without a centre - indeed the different nodes have not only never met but can be unaware of each other's existence.

In the course of the week in Barcelona we also mobilised in support of one of the squats where the encounter was being held. In a piece of blinding stupidity the council had announced its intention to evict this in the middle of the week. They backed down on the day of the demonstration, which became a victory march through the Hospitalet

district complete with samba bands, stilt walkers and fire jugglers. An enduring image from the demonstration is one of a Brazilian carrying the flag of the Movimento Sem Terra, the movement coordinating the occupation of farmland by landless campesino's on this demonstration in support of the occupation of a building in one of the big industrial cities of Europe.

Another highlight of the week was a video-showing of the Milan train occupations. These occurred in June of this year when 4,000 Italians occupied two trains in Milan and succeeded in travelling right across Europe to the demonstration against the EU summit in Amsterdam, focal point of the European march against unemployment. The video was produced by Italian autonomists from a social centre in Rome that we were thrilled to learn was in an old military fort with a castle and a drawbridge. The encounter was bringing people from different traditions of struggle into contact with each other so that we could draw inspiration and learn from each other.

The value of this sort of exchange cannot be

over-estimated. By seeing the struggles of others we come to understand our struggles better.

After several days, we boarded the train and settled down for the long night-journey across the Spanish state to El Indiano.

Throughout the night and into the next day vast amounts of liquid refreshment were consumed to the sound of revolutionary songs from every corner of the globe which emanated from the dining car. By the early hours of the morning the songs were becoming shorter as words were forgotten but the spirit was there. On that long train journey south many kindred spirits living in this temporary and mobile 'free world' reached out to each other in the dark of one hundred compartments. All through that night and into the next day the train rolled south and as the sun rose so did the heat and it kept rising and rising as further south we went into a land of red soil, sunflowers and olive trees stretching into the distance.

The journey took 20 hours by train and another 30 minutes by coach to the small town of Puerto

Serrano. Here we ran into two gates, each guarded by a large bearded man shouting at us to go to the other one. Eventually something was sorted out and the thousands of activists flooded into the schools and their grounds to stake out spaces for sleeping.

That evening there was the inevitable fiesta. We formed into a long column outside the schools and marched there, although definitely more of a manifestation than a demonstration. The locals turned out in force to watch. At one point an old man stood outside the house, both arms above his head, cheering those marching by. From his age and obvious joy we speculated that here was a participant whose eyes had seen the struggle that Spain represented to so many of us, the Spanish revolution of 1936. We were, after all, in the olive groves of Andalucia where a previous generation had fought and died for their vision of a new world.

The final day of the encounter we walked to El Indiano, an agricultural estate squatted by the union Sindicato de Obreros del Campo. We were passed at one point by a JCB digger, its front bucket

20 crammed with several punks who had hitched a lift

from a local. Revolutionary Spain briefly met Mad Max on that road.

The end was an anti-climax; throughout the long, hot day each group reported back in three languages, Italian, Spanish and English. Each statement started with "neoliberalism is generally bad, it's bad for the issue that concerned our table because blah, blah, blah, and we need to create an alternative." In the evening we returned to hear the closing words of the Zapatista delegates before making our way back along the road; this is where the shooting star appeared and this account begins.

From here there is little to tell or there is everything to tell. The second encounter ended but the encounter for humanity and against neoliberalism goes on.

- **Andrew Flood**



Reclaim the Streets occupy a motorway and turn the tarmac into a beach, London, July 1996.



Citizens fight against the imposed privatization of their water supply. Cochabamba, Bolivia, April 2000.



## Peoples' Global Action Weaving a fabric of struggle

The idea of People's Global Action, a network of grass roots direct action groups, was born during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Encuentro. Aiming to be "a global instrument for communication and coordination for all those fighting against the destruction of humanity and the planet by the global market, while building up local alternatives and people power," the network had its founding meeting in **Geneva** in February 1998.

More than 300 delegates from 71

countries attended and plans were hatched for the first global day of action against the WTO and G8 summits in May 98. One of the participants spoke of this inspiring gathering:

"It is difficult to describe the warmth and the depth of the encounters we had here. The global enemy is relatively well known, but the global resistance that it meets rarely passes through the filter of the media. And here we met the people who had shut down whole cities in **Canada** with general strikes, risked their lives to seize land in **Latin America**, destroyed the seat of Cargill in **India** or Novartis' transgenic maize in **France**. The discussions, the concrete planning for action, the stories of struggle, the personalities, the enthusiastic hospitality of the Genevan squatters...all sealed an alliance between us...

"On the last day a demonstration marched to WTO headquarters where,

facing police lines, a woman from the **Bangladesh** Garment Workers organisation burst into a diatribe of such fury that I (who was holding the mike) was actually a little afraid that she might have some sort of a fit. Absolutely rigid, her eyes fixed on the top stories of the WTO building, she was asking for nothing. She was telling them, positively screeching 'We are warning you! You have caused enough suffering! Enough deaths! That time is going to end, because we are going to stop you!' The external relations officer of the WTO abandoned his attempts at dialogue and retreated into the building, no doubt thinking, "So that was what they mean by being opposed to lobbying." And we marched back to dinner, I think each of us saying to ourselves, "These are people after my own heart!"

The slogan - **Our resistance is as transnational as capital** - was becoming a reality.

*Four hundred and fifty activists from Southern grassroots movements took part in the Intercontinental Caravan protest tour of Europe in the summer of 1999. Members of the Movimento Sem Terra (MST) - Landless Movement of Brazil, several hundred Indian farmers, and activists from Columbia, Mexico, Bangladesh, and other places came together with European activists to organise the caravan which culminated at the protests at the G8 summit in Cologne, Germany on June 18, 1999 as part of a global day of action. These are the words of the MST, the day after they took part in the protests in Cologne. The cry, 'ICC Zindabad!' they end with is inspired by the rallying shout of the Indian farmers. It means 'Long live the Intercontinental Caravan!'*

## Together we start a struggle

We saw nice cities, big buildings, luxury cars, architecture, the history and the richness. It seemed that people talked about bad things, in between all the nice things. We did not see the people laughing, we did not see any happiness. We saw, astonishingly, that a lot of people were nearly dead. They were in prison of their own bodies without any life, addicted by television and radio, doped by the beat of the mystique of consumption, cheap and expensive drugs. Doped by indifference and disillusion.

So - we saw people in the middle of these wonderful things, but empty, without any humanity. That is what appeared to us, this continent, which is presented to us as the cradle of civilisation.

Now this continent is a grave, a cave, a cemetery, the consequence of the human race. Here we have learned, we have understood, that in between all the bad things, there is resistance, which attacks the order: when houses are occupied, when war is condemned, when the persecution of migrants is condemned. Against globalisation, whose soul is called capitalism, we have learned that we are a lot of minorities, that we are in resistance, that we will not be bowed.

We, people from different continents, who are together in the caravan, we started a struggle. We started to understand that capital has no borders. Therefore we have to start an uprising of the people all over the continents. There has to be continuity, to demand for respect of life, for human rights and the environment and for nature. **ICC Zindabad!**





## Global Days of Action Against 'Free' Trade and the WTO [May 1998]

Throughout May acts of resistance echo around the planet, mostly coordinated through Peoples Global Action. May 2<sup>nd</sup> hundreds of thousands of peasants, agricultural labourers, tribal people and industrial workers from all regions of **India** take to the streets of **Hyderabad** against a growing wave of peasant suicides, calling for a rejection of neoliberal policies and demanding the immediate withdrawal of **India** from the WTO. May 15<sup>th</sup> 10,000 fisherfolk

march in **Manila**.

On May 16<sup>th</sup> the first global street party takes place with over thirty Reclaim the Streets parties filling streets with music and rebellion from **Finland** to **Sidney**, **San Fransisco** to **Toronto**, **Slovenia** to **Belgium**, **Lyon** to **Berlin**. In **Prague**, the biggest single mobilisation, since the Velvet Revolution in '89, brought over 3,000 people into the streets for a mobile street party which is attacked by police, ending with several MacDonald's being "redesigned" and battles running into the night. Meanwhile in the **UK**, 5,000 Reclaim the Streets activists block central **Birmingham** as the G8 leaders flee the city to a local manor, to continue their meeting in a more tranquil location, earlier 50,000 debt campaigners made a human chain around the summit.

Meanwhile in **Geneva**, while World leaders congregate for the 2<sup>nd</sup> WTO ministerial, and to celebrate the

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) the forerunner of the WTO. Over 10,000 people from all over Europe show their discontent, banks have their windows smashed, the WTO Director Generals' Mercedes is turned over and three days of the heaviest rioting ever seen in the city follows. It was not to be the last time that a city hosting the WTO ministerial was to be filled with billowing clouds of tear gas.

Four days later **Brazil's** landless peasants and unemployed workers march from the four cardinal points of the country. As they converge on **Brasilia** they redistribute food from supermarkets to feed the poor.

China's English-language paper China Daily, says of the protest: "It was planned as a grand birthday celebration to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the free trade system. But the 2<sup>nd</sup> ministerial conference of the WTO will instead be remembered as a turning point in the rush towards globalisation."

*The indigenous Ogoni people who inhabit the Niger Delta - led by writer Ken Saro-Wiwa - have led a determined opposition to the oil multinationals who have devastated the lives of those living in this rich ecological region. In 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged with 8 other Ogoni activists by the military dictatorship with the tacit support of Shell. His brother, fellow activist Owens Wiwa, went into exile. In this piece from an interview, Owens talks about what he found when he returned to Ogoniland from exile in 1999. The "Carnival of the Oppressed" held on the streets of Port Harcourt to welcome him home was part of an international day of action against global capitalism, held during the G8 summit in Cologne, Germany. While 10,000 people held a Carnival Against Capital in London, UK, Ijaw and Ogoni youth were removing the sign of main road named after the dictator General Abacha, and renamed it Ken Saro-Wiwa Road during their carnival against "imperialism and corporate rule".*

## Carnival of the Oppressed

I left Ogoniland in 1994. I remember it was the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May. I found out that I was declared wanted, and so I didn't go back. I went underground in Nigeria for a year, then I went into exile. I arrived back in Nigeria on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1999. I flew into the airport in Port Harcourt, and five thousand people came out to receive me. It was a wonderful reception that turned into a mass demonstration against what the corporations have done to the indigenous populations of the Niger delta.

Twenty-two communities of the Niger Delta took part in the Carnival of the Oppressed, including the Chikoko, Ijaw, Isoko, Ikwerre, the Urhobol National Congress, the Itsekiri Youth Vanguard, the Egi People's Forum and Egi Women's Movement - many, many different communities came in their truckloads and busloads from all the different corners of the Niger Delta. Together they created a convoy that stretched out five kilometres (2 miles) behind us.

We made a first stop at a major road junction, where we laid a wreath in memory of Ken. Then we carried mock coffins to the oil company headquarters of Agip. We went

on to Ken's old office and performed a ceremony for his martyrdom and in memory of the others that died with him.

To me the carnival was amazing. There was lots of dancing in the street. I was so honoured. There were so many dancing in the street they blocked the whole of Port Harcourt! There was carnival dancing, masquerades, music everywhere, everyone in the streets - it was quite a sight to see!

Then we went in the Shell headquarters and repeated the carnivalesque atmosphere, gave rousing speeches, and we blockaded the Shell offices. Up to ten thousand people took the great risk to come out onto the streets. Luckily we had already taken the precaution of alerting international society so that the government knew they were being watched.

From there we travelled to Ogoniland. From the moment we entered Ogoniland to the point where we reached my own village, there were thousands of people lining the roads the entire way. When we got there, every shop was shut, every market closed, the whole town had shut down and come onto the

streets to welcome us home. There were 20,000 people on the roads and routes and through streets on the way down to my own villages. Masses of people from my village had come, then another 10,000 arrived. Ultimately I would say about 50-70,000 people in Ogoniland participated in my homecoming. It was very humbling.

Shell and the government tried to use force to cower us against our aspiration, but we came out to celebrate anyway.

When I went back to Ogoniland, I saw a group of people who were very visibly proud that they were able to drive one of the biggest transnational corporations in the world off their land. But I also could see that there was a lot of poverty.

Shell had not cleared up any of the spillages in Ogoniland, the pipelines were still on the surface, they had not been buried. One thing that had changed, however, was that the gas flares had gone. The Ogoni had put a stop to those. Compared to a few years earlier, when Ken was still alive, the trees were green again. There was a visible change in the vegetation due to the fact that there was no more

oil drilling going on.

But the people were so visibly poor, and the inner anger against Shell was visible in their faces. You could see it in their eyes when the name Shell was mentioned. People in the region had been abused, raped, beaten, tortured. Still there had been no redress, no compensation for the human rights abuse and the destruction of the environment. They've had no redress from Shell. But the people are still very resolute and said that they did not want Shell to ever come back to Ogoniland.

Shell has made a lot of moves to divide people, to get some in the community on their side so that they will help Shell back into Ogoniland. There is a lot of bribery going on, especially of key people like chiefs, to use their influence to invite Shell back. But the women especially, the women will not be bought over.

Many other groups in the Niger Delta had also become aware of the economic, environmental, and human rights abuses going on and have increased their actions in working against Shell and other oil

companies in the area. The oil companies' activities are backed up by the military police. Aside from Shell, the other companies involved in oil drilling in the Niger Delta include Chevron, Agip, Mobil, Elf, and BP. These are the main players in the region.

I also saw more drilling, both on and off-shore, than when Ken was alive - but not in Ogoniland. There was definitely an increased environmental awareness around the whole community, with an increase in civil actions. In relation to government, there was more freedom of speech and association but still incidents of senior military personnel arresting and molesting people, especially those resisting the oil companies.

When I was in Ogoniland, I did not see the community development of which Shell speaks. [Shell's 'Profits and principles, does there have to be a choice?' report claims it has built many community development projects in the region.] I saw new roads built by Shell, but these were ringing their own facilities, and served only Shell. The roads I saw were not the priority of the Ogoni people. Ogonis don't have cars, and these roads take



## J18 Carnival Against Capital [June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1999]

From **South Korea** to **Senegal**, **North Sumatra** to **Zimbabwe**, activists take part in an "International Day of Protest, Action and Carnival" in financial centres in 40 different countries. Timed to coincide with the G8 summit in **Cologne, Germany** and coordinated by the PGA, the action call-out explicitly targets capitalism, not just "free" trade and global economic institutions.

In the City of **London** a "Carnival against Capitalism" attended by

10,000 turns Europe's largest financial centre upside-down; attempts to physically occupy and electronically hack into the Financial Futures Exchange end with widespread rioting. Simultaneously a "Carnival of the Oppressed" in **Nigeria**, brings 10,000 Ogoni, Ijaw, and other tribes together in closing down the country's oil capital, **Port Harcourt**. Other subversive carnivals take place across the world including: **Boston, Los Angeles, Valencia, Seoul, Athens, Zurich, Tel Aviv, Minsk, San Francisco, Toronto, Ottawa and Glasgow**.

Stock exchanges are invaded in **Madrid** and blockaded in **Amsterdam, Vancouver, New York and Melbourne**. A spoof trade fair in **Montevideo** invites Uruguayan garbage haulers to deposit their refuse in local bank branches before a festive invasion of the stock exchange takes place. In **Barcelona** a piece of squatted land is turned into an urban oasis overnight, complete with

vegetables, medicinal herbs and a lake.

In **Buenos Aires** a multi-faith assembly marches through the financial district demanding an end to debt, while Bangladeshi domestic and garment workers demonstrate against the IMF in **Dhaka**. A simulated bank demolition takes place in **Lisbon**; real banks are attacked in **Eugene**, painted pink in **Geneva**, occupied in **Bordeaux**, and picketed in several Spanish cities. Meanwhile, in **Cologne**, the Intercontinental Caravan concludes with a planned "Laugh Parade," but police detain 250 international activists before they get the chance to laugh at the G8.

The following day the London Times writes "The enemies of capitalism will be back."

The success of J18 inspires US activists to believe in the impossible and plan the shutdown of the WTO in **Seattle** 5 months later.

up the land and carry loggers to our remaining forests.

The community development priorities of the Ogoni people are to clean up the polluted land, and the polluted rivers, so that they may be used once more for farming and fishing. So that ill health maybe tackled, so that the people are no longer drinking polluted water. And so that they will not be malnourished because they can once more get the protein they need from the fish in the rivers. The killing off of the fish in the waters means people are malnourished and especially vulnerable to disease.

So there is a big disconnect between the brand and the reality. It's very important and

*"For a commercial company trying to make investments, you need a stable environment... Dictatorships can give you that."* - Naemeka Achebe,

*Shell's general manager in Nigeria, in 1995, a few months*

**30** *before the Nigerian government hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa.*

strengthening to know that our struggle is not just local. Solidarity is always hopeful in many ways. Linking all our struggles, which we realize are really the same, gives us great encouragement - to see that others are in the struggle. If we connect with people in other places our struggle becomes internationalised, in that way we can look at our programmatic similarities and we don't just remain isolated. And if we stay isolated, we will be wiped out. If the government knows we are part of a wider network they know they have to be more cautious.

Marginalised peoples in all parts of the world need to be making connections, coming together to develop conjoined solutions. You can see

commonalties for example between the indigenous peoples in the Amazon, in Australia. The process of globalisation has destroyed our wealth, the natural resources we use to sustain ourselves with and that made us prosper. But we draw great hope from this globalisation from below. It is going well. But it is a



The Carnival against Capital turns the City of London upside down. June 18, 1999.



Thousands break through police lines during the Asian  
Development Bank meetings in Chiang Mai, Thailand. May 6, 2000.



very slow process. To do it properly, really from the ground up, is a very slow process. I have grown to understand that good things come slowly to people like us.

I worry that our collective pace in combating globalisation is too slow compared to the rapid rate that economic globalisation is occurring. It is creating a space that nothing is filling. Our own slowness of movement cannot catch up with the fast pace of economic globalisation - its speed, its momentum is like a train going too fast. Perhaps we do need to speed up our protest and our resistance, roadblock the rails or pursue the train faster. It is very difficult.

I was in Seattle. It was incredibly gratifying to see people from the U.S. on the streets protesting against corporate rule there. But one thing our friends in the North should know: that big corporations, the extractive industries - if you want to stop them, you have got to stop them at the point of production, as well as disrupting the meetings. So it is especially important to disrupt the process at the other end, to support the people who are

fighting globalisation from the grassroots in Southern countries.

In Ogoniland we use the method of the human shield - a simple, nonviolent human shield. Often it is the women who stand at the forefront. We use the biggest resource we have - humans - to prevent the oil companies from getting access to their weapons of mass destruction - to drill the earth, spoil the earth, drill for oil. Our processes involve making sure everybody is involved through democratic processes, holding a council meeting. We held lots of rallies in every village every week and different groups choose to form together, through self-organisation, through self-building. In this way everybody in the community becomes mobilised.

We are working for freedom, for economic and social freedom. The corporations are dictating our lives right now. And I am fighting for my brother's name to be cleared. I want it to be known that he was a man of peace, a man who gave his life so that those struggling against corporate power can do so without being killed, so that people can live in dignity.

On November 30, 1999, the world's political imagination received a jolt of inspiration. The opening ceremonies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ministerial of the World Trade Organisation were successfully blockaded by 15,000 people taking direct action. Thousands of labour unionists broke out of their 50,000-strong permitted march, and joined students, environmentalists, people of faith, and local citizens in resisting the hegemony of the WTO despite massive police attack. The next day the streets were patrolled by the National Guard, and a "no-protest zone" was invented by the mayor, yet thousands took to the streets again, over 600 were arrested, and the tear gas and plastic bullets continued to fly. The ministerial ended in failure, as Southern delegates, taking encouragement from the streets, declared the proceedings exclusionary. Here are two of the thousands of untold stories of individuals taking action, all of which, when combined, add up to much more than we can possibly imagine.

## The Anticipated First

I met you some where between revolution and my heart. You walked in cold and smooth on the eve of History. Stories whispered by my ear and maps lay on my lap, actions were planned and I signed up to lock down around a cow. You slid in next to me and shook my hand. I said, "Nice to meet you, are you getting arrested?" You said, "No, not this time." Then you turned on your heels and walked toward the ruckus of the week to come.

I desperately want to say that I thought about you every day, that the revolts on the street were nothing next to the revolts of my heart. But I had been training in a boot camp for combatants against capitalism for the last 19 years, and all I could think of was glory and stories of the Movement to come. I hadn't slept in weeks; I couldn't dream of you. I hadn't eaten in days; I was planning our attack. I hadn't loved in months; I was organising the stories of Salvadoran struggles.

I woke up at four am on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1999 from the pre-battle lump in my throat and the ten thousand monarch butterfly skeletons rattling in my belly. I had two hours to get to the park, two hours to meet my affinity group; two hours 'til I would introduce myself to a hormone injected cow. A cow that would make its way through wet streets and riot police, a cow that

mooded: "We're cold, we're wet, and we hate Monsanto." I arrived armed with hot tea and a mistrust of the already swarming police. I watched cops confiscate puppets and shopping carts, smirking as they walked away with a 40-foot paper mache carrot that read **"UPROOT OPPRESSION."** - that's what we were, all of us, bold and cold. Some with wings and a smile, some with lock-boxes tucked under our Gore-Tex jackets and Bolivian wool sweaters. The ground vibrated beneath our collective fear and anticipation. We sang songs in rhythm with memory, and moved in beat to the stories of those who had fought before. We functioned in narratives. We saw microscopic forms of the present. We longed in future syllables of what may come. We aged.

The smell of wet hair and history sailed into my nostrils as we stepped into those streets. There was a collective sigh of relief as the morning light pierced through the clouds onto the streets that would become our home for the next week. We had fun, the Monsanto hormone-injected cow and I. We ate words of struggle, spitting them out with venom and power, and as day broke night we broke oppression.

Empowerment swelled over us; a generation began to understand. Our work was legitimised, our back-alley meetings made sense. And our fates had been sealed by sticky, permanent, revolutionary glue.

I didn't think about you that day. I thought about El Salvador and Chiapas. I thought about Emma Goldman and the Chicago anarchists of 1887. I thought about the fact that I paid for my own teargas, and wondered if I had gotten my money's worth. I wondered if my parents were proud, hearing my father say, "They think they can hide, but not this time; people are organising." I saw them standing in shattered glass; they watched my face and for a moment our lives had reversed - a recognition of their past.

I remember the collective. I remember standing in the intersection of Stewart and Olive and hearing my life change. I remember thinking that I would talk with you about all of this. I remember thinking I would never stop. My body was caving in on me, my eyes were swollen, my feet were bleeding, and I never anticipated stopping. I would like to think a generation never anticipated stopping. I lay down

that night and heard drums in my ears, and watched helicopters fly past my high school. I watched riot police stand on the same corners where I used to smoke a joint. I watched the beginning and the end of my career as a forgiving activist. I knew that I would soon be a casualty of everyday meetings and the jailhouses of Seattle, Philadelphia and D.C. I don't think I thought much more that week. I had occupied a different mind, trying to organise the events, trying to organise the order of the streets I would be running in.

We won that night. A phone call from the jailhouse yielded me my breath. I heard the drums and the chanting and then the words, "We won this battle, there was no new round, we shut down the WTO!" I fell to the floor and cried; I cried an hour before I met you and I cried an hour after I left you. I cried from the acid left in my mouth and numb limbs; I cried for all our defeats. I cried because I never imagined experiencing a victory in my lifetime. And then I ran to my car and came to you, bearing my body and the news of the first victory of  
**36** this war. I remember you sat down and stopped

moving, and looked at me as though the world had just fallen from my tongue. We smiled. We would have kissed if we had known each other; we would have hugged if it hadn't been our first date. And I said, "Should we go downtown?" and you said, "I really want to hang out with you."

That night we sat across from each other sipping tea and singing stories, weaving the past into our present; speaking of yesterday as if it had already been entered and meticulously recorded into the history books. I felt the philosophical knife of my life before and my life after N30 slide deep into my skin. I had broken open; I was seeing new land with views of rebellion and courage, a glimpse that will be with me through the stories of repression and time and survival. That will outlive me. I knew then that I might never have the words to tell this story, our story, a story of re-birth.

I can never forget the history of that week, so I can never forget the history of us. I met you in simple language, at the beginning of a complex battle, somewhere between revolution and my heart. - **Rowena Kennedy Epstein**



## N30 WTO Shutdown [November 30th, 1999]

"I wish every town could be just like Seattle," says WTO Director General Michael Moore, just before the police begin rioting. While mainstream media focuses solely on events in **Seattle**, reports of actions from **Hong Kong** to **Iceland** flow across the world, thanks to the newly launched indymedia website. In **France** 5,000 French farmers with their sheep, ducks, and goats feast on regional products under the Eiffel Tower while 75,000 people protest in 80 towns.

**Turkish** peasants complete a 2,000 mile walk to the capital, having visited 18 towns to discuss the attack on humanity by capitalism. Massive demonstrations take place all over **India**; in **New Delhi** hundreds of indigenous people blockade the World Bank building covering it with posters, graffiti, cow shit, and mud.

Banners with mock slogans which call for more order, security, and police are paraded in **Berlin**, while a **Korean** Subcommandante Marcos and speculator George Soros debate free trade in downtown **Seoul**. In **Amsterdam's** airport over 100 activists demand free tickets to **Seattle** from the airline companies sponsoring the WTO summit, while free food is distributed on the streets of **Hamburg** and **Prague**. In **Geneva**, activists sneak into the WTO HQ and short circuit the electricity mains, crashing computers and communications for several hours. As 8000 march in **Manila**, a virtual sit-in

involving 200,000 people floods the WTO web site.

Stock exchanges are targeted in **Buenos Aires** and **Brisbane**, where the street is declared a "beyond the market" zone. In **Italy** a McDonalds is occupied, a Nestle factory and Lloyd's bank get a similar treatment in **England**, while 2000 people rally in **London** against the privatisation of public transport and are attacked by the police. Over the following week, actions in solidarity with the 600 arrested in **Seattle** take place around the world, notably in **Mexico City** where 10,000 demonstrate outside the US ambassador's residence, demanding freedom for those arrested and an end to neoliberal policies.

It seems that the 21<sup>st</sup> century began early in **Seattle**, giving hope to people around the world that resistance was alive in the heart of the Empire.

# Not in Service: The Tale of Insurgent Taxi Drivers

One of the lesser known acts of civil disobedience during the days of the Seattle WTO meetings was a strike by the local taxi drivers; a small but effective component in making the city inhospitable to unwelcome guests. The call was made for all taxi drivers to suspend service within Seattle City limits from 6am to 6pm on Tuesday November 30<sup>th</sup>.

In some parts of the world, taxi driving is a respectable profession which earns a decent income, by local standards, and which has no negative stigma. The cab drivers I've talked to in Europe, Asia, and North Africa claim to do pretty well and identify with the "middle class." This is not the case in the United States, where taxi driving is on one of the lowest rungs on the social hierarchy. Taxi drivers in urban areas are overwhelmingly poor immigrants, rural drivers are frequently among the poorest and most

marginalised of whites. Seattle's two biggest taxi fleets are primarily owned and operated by East African men from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritria. Another large company is almost entirely Punjabi Sikhs and other North Indians, and another is the last holdout of the working-class Anglo drivers.

Drivers lease cabs for 12 hours shifts from owners. Most lease the car on a weekly basis, working seven 12 hours shifts per week. We are therefore self-employed, lacking unions, unemployment insurance, workers compensations, medical insurance, and any official channel for dealing with exploitation by the companies, which deal with the allocation of cars, collection of lease, dispatch, and general administration. Cab owners pay dues to the company to support this infrastructure; since there is no oversight, the companies are dens of nepotism and incompetence.

Additional troubles began in the industry when the City government decided to apply the New York 'zero tolerance' model to the local taxi industry

with an ordinance passed in 1997. In one of the many spurious attempts to make Seattle a "world class" city, perhaps in anticipation of the already scheduled WTO meetings, the taxi industry was targeted for reform. Laws were enacted regulating everything imaginable, beginning an era of English language tests, uniforms, enforced cleanliness, consolidation of cab companies, illegalisation of independent owner-operators, inspections, and a punitive system for offenders. Curiously absent from these laws was ensurance of quality of life, job security, safety, or reliability of income for the taxi drivers - indicating the local government's dominant concern for the superficial experience of tourists and conventioners over the working conditions of its constituents.

Drivers reacted by forming an organisation, called the Cab Drivers' Alliance. This organisation has had limited success in challenging the power structure, mostly stymied by

the individualist nature of taxi drivers and the implacable nature of politicians. At very least we have made a career of harassing City Hall, once encircling the building with honking cabs in a four hour wildcat strike, then cruising through downtown as a rolling roadblock.

If this doesn't sound familiar, it should. People from the global South working too hard for too little. Working-class whites pitted against immigrants. Sweatshop hours. A system which caters to the comforts of the wealthy. A popular resistance that gains little ground against a "business-friendly" government. It is like a script

*'What you don't understand is that when we negotiate economic agreements with these poorer countries, we are negotiating with people from the same class. That is, people whose interests are - like ours - on the side of capital' - Former State Department official at a meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations*

in miniature of capitalism's latest fad, neoliberalism.

For obvious reasons, it wasn't difficult to call for a strike. The difficulty was largely one of information dispersal. Flyers posted at the cab lot were torn down immediately, flyers posted fifty yards from the lot were removed within 24 hours. Management did its best to discredit the strike, claiming it to be a fiction to the media. Other management declined comment or made ambiguous statements. At the Anglo company, the management made it clear to me that I was not physically safe to organise or post flyers at their lot. I spent a few nights creeping around all the lots at three in the morning posting flyers under windshield wipers. It is strange that so little has changed in the U.S. - that labour organising can still get you shot or blacklisted.

Perhaps the most difficult task was to convince the drivers that N30 was the right time for a strike.

Most were counting on making heaps of money  
**40** from the delegates and were hesitant to give up one

of the most lucrative days of the year. A large article was published in our newsletter, detailing the reasons we should act on this day for our own individual interests and for global reasons. Many of the African and Indian drivers were familiar with the WTO, World Bank, and IMF because of the activities of those institutions in their home countries. Eventually most drivers warmed to the idea because of the rare chance to get even with the city government--by denying taxi service when it would hurt the most.

Just four days in advance, the strike was announced to the media. It was kept secret until the last minute to prevent the companies from coming up with counter-propaganda, or the municipality avoiding the crisis by arranging other transportation. Response from the media was immediate and somewhat overwhelming for our small strike committee. News outlets were desperate for more WTO stories, and I suspect they were also interested because of the dynamic and unpredictable nature of our "union," lacking







Tactical Frivolity merge rebellion and carnival outside the IMF/WB meetings. Prague, Czech Republic, September 26, 2000.

careerists and the usual crusty old order of lefties to water down our anger.

The events on N30 are now pretty historic, and there were certainly a lot more exciting things happening then a dearth of cabs. Busy with other actions that day, I felt happy to know that the delegates couldn't use cabs to get through crowds, and were more easy to spot and harass in their limousines, and that no taxis were being shaken or blockaded, which could have shifted some taxi drivers' sympathies.

Our strike significantly aided in shutting down the city since bus service was also suspended, and

people definitely wouldn't drive into the city after it became clear that the demonstrations had claimed the streets. There was simply no way for people to get to their jobs in the city center. This, combined with the masses of people who voluntarily chose not to work N30, suspended any atmosphere of normalcy. The transportation shutdown enabled a situation of de facto general strike.

- Greyg Filastine

gunfire. Two students were killed, one lost a leg, and more than 60 injured.

**[1996 January]** 102 farmers arrested when the Karnataka State Farmer's Association (KRRS) occupy Kentucky Fried Chicken in Bangalore, India.

**[August]** Riots break out in Karak, Jordan and other southern cities after IMF demands removal of subsidies, resulting in tripling of price of bread. King suspends Parliament when it

refuses to support price hikes.

**[November]** The U.N. World Food Summit is held in Rome. A counter summit entitled The Hunger Gathering brings together diverse groups ranging from Bangladeshi farmers to the Brazilian landless movement, Movimento Sem Terra (MST). Their work sows the seeds of protest against genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in Europe.



*In January 2000 over a million Ecuadorian indigenous paralysed the country with protest after the International Monetary Fund demanded the "dollarization" of the Ecuadorian economy as a condition for a loan. The loan was necessary because a single investor named Mark Helie, a partner in a New York investment firm on Wall Street called Gramercy Advisors, refused to agree to a one-month extension of the pay-out on Ecuadorian bonds that he held. He bragged that he was, "the man who brought Ecuador to its knees, single-handed."*

*CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenas Nationalities of Ecuador), along with other social movements, set up popular parliaments and on January 21st took over the national parliament. With army support they successfully toppled President Mahuad. However, the new President Noboa rescinded on his promises and continued following IMF dictates to peg the Ecuador sucre to the US dollar. The indigenous have continued to protest. This is the CONAIE statement of February 4, 2000.*

## Insurrection Grows Like a Swelling Waterfall

The fight of the People of Ecuador today is made of legitimate actions recognised by the sovereign power which resides in the People. Towards the constitutional recognition of the spirits of our sacred mountains, rivers, waterfalls, and seas, to maintain our dignity at any cost, we, the people of Ecuador, undertake the Popular Parliaments and the Great insurrection of the towns as forms of resistance to neo-liberal, corrupt, anti-popular and anti-sovereign policies, imposed by the bankers, groups of great economic power, the government which represents them.

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, after the organisation of the provincial Peoples' parliaments, we installed the National Parliament of the Communities as an alternate and sovereign form of power where different social sectors are discussing and generating a plurality of governance proposals.

The Indigenous and popular insurrection has advanced from the field to the city.

In Indigenous communities there has been a high level of repression and coercion. Military tanks swarm along the roads out of the communities. All supplies and food entering the communities have been confiscated, along with the vehicles used to transport people and supplies.

The buses travelling between towns have received orders to transfer "any thing, person, even animals, except Indians." Buses in the military zones are stopped and all those who are dressed in Indian clothes or appear Indian are forced off.

The government uses "sold" Indians on the television to speak against the national leaders, saying any calumny. False documents with racist expressions

are spread by the government to pit the non-indigenous population against us. Agents of the government say the insurrection has been suspended, or the leaders have negotiated with the government, and that it is necessary to take a rest, all with the purpose of demobilising us.

But the Insurrection grows like a swelling waterfall.

We demand the resignation of President Mahuad, for betraying the interests of the country. For having given \$1.5bn of the resources of the State to a bank

*"The people that stand outside and say they work in the interests of the poorest people ... they make me want to vomit. Because the poorest people on our planet, they are the ones that need us the most, " - Michael Moore,*

*Director General of the WTO, commenting on protesters*

whose owners robbed their depositors to protect these banks and their capital. In addition he has allowed these same banks to speculate with the currency of State which in one year has fallen from 7,000 sucres a dollar to 25,000 sucres a dollar.

And as the grand prize he has decreed the dollarization of Ecuadorian economy. This means that while the pay is \$40, the shopping basket for a family of five is \$250. In the agricultural field, inputs are no longer within reach of indigenous and farmers. Will we have to leave the field, then? Cities offer the greater misery to us. The government, although it speaks of its great investments in health and education, has practically eliminated free services. Anyone able to obtain a medical diagnosis, cannot afford medical prescriptions. The prices of medicines are near the black hole in space.

The Dr. Mahuad, who speaks of the right of Ecuadorians to hope and dream, responds to us with 35,000 members of the army and 10,000 police, and

we were in war, and there were no longer citizen's rights. They damage homes.

We cannot walk about on our own earth. They prohibit us from meeting. But we have defied with what little power we have left, with civil disobedience.

For that reason we have advanced to the taking of Quito. The majority we have passed like rain, fog, like wind, deceiving the military controls. Now we are more than ten thousand Indigenous in Quito, making ready to take other cities.

To be true we must be a single thought, a single heart, a single voice and word, and a single fist.

We wait for any action in solidarity.

We await your insurrection.



## MayDay 2000

MayDay merges the licentiousness revelry of a festival with the transformative energy of radical politics. It is red for international worker's day, green for celebrating fertility, and black for the Chicago anarchists executed for their part in bringing about the eight-hour day in 1886.

MayDay 2000 is called as another global day of action and sees extraordinary convergences happening as unionists dance with street reclaimers, young anarchists exchange

ideas with labour activists, and radical cheerleaders share songs with environmentalists. Excessive police forces are deployed everywhere - many of the events across the globe are attacked.

In the **U.S.** one of the few countries where May Day is not a holiday, radical history is reclaimed as thousands of immigrants and undocumented workers demand labour rights and a decent life for all, with marches in **New York** and **Chicago**. Other actions, many of them carnivalesque, take place in cities across 20 other states.

While in **Prague** and **Pakistan** all May Day marches are banned, in **East Timor** May 1<sup>st</sup> is declared a holiday for the first time in history.

In **London**, a guerrilla gardening action aiming to plant vegetables, is met by the police's biggest operation in thirty years, while the media does its best to discredit the movement with sensational headlines. In **Canada**

unionists delay the distribution of a national newspaper.

Traditional labour demonstrations gather tens of thousands on every continent. In **Japan**, 1.7 million workers attended more than 1,000 rallies to demand job security and better employment conditions. Millions come out in **Cuba's** biggest May Day demonstration ever.

The thin line between carnival and riot is crossed as spirits are dampened with water canons in **Zurich**, **Manila** and **Colombo**, while in **Berlin** the annual ritual clashes with police leaves 200 of them injured and one off-duty policeman arrested for taking part in the irresistible festivities.

Fearing the creativity of radical convergences, **Seoul** police clash with several thousand students who try to join the union march. Even the Pope joins in the spirit of celebration as 700,000 gather in a joint May Day and Jubilee celebration in **Rome**.

On September 26, 2000 the IMF and World Bank attempted to have their 3 day annual meeting in Prague, while 20,000 people attempted to disrupt them. The need for a diversity of tactics was successfully met, and the demonstration divided into 4 separate marches: blue for those who wished to engage in aggressive tactics on the west side, pink for the socialist contingent which carried their placards around from the east, yellow for staging a highly visible yet impossible attack from the north, and pink and silver, for a carnivalesque advance from the south. The plan was to lay siege to the meeting centre and blockade the delegates in, though not everyone on the streets knew this, or necessarily agreed. However, the action was successful, and led to minimal attendance by the delegates the following day, and the cancellation of the last day's meetings. Months later, English Prime Minister Tony Blair referred to all demonstrators as "the travelling anarchist circus." Maybe if he read this piece he'd want to run away with the circus as well!

## It has got to be Pink and Silver

**London.** Twelve women, two trucks, two men, one ultimately useful journalist. I realize something is different. Usually people tat down to just one small rucksack for a journey. Not this time. Everyone brought everything: tentpoles, sewing machines, brewery tubing, tinfoil, space blankets, medical kits, gaffer tape, glue, whatever we thought might be useful, plus personal tat. All in a pile on the floor of my truck. Fuck. Packed it really badly and headed off to Calais with the vehicle leaning 5 degrees to the left.

**Calais.** Really fucked already. Park up on the sand dunes to make breakfast for fifteen people. Carla performs miracles on the all the tat; ruthlessly subdividing the available space, folding, sorting and beating it into the corners, leaving us with an almost-livable space in the middle. Which is great, but for the rest of the journey we have to ask her where anything is. The rest of us head to the dunes and the sunshine, dragging piles of clothes and fabric. It looks amazing; the hills are strewn with yards of flashing silver and lurid pink. We dig out silver leggings, fluffy waistcoats, frocks, socks, gloves, and hold them up to each other. This is



going to be silly. This is going to be good. The journalist wanders around the periphery, sucking a pencil and making notes.

The drive was a rush. Up by seven, on the move by ten. Two trucks travelling in convoy, one divining the route, the other following the exhaust. Late at night, parking under a tree, in a field, in a forest; fire, some singing, some talking, some crying. Got pulled by the police just before the Czech border, and they were very amused by our singing, wise cracking, dance routines. They checked our passports and waved us on. "Let that be the Czech police's problem," they thought.

**The border.** Everything was different. A lot colder. We suddenly felt stupid in our random silver

clothing. And fucking freezing too. Men in black shut me out of my truck and searched it inch by inch for drugs, which freaked me right out, coz they could plant anything. They shook my homeopathy suspiciously, sampled my St John's Wort oil (hope it cheered them up), and stopped just short of searching the drawer with my pink sparkly vibrator in, for which I was extremely grateful. They said we couldn't come into the Czech Republic unless we had money for our stay. Max, quite miraculously, produced £900 from his bumbag which he hadn't wanted to leave behind in his squat. They said our vehicles were not roadworthy. We pointed out that the large black patch under Mel's truck was in fact, not oil, but the overflow from the washing up. They said they did

not like campers in the Czech Republic (as another Winnebago sped past) and said they would confiscate our tools and knives. I was hiding my adjustable spanner in my sock when the journalist wandered over to the

*'Who are these people? Who do they represent? If anyone is the voice of the people, it is me. I am elected by 185 countries. I am the one who can claim legitimacy.'* - Michel Camdessus former head of IMF

head of customs, showed him his press card and World Bank Conference accreditation, and asked if that meant he wasn't allowed in either. The poor man's face crumbled. "But you are not, with.... Them?" he whispered incredulously. The journalist replied that he was, actually. And we were allowed in.

That set the tone for our experiences with the Czech authorities. Police arrived at our park-up that night. Plain clothes police probably followed us into Praha the next afternoon. We were pulled twice more before we found a camp site and secret police tailed us indiscreetly to the pub. We started a book on how many times we'd be asked to show our passports. It does make you feel safe, said Kim.

*'We have to make sure globalisation works for the poor. Our intention is to have dialogue, but it's impossible to do that with those who want to abolish you.'*

Mm, agreed Ronni, we're sure not to be raped or mugged. The constant surveillance had taken its toll on fellow activists. We phoned the number on the flyer when we got into Prague, to be told not to leave the vehicles on the street, or in a secure lock-up, they would be impounded, what were we doing bringing our homes with us anyway? And meet Someone (who we probably knew by a different name but was using a code name for this operation) in a Chinese restaurant, opposite a certain metro station, for further instructions which it would be unsafe to issue over the phone. Very fucking cloak and dagger. Some of us went off to meet Agent Paranoia, most of us went to the laundrette, and I napped in the back of the truck.

Where were we going to put the vehicles? I thought bringing my home would be an asset, not a liability. But now we realised we couldn't just expect there to be a traveller site in the middle of Prague. Squatting was illegal; campsites expensive; we couldn't

even park on the street for an hour and every time we moved them we got pigged. There was a real possibility I was going to spend September 26<sup>th</sup> babysitting my truck. Then we got lucky again. Friends told us of Ladronka, a crumbly squatted farmhouse in the middle of a park to the West of the city. With a yard (hee hee). It was inhabited by an undefinable number of people who weren't particularly into being associated with the protest and possibly risking their home, but we met them, and fortunately they all fancied Carla. So we were in.

The convergence centre opened and filled with activists from around the world. So many groovy people! So many sexy groovy people! Unfortunately we wasted all our precious socializing time having interminable, slightly pointless seven hour meetings in five languages about where we would be on the day. What we didn't discuss was what we would do when we got to where we couldn't agree we would be. And I suppose that was good, because we didn't have interminable, divisive, and slightly pointless discussions about violence versus

nonviolence, man, and what is violence anyway when the State, is like, killing people every day, man. And the people in the World Bank eat Third World babies for breakfast, so if they get bricked then hey, that's their fault, although, of course, symbolically placing a flower on each of their breasts would be great. Yeah, I was quite glad we avoided having a general fluffy versus spiky debate, but afterwards I wished that our infinity [sic] group had a chat about what we would do at the police lines.

Back at Ladronka, a riot of pink and silver had erupted from the back of the vans. Vi was going to be a butterfly, Dee a bird; Ronni made a huge spiral dress with polka dot skirts and a feather duster fairy-godmother wand. Caz started constructing nine foot high samba dancer fantails which filled half the yard. A two foot pink Marie Antoinette wig, a silver flash Superman costume, a floor length tinsel ballgown. Natalie was in pink shin pads and soldier's helmet; Jane was a scaly silver bat-winged thing. The lads in the house would wander through from time to time, shooting us

bemused and incredulous glances. One afternoon we were bent over sewing machines in the slanting autumn sunshine, splashes of pink unrolled around us, and crumpled silver foil escaping across the yard. A police helicopter suddenly rose over the rooftop and hovered eighty feet above us with a camera. It must be such a picture. Tuesday came. We all dressed up. We rocked.

**What was the action like?** I can't really describe it. It was pink. Our whole fucking march was pink. We'd decked out so many people in a totally silly, non-threatening colour, and it had all happened because Caz had been wandering through the scrap store three months earlier, thinking "It's got to be silver and pink." Doing an action in a carnival costume is mental. For women, facing all-male riot police, it is a way of exploiting our vulnerability, making them see that we're people, not just things to be hit. We all got hit, but there were some charmed moments. Caz hung back when others ran, walking in her huge silver costume. With her

52 pink confection of hair and voluminous skirts she

was like the figurehead of our march, a woman, alone. She and the line of pigs met, and they didn't hit her, it was like for a moment they couldn't hit her; they pushed her instead. She fell, and the crowd surged back for her, and the police were checked for a moment, seeing us all move. The next instant she was up again, but her wig came off; her head looked naked without it.

The crowd surged again for the wig and a copper booted it back to us. Caz was restored to full glory. She kept going, she really had no fear. I was dancing alone in a side street while the crowd streamed past me. There was a line of police there and I didn't want them to surge out and attack the crowd from the side. A sweet looking guy in a green camo vest tapped me on the elbow. "You come with me, I know a way in. I think it will be a good action, yes?" Fuck yes! He ducked through a door in a side street and gave me a leg up onto the roof of a garage. "I make graffiti often in my home town. And this, I think, makes it easy for me to see a way across the roofs." I scrambled like a spider under a three foot gap beneath an apple tree (with my fan

tail) and through a dark corridor.

My companion paused with his hand on the handle of a door. Concussion grenades were going off outside. We emerged slickly into the sunshine and joined a waiting crowd of delegates as inconspicuously as one possibly can in a floor length silver tinsel dress, pink Ascot hat, and a nine foot fantail of silver streamers. Cop after cop thundered past us to reinforce their lines. The pink march was within four hundred yard of the doors of the Conference centre. The police were moving in with water canon and CS gas. Two women were bundled past with blood flowing down their faces.

And there we were, standing with a line of delegates who were waiting for the metro. Very unfortunately, I did not at this point manage to think of single politically incisive statement. High on adrenaline, I made meaningless small talk with a man from the Royal Canadian mint. Then someone asked me what I thought of the World Bank, so I had a little rant at her, but then I realised she was a journalist. The delegates melted away, leaving only newshounds, hungry for pictures of violence.

- **Kate Evans**

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**[1997 January]** South Korea is rocked by a wave of massive general strikes as workers protest new casualisation laws. Government backs down and withdraws the new laws.

**[February -May]** In Thailand, a coalition of disenfranchised farmers, refugees of dam flooding, and other rural peoples form the Assembly of the Poor. 20,000 of them stage a 99-

day protest camp protest in front of the Government House in Bangkok.

**[September 8]** International day of action for dockers who were sacked in Liverpool, UK for fighting casualisation. Dockers take action in 21 countries, from South Africa to Australia. Every port on the West coast of North America, from Mexico to Alaska, is shut down.



*The Narmada is the longest river in India, sacred to the villagers who live along her banks. In the 1980s, a World Bank loan funded the Indian government to build 30 dams along the Narmada Valley, threatening to submerge or displace 25 million villagers. Since then, Medha Patkar has led the international fight against the Narmada dams. She has sworn to drown herself in the reservoir if the Sardar Sarovar - the first and largest of the dams - rises above 90 metres. These are her words as she carried the "Peoples' Global Action - We Are Everywhere" banner through the streets of Prague with the pink and silver group during the September 26th protests against the World Bank and IMF in 2000.*

## A River comes to Prague

This day is not about Northern protest, but about the solidarity all around the world. It's not about the First and Third World, North and South. There is a section of the population that is just as present in the USA, and in England - the homeless, unemployed people, on the streets of London - which is also there in the indigenous communities, villages, and farmers of India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Mexico, Brazil. All those who face the backlash of this kind of economics are coming together - to create a newer, people-centred world order.

We're here because our movement is the movement of the people from the Valley of Narmada fighting big dams, which the World Bank was originally involved in. But our movement successfully forced them to withdraw.

We battle for the true kind of development which is equitable and sustainable, and believe very strongly that the World Bank, IMF, the WTO, and the multinational corporations are taking society in exactly the opposite direction. That is, towards an inequitable, non-sustainable, and unjust world. We feel that the corporations and their tentacles have now taken over, not just markets, but the lives of

the people. The people have to resist. The people have to say no, not just imports, but to impositions. Imposition of culture, imposition of consumerism, imposition of a new kind of money and market based economics and related politics.

And we know that we cannot fight this alone in our corner of the world and in an isolated way. It is necessary to build alliances among the women's movement, the fish workers' movement, the farmers' movement, the tribal and indigenous peoples' movement - all those who live on the natural-resource-base and their own labour are

being evicted and being impoverished.

And then we have to gather together all the sensitive and sensible people of the world to reject the corporate sector and this kind of lending and the export credit guarantees. And these will be replaced by ordinary people's ways of exchange, of knowledge, ideas, of technology - that will be the real empowerment of the people.

- **Medha Patkar**

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**[1998 April]** The indigenous Hikoi Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand set out to walk 600 km to the capital to protest the MAI.

**[May]** Insurrection spreads through Indonesia as citizens riot against the Suharto dictatorship and the country's IMF-dictated austerity policies. Police kill 6 students. Suharto is overthrown.

**[July 6]** A 48 hour work stoppage

entitled the "people's strike against privatisation" takes place across Puerto Rico protesting the privatisation of the state telephone company. The country is brought to a standstill; even shopping malls and the airport are closed down.

**[November]** A massive internet campaign against the MAI pressures the French government to withdraw,



*That which inspires people to devote their lives to social change is sometimes an accumulation of experiences and knowledge, slowly building into an articulate conviction. It may be when resistance takes new forms, new movements develop, an entrypoint becomes obvious. Other times it comes like a bolt of lightening, a sudden shift, a single moment around which a life can be measured as coming 'before' and 'after.' That moment may be an arrest, an action, the destruction of a beloved place, a conversation, witnessing an act of fearlessness, or receiving a gesture of unexpected generosity. It is these times, when the realm of the possible expands, that history speeds up, comes alive, and falls into our hands.*

## Anarchists Can Fly

"If someone had told my dad he'd one day be friends with the President of the United States, he wouldn't have believed it." Fucking moron. I would have smacked her if she had been three-dimensional.

In the library, waiting for the Internet terminal, I picked up the latest issue of TeenPeople, the glossy-paged teen celebrity magazine. I didn't start reading to 'scope some mega-cute skater sweeties!" or dig some lip-gloss likely to get me tongue-kissed after class. Nope - it was lying open where I sat down, and the page facing up was a photo spread of George W. Bush's inauguration.

I had been in D.C. when the president was sworn in. I was curious to see how a magazine that touted shopping and good grades as the answer to every teenage problem would write up an event like our corrupt system reaching new heights of unscrupulousness, and how their coverage measured up to my memory of it.

Not very well. The girl writing the photo captions was the daughter of a friend of Dubya. She got to go celebrate the presidential coup Republican-style, with ball gowns, (I spent about two hours getting ready!) and Ricky Martin shaking his bon-bon and Bush calling out "T-Bone!" to her daddy, "That's good ol' Bushie's nickname for him!" from the stage right before his speech. Wow, I thought. Ain't no



inauguration I went to.

My memories of January 20 are strikingly different, but no less memorable. I was there as a protester, one of the 20,000 who came to deride Bush and the crooked political system, not dance at the ball. I was a member of the Revolutionary Anti-Authoritarian Bloc. We were the anarchist Black Bloc, the window-smashing flag-burning mask-wearing 'bad' demonstrators.

There's a photo in my journal - a black and white taken at 14<sup>th</sup> and K, where police scuffled with protesters - that shows nothing but lights and shadows distorted into a haze of action. Nothing entirely clear, everything moving fast. I saved the print because that was the way it had felt. This was my first big protest, and there was just too much happening - too many chants, too many conflicting reports on the streets, too many cops, too much rain and hunger and exhaustion. I was new to this and a total wimp, and I ran on autopilot.

There was one moment, though, that seared itself into my memory, seizing a handful of brain cells so tightly it will never escape my mind. It was

after hundreds of protesters had bypassed the unconstitutional security checks - goodbye, chain link fences - and got all the way up to the parade route we were supposed to be four blocks away from. We stood near Pennsylvania Ave., waiting for Dubya's motorcade to go by. The Black Bloc had converged near a small plaza full of flagpoles. We'd met there for protection - the National Organisation for Women had staked a claim to some of that space, and while police would charge and beat the anarchists, they might not do that to a crowd of feminist ladies. The crowd was thin and we would be close to the street when the motorcade passed, a good thing.

We anarchists milled about, anxious. The flagpoles - about thirty feet high, set in seven-foot concrete pedestals - were the Navy Memorial. Each of them was strung with three long ropes of ship flags waving in the cold wind. I looked around anxiously at the flagpole and the crowd of Bush supporters, NOW womyn, "Hail to the Thief"-ers, and scrawny black-clad militants, feeling as though my momentary quietude was about to be disrupted. 57

I was right. A Black Blocer, his face covered with sweatshirt hood and black bandana, ran up to the pole and scrambled up the cement base. Three others quickly joined him, and the crowd began to cheer. They struggled to unravel the ropes holding the flags in place, tearing down the monument. As each length of cloth fell the crowd let out a collective yell of joy, happy to see the symbols of the system they wanted so badly to change hit the mud puddles below. I hollered, "Hell yeah!" up to the overcast sky, thrilled with the spectacle.

With the flagpole stripped bare, the anarchists ran up their own symbols: the anarchist black flag and the red/black flag. The Republicans standing nearby began to yell, "Get down! Get down!" as the four kids clinging to the flagpole began to string an upside-down US flag into place. The anarchist kids yelled, "Stay up! Stay up!" in response. We were louder and more exuberant than the sourpuss Bushites, and the tattered emblem of a state gone wrong rose all the way to the top of the post.

Someone else was about to disrupt the fun,  
**58** though - a handful of cops, formerly occupying the

curb of Pennsylvania Ave., moved into the crowd to end the symbolic dissent with a few beatings and arrests. Three of the flagpole liberators saw them coming, leapt down and ran, hiding themselves in the crowd. The fourth had his back turned, and by the time he saw them it was too late - he was surrounded by angry patriots with pepper spray and batons at the ready. To hop down would be to take a beating and maybe a felony charge, so he did the only thing he could: he breathed deep, lifted his arms and flung himself straight out over the cops and the crowd, stage diver-style. The crowd let out a collective frightened gasp. It was the shocked response of people watching something so daring it looked, at first glance, suicidal. He was Rocky the Flying Squirrel, Evil Knievel, the antithesis of timidity.

My heart stopped too in that moment. It seemed both lightning-quick and eternal, that one second when the flying anarchist hovered horizontal in the air. When he fell to earth, landing in the arms of his comrades and escaping police, everything felt different, like we were living in the pages of



Everywhere the same police, the same teargas, the same truncheons, the same lies.



60 Karnataka State Farmers burning genetically modified crops,  
during the "Cremate Monsanto" campaign. India, November 1998.

history, as though in that moment there was a crystal-clear delineation of past and future. Something had just happened.

But there was no time for the inspired feeling in my gut to move to my left brain at that moment. The cops were advancing, nightsticks swinging. The anarchists panicked a little and retreated, but then the Black Bloc's collective mind seemed to go, "No, fuck these cops." Somehow, the anarchists turned and linked arms, pressing forward and shouting at the police. We yelled at them to back up and, their confidence suddenly wavering, they did. One by one the cops began to move back across the curb. It was a retreat no one in my affinity group, with hundreds of protest hours logged among them, had ever seen before. Later, when Dubya's motorcade raced by, SWAT team members in full riot gear advanced on us. We did it again, linking arms and screaming, "Cops off the sidewalk!" And they moved back. It was a feeling of incredible strength.

Reading TeenPeople's article, I was unamazed to find that there was no mention of protesting. It was as if the day had been nothing but cheerful, waving

Republicans and a grinning President, so thrilled to be able to seize power and destroy the country. It reminded me of part of a column from the Washington Post the day after: "It felt like the lefty-lefties were a whole lot angrier than the official picture of the day was going to portray them as being. It felt like the right was going to be able to roll their eyes at them anyhow."

No fucking kidding. The history-in-the-making feeling I had gotten at the Navy Memorial was, in the end, only true in the personal sense. It made no headlines, changed no policies, destroyed only a few pieces of cloth - but to me it changed everything. Before Washington I had been to, dig it, two protests. I wasn't an activist and wasn't especially committed to any cause. I was only a voyeur of activism, doubtful of our ability to really change anything. Pre-inauguration, I knew I could walk away from activism altogether. Afterwards, I felt as though I never could.

When the anarchist leapt and the world stopped cold, my heart ceased for one beat and then started up again in a different rhythm. I understood that to

turn my back on the world's problems would be to become an accomplice in their perpetuation, and that changing the way things are now is critical to the survival of the world. I understood my right to say "NO," and not consent to living under these rules, and the need to say "YES" to creating something different. My mind had understood human suffering, injustice, destruction and pain; suddenly, my heart did too, and change became vital, a part of my soul.

But the problems in the world had looked impossible before; it was an uphill battle on a hill too steep to climb. In that incredibly bold leap over the heads of the riot police, the option of saving the world from the jaws of destructive, violent capitalism seemed possible somehow. One quick, bold move - it made other acts of amazing audacity seem possible, which made defeat for the powers-that-be seem possible, which meant that our efforts on that cold day and all the other days when people worldwide had been marching through the streets, struggling to be heard, were not for show, not a battle fought in vain, not a losing proposition. It

took my hopes of defeating the forces that beat us down and synthesized them into one metaphoric illustration that said, "Yes we fucking can!" A seven-foot leap; a leap of faith. When a handful of kids in black sweatshirts told a SWAT team to back up and they obeyed, that feeling was confirmed. If that flying anarchist taught me nothing else, it was that when shit looks absolutely impossible, don't worry. Don't stop to analyze too much. Be courageous. Do what they don't expect. Take a leap. Anything is possible.

I flipped through the rest of 'TeenPeople,' then turned back to the Bush coverage, pulled out a marker, and scrawled "FUCK BUSH" across one page. On the other, I added a new slogan, often repeated at J20: **"ANARCHISTS CAN FLY."**

**- Sophia Emergency**



## S26 Prague anti-IMF/WB [September 26th, 2000]

While the Czech state turns activists away from its borders, there seem to be no borders to the imagination of those who take actions in 110 cities in solidarity with the demonstrations in **Prague**. Early morning commuters are greeted with banners hung from motor way bridges in **Frankfurt** and **Seattle**. Despite bans on S26 demonstrations in **Moscow**, activists put out a spoof press release saying they will destroy a McDonalds, and baffle the pursuing media when they pay a noisy visit to

the World Bank offices instead. Similar colourful visits happen in **Ankara, New York, Dhaka, Paris, Calcutta** and **Kiev**. Mirroring the events in **Prague**, World Bank employees are blockaded into their offices in **Delhi** while in **Geneva** a symbolic sculpture of flesh, bones and money is built in front of their doors.

Meanwhile in **São Paulo**, 1000 people occupy the streets around the stock exchange, where a banner declares: "Seattle, Prague, São Paulo: We are Everywhere." IMF "delegates" in pig masks play football with a globe, and a capitalist monster covered in corporate logos eats people in the crowd. When paint and stones are thrown at the building, and a corporate media van is destroyed, the police attack the crowd.

A **Brazilian** Citibank branch (Citigroup is a major investor in World Bank bonds) is blockaded in **Belo Horizonte** while in **Berkeley** one loses

its windows and in **San Francisco** a "Shitigroup" float with bankers sitting on toilets shitting into planet-shaped toilet bowls brings much laughter.

A caravan made up of 30 organisations tours **Pakistan**, visiting 31 towns where they are greeted by large crowds. The joy of resistance is brought to the streets of **Buenos Aires, Mumbia, Buffalo, Chicago, Bangalore, Capetown, Brussels, Warsaw, Belfast, Denver, Bergama, Zagreb, Boise, Istanbul, Burlington, Johannesburg, Bawalpur, Izmir, Brussels, Sydney, Belfast, Montreal, Bristol, Tel Aviv**, and beyond...

"I'm getting so tired of all the security," says Wolfensohn, head of the World Bank, as smoke bombs greeted him a week later at a conference in **Amsterdam**. Commenting on protesters he said: "Friends say I shouldn't take them personally, but that's hard when people say you're responsible for the death of millions of children."

With the highest number of HIV infections in the world, by 2010 the life expectancy in South Africa will drop to 36. South African activists are becoming increasingly vocal in demanding rights and equitable access to HIV/AIDS treatment. Local activist Richard Pithouse describes those who joined the 2000 Global March for Access as, "the excited group of nuns, drag queens, sangomas [traditional healers], doctors, communists, teenage punks on skate boards, Pan-Africanists, gay activists, unionists, students and nurses." But global patent rights - being enforced by the World Trade Organisation - on essential medicines such as AIDS drugs price them way out of reach of poor countries. Last year the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers took the South African government to court for importing generic AIDS drugs - thus, they argued, breaking patents held by multinational corporations. An increasingly mobilised grassroots movement in South Africa is linking up to the international movement challenging the power of transnational capital. This is the story of one of its beginnings.

## March on Merck

The march on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2001 against pharmaceutical giant Merck was Durban's commitment to the struggle for affordable drug prices for HIV/AIDS patients, inspired and strengthened by the large shows of support and solidarity taking place in diverse locations like Mumbai, Paris, São Paulo, Bangkok, Washington, New York, Dakar, London, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Cape Town.

University of Durban-Westville staff and students held a meeting and decided to target Merck, one of the thirty-nine pharmaceutical companies that had brought the case against the South African Government. It was also decided that no politicians - and especially no health ministers - would be invited to speak at the march. (At a previous such march, marathon speeches by the likes of Kwa-Zulu Natal health minister Dr. Zweli Mkhise and various figures of officialdom had put the anarchists present into visible pain).



At the meeting old apartheid-struggle activists mixed, spoke, and exchanged ideas freely with younger versions of themselves, united by a common hatred of market fundamentalism. Everybody had something to contribute. People had to shout to be heard. The radicals spoke about possible infiltration and occupation of Merck premises. The liberals spoke about the checks and balances of the march funding. The conservatives kept a surprisingly cool head. But overall they agreed that the court action against the South African government was morally reprehensible and that quick, strong, and decisive action needed to be taken against those drug companies that put profits before the lives of people. By the end of the meeting the AIDS Action advocacy group was formed, a date for the march was set, and the dormant university struggle engine began to slowly roar to life again.

Fazel Khan, a COMSA [Combined Staff Association - a militant independent union] veteran and legendary mobiliser, stepped forward to show less

experienced activists the way it was done. His eccentric methods were unfathomable at first but later it slowly dawned on most the AIDS Action activists that they had just received a three week crash course on how to conduct a revolution.

Then, a day before the planned march, Merck began their dirty tricks campaign. A high-ranking Merck employee claimed that his company, Merck (Pty) Ltd, had no relation to Merck and Co. Inc, the US-owned company party to the PMA Court action against the government. Panic set in. Company web pages were pored over and frantic phone calls were made. Eventually it was discovered that Merck (Pty) Ltd. was indeed separate from Merck and Co. Inc, but it was nevertheless also one of the 39 drug companies taking action against the government. When confronted, the Merck employee admitted to being in attendance at the first court case. The rules of engagement were now established. The mood at the university had grown militant and resolute: Merck was going down.

That afternoon, the mercurial AIDS activist Zackie Achmat, who has refused any drug treatment until it is available for all HIV/AIDS patients, gave a talk on the way forward in the struggle to win affordable treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. Visibly tired, he still managed to give a rousing speech to activists that had gathered in anticipation of the march. They unanimously passed a resolution to be handed to Merck the next day demanding that it withdraw its support for the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association's legal challenge, lower their prices on all essential drugs to affordable levels, allow all poor countries to manufacture generic HIV/AIDS drugs, and demonstrate transparency in their pricing policies. The resolution also supported the struggle for full access to treatment for all. The slogan of the march was: "People before Profits."

The morning of the march, AIDS Action heard that Merck was now threatening legal action against the Brazilian government over its decision to import the generic drug, Efavirenz, from India. Merck

claims that the Brazilian state-owned pharmaceutical laboratory, Far-Manguinhos, in doing so has violated its patent on the drug known as Stocrin. Brazil is the one developing country that is able to provide life saving AIDS medicines to all its people for free. In other developing countries these medicines cost up to R100,000 [US\$ 39,000] per person per year. Brazil has achieved this by manufacturing generic, non-patented, versions of these medicines. It now legally manufactures eight of the twelve drugs used in AIDS treatment cocktails. In this way Brazil has managed in four years to cut its AIDS deaths in half, giving hope to millions of people living with AIDS in the developing world. It is clear that Merck wished to quash this hope. The symbolism of the march against Merck was taking on immense proportions.

At around noon, happy and determined protesters began to gather around the university quad. As well as university staff and students there was also a strong union, anarchist, and feminist presence. The weather was sweltering even for Durban. Large

banners were being spray-painted all over the quad. Crowds gathered around the painters suggesting slogans and querying the nature of the protest. One read: "Merck! Hands off Brazil!" The word had spread quickly.

As Zackie Achmat spoke to students in the quad about the battle for affordable treatment, activists handed out t-shirts with the "People before Profits" slogan on it. But most protesters clamoured for the t-shirts with the "HIV Positive" emblazoned on them. Achmat had his own t-shirt declaring, "HIV Positive" – to his amazement he surrendered it a

few minutes later to a pleading female protester. In May 1998 a woman in Durban, South Africa, was stoned to death after she revealed she was HIV positive. But the stigma and alienation of the virus was suddenly giving way to the idea of it being a collective problem that could only be solved by a collective effort by the multitude. At the same time academics and politicians around the country were attending conferences and seminars on the African Renaissance dressed in "traditional" regalia. There was clearly a conflict between what the theoreticians and what the multitude thought the garb of the renaissance should be. Later Achmat

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leading to the total collapse of the negotiations and sending a wake-up call to business élites. Lasting results of the campaign include a network of activists primed for the next battle: that against the upcoming WTO ministerial in Seattle.

**[1999 February 6]** Nairobi University students fight riot police for three days over the development of the

Karura Forest and government corruption. Three MPs are arrested and charged with inciting violence. **[April 2000]** Students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico begin a general strike against tuition increases and for administrative reform. The strike, which completely shuts down this university of 270,000 students, inspires people worldwide



suggested that the university print each student and staff member one of the t-shirts. The well over 700 people participating in the march against Merck had, given the short period they had to arrange it, exceeded the AIDS Action activist's wildest predictions but perhaps what pleased them the most was the diversity and militant mood of the people.

Protesters on the buses were rewarded with righteous Zulu folk songs, impromptu toyi-toyi (ritual dance of protest) demonstrations, manifesto and poetry readings, and brief lessons in anarchism. The highly confined spaces ensured that everybody was sweaty but not a single soul complained or mentioned it. Talk of confronting

the "evil Empire" abounded. One particularly sweat-drenched chap invoked the name of Subcomandante Marcos and his band of Zapatistas who were at the very same moment engaged in their own battle against neoliberalism in the heart of Mexico City. A cry of "¡Basta! – Enough!" rang through the buses.

Under the watchful eye of the police the protesters began the long march to Merck. They were joined by children and volunteers from the God's Golden Acre home for AIDS orphans. Since the walk was too long for most of the younger orphans to make on their own they were carried in the arms of protesters.

*"South Africa is in the hands of global capital. That is why it can't meet the legitimate demands of its people."*

The protesters, both young and old, then began the long toyi-toyi up the hill to Merck's offices. Their energy-levels, despite the tremendous heat, did not falter. A woman along the way had to restrain



Thousands take to the streets to protest patents on Aids Drugs, South Africa, March 2001



Villagers refuse to abandon their homes to the rising waters of the dammed Narmada River, India.

her large dog from barking and from trying to attack the protesters. She received a roar of approval from a section of the march when she scolded it by telling it: "Don't bark at them boy. They're not the crooks. They're going to get the real crooks." Merck employees gathered on balconies and looked out of windows as the protesters assembled outside of their company premises.

Every one of the speakers spoke for a very short time. No praises to the Government were sung. The plain facts of the case were clearly and concisely stated and all the speakers agreed that this was just

the beginning and that they wouldn't rest until the struggle for affordable treatment had been won.

Patrick Bond recalled marching twenty years ago to the Merck offices in America and expressed happiness that the movement was being resurrected. He introduced the South African protesters to some of the struggle slogans used by US protesters during the WTO shutdown. By the end of his speech most of the protesters had dropped the familiar chant of "iViva!" for Bond's suggestion of "Hey Ho!" The good-natured refrain continued for the rest of the march and much of

who face similar cuts, privatisation, and the undermining of public education and social services. Military police take back the campus after nine months of student occupation.

**[September 8]** Colombian labour unions begin the first day of an indefinite general strike in protest of the government's political, social, and economic agenda. The unions demand

a government moratorium on all debt payment. An IMF delegation decides to cancel a trip to Bogota.

**[December]** Thousands of students in Mexico City demonstrate in solidarity with people arrested in Seattle.

**[2000 January]** Protesting the dollarization of the Ecuadorian economy, 40,000 members of indigenous groups converge on Quito,



the next day. The protesters were proving to be very receptive to new ideas. Bishop Phillip said that during the apartheid struggle many people sacrificed their lives for justice for all the people. He added that the new struggle was against a disease that was destroying our people. Ashwin Desai was introduced to the protesters to great cheers. Older student protesters recalled Desai's instrumental role in the attempted coup, dubbed "Operation Dislodge," of the University of Durban-Westville's management that took place about six years ago. He is to this day banned from entering UDW property.

Desai did not need a microphone to be heard. He raised the issue of protest marches that were becoming more and more passive. He added that

*"The Anti capitalists have been winning the battle of deas - despite having no ideas worthy of its name"*

instead of standing outside of evil places we should be burning them down and that instead of handing over memorandums we should be setting them alight. This pronouncement was met with militant cheers.

Ludna Nadvi then read out the resolution passed at Zackie Achmat's talk the previous day to Merck MD, Jacob Godwin, before it was handed over to him by one of the AIDS orphans from the God's Golden Acre home. Godwin wished to speak. He was faced with placards and banners saying, "People Before Profits," "America Stop Killing Us," "Affordable Treatment For All, Not Super Profits For A Few," "Globalisation Ruins The Poor," and "No Patience With Patents," He said that he would

present a memorandum justifying Merck's price structure for AIDS drugs. This was met with loud boo's, curses, and shouts of "shaya." The marchers turned their back on him. On the buses back to the university the mood was jubilant. The march had been a huge success and the seeds of a



larger social movement had been sown. Later on back at the university two sweaty and untidy looking marchers were confronted by an academic looking resplendent in his fine tweed jacket. He wanted to know where they had been. They told him. He replied that they had missed a very important seminar on the importance of civil society. Much laughter had to be suppressed. The next day an article covering the march appeared in one of the morning papers. Merck called up the journalist concerned and threatened him with legal action over inaccuracies in the story. The well-worn "Merck (Pty) Ltd. is not Merck and Co. Inc." gambit was being used again. The quick-witted journalist replied that if Merck were so concerned about patents, why weren't they worried about another company using their name? The energy generated by the march was rapidly spreading. Victory was in sight.

- **Pravasan Pillay**

In a March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2001 press release entitled, "Activists' Demonstrations at the Offices of Major pharmaceutical companies are not the way to help patients in developing countries," the President of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations (IFPMA) said: "We very much regret such attacks against research-based pharmaceutical companies, and believe all efforts should be directed towards solving the problems of sufferers instead of profile-raising efforts by parties who are not in the best position to contribute to alleviating the terrible situation of those affected. We fail to understand the motives of some AIDS activists... We are concerned that for some there is another, ideologically based, agenda – i.e., to discourage the morale of the research base of pharmaceutical companies."

From April 20-22 the 34 heads of state from all of the Americas except Cuba gathered in Quebec City behind 3 meter-high fences to discuss expanding the North American Free Trade Agreement to include all of their nations. Outside the fence, one affinity group's mission was to travel around the periphery, reading the "Cochabamba Declaration", which was written during the recent Bolivian uprising against the privatisation of local water supplies. They were one group among tens of thousands of people, who endured tear gassing at a rate of over a canister a minute over the course of 48 hours, and who responded to the insult of the clandestine negotiations behind the detested fence in a variety of ways: tearing it down, hurling messages and hundreds of rolls of toilet paper across, pinning notes, balloons, and flowers to it, and using a theatrical medieval catapult to launch teddy bears into the exclusion zone.

## The Bridge At Midnight Trembles

Under the freeway, they are drumming, picking up sticks and beating on the iron railings, on the metal sculptures that grace this homeless park, on the underpinnings of the overpass that links the lower town to the upper levels of Quebec City. They are mostly young and they are angry and jubilant, dancing in the night after two days on the barricades.

From above, the cops fire volleys of tear gas. It billows up in clouds and drifts down like an eerily beautiful, phantom fog, but the dancers keep on dancing. The sound and the rhythm grows and grows, a roar that fills the city, louder than you can imagine, loud enough, it seems, to crack the freeways, bring the old order down. The rumbling of the rapids as you approach the unseen waterfall. A pulsing, throbbing heartbeat of something being born. A carnival, a dance, a battle.

No one has come here expecting a safe or peaceful struggle. Everyone who is here has overcome fear, and must continue to do so moment by moment.

In the chaos, the confusion, the moments of panic, there is also a sweetness, an exuberance. Spring after winter. Freedom. Release. The rough tenderness of a hand holding open an eye to be washed out from tear gas. The kindness of strangers offering their homes to the protesters: come up, use our toilets, eat these muffins we have baked, fill your bottles with water.

We are the Living River: a cluster within the

action that sometimes swells to a couple of hundred people, sometimes shrinks to fifty. Our core is made up of Pagans, who are here because we believe the earth is sacred and that all human beings are part of that living earth. Our goal is to bring attention to issues of water, we say, although our true goal is to embody the element of water under fire.

We carry the Cochabamba Declaration, which was written by a group of people in Bolivia who staged an uprising to retake their water supply after it had been privatised by Bechtel Corporation.

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the capital, demanding the resignation of the president and occupying government buildings with the help of soldiers who have joined the insurrection. Workers at the national oil company, Petroecuador, declare an all-out indefinite strike to support the Indigenous movement.

**[March 16]** Pressured by the IMF the Costa Rican government passes a law

allowing the privatisation of the state telecommunications company. Widespread protests erupt, resulting in five protesters being shot, one killed, and 60 police officers injured as riot police clash with demonstrators. 100 student protesters are arrested. Days later, 40 protests take place around the country.

**[April]** Following months of protests



They wrote:

*"For the right to life, for the respect of nature and the uses and traditions of our ancestors and our peoples, for all time the following shall be declared as inviolable rights with regard to the uses of water given us by the earth:*

*1) Water belongs to the earth and all species and is sacred to life, therefore, the world's water must be conserved, reclaimed and protected for all future generations and its natural patterns respected.*

*2) Water is a fundamental human right and a public trust to be guarded by all levels of government, therefore, it should not be commodified, privatised or traded for commercial purposes. These rights must be enshrined at all levels of government. In particular, an international treaty must ensure these principles are non-controvertible.*

*3) Water is best protected by local communities and citizens who must be respected as equal partners with governments in the protection and regulation of water. Peoples of the earth are the only vehicle to promote earth democracy and save water."*

The Declaration is the alternative. It's what we are fighting for, not against. Our goal is to bring it into the Congress Centre, declare the FTAA [Free Trade Agreement of the Americas] meeting illegitimate because it is not supported by the people, and suggest they begin negotiating to protect the waters. Failing that, we will get as close as we can, and declare the Declaration wherever we are stopped.

As we are mobilising, our friends in Bolivia stage a March for Life and Sovereignty, which is violently repressed. Oscar Olivera, one of the framers of the Declaration, is arrested, charged with treason, but then released. As we are tear gassed, so their March is tear gassed, again and again. In Bolivia, two people die, one asphyxiated by the gas. In Quebec, there are near deaths, a man shot in the trachea by a rubber bullet, asthma attacks from the tear gas, a finger torn off in the assault on the fence. In São Paulo the youth blockading the Avenida Paulista are brutally attacked and beaten. Broken arms, broken wrists: one of our closest friends is beaten on the head so

hard her helmet is split in half, but she refuses to leave because she is a medic. At the private hospital, they refuse to treat the protesters. The police chase them away with live ammunition. Those arrested are tortured, held on their knees for over three hours in tight handcuffs while every fifteen minutes the police come by and beat them on the back. Most are under eighteen.

Friday afternoon. The River has spiralled at the gate at Rene Levesque, where the night before the Women's Action hung our weavings. As we wind up the circle, beginning to raise the power, Evergreen comes up to me with a man in tow who is decked in the Cuban flag. He is part of a small group of indigenous people who have been holding a vigil at the gate, and our group is so metaphoric, (and we never quite got the signs made that said clearly what we were doing) that somehow he has gotten the impression that we are for the FTAA. We are singing, "The river is flowing," and he is from Honduras and

his land is flooded from ecological breakdown and hurricane Mitch, and the only way we can demonstrate our solidarity, he says, is to join him in his chant. "Why not?" I shrug and we begin to chant, "El pueblo, unido, jamás sera vencido!" (The people, united, will never be defeated!)

We dance on down to St. Jean Street, where the news comes from our scouts - the CLAC (Anti Capitalist Convergence - one of the groups organising actions) march has reached the gate we've just left, and the fence is already down. I literally jump for joy. We advance forward and receive cheers - "Hey, it's the River." Closer to the gate, the cops are firing tear gas at the crowd. Young men run out of the crowd, shadows in the fog, and throw them back. The gas billows up and is blown back onto the police lines. We are still

*'This is an uprising as big as the revolution that shook the world between 1890 and 1920. Beware.'*

*- Asia vice-president of the financiers Goldman Sachs*

able to breathe, and sing, so we start a spiral. The circle grows: other people join hands and dance with us, moving ever closer to the gate, not running away, not giving ground. All along it has been hard to decide what the action of this direct action should be. Now we all see that the fence is the action.

We spiral and dance, the drums pounding against the thunder of the projectiles as they shoot tear gas canisters overhead, laughing with the sheer liberation and surrealism of it all. Until at last one shot lands close to us, the gas pours out and engulfs us in a stinging, blinding cloud, and we are forced away.

We decide to flow on, to the blockade on the Côte d'Abraham a few blocks away. We hear that the Côte d'Abraham gate could also use some energy, and the mission of the River is to flow, so

we go on. We could use ten, a hundred Rivers.

The area has been so heavily gassed that many of us can't stay long. The energy peaks, not into a cone of power but into a wild dance. Our scouts report that riot cops are massing down the street, heading toward us to clear the area. The river flows on. Behind us, we can look back and see the spray of the water cannon, arching high in the air, filled with light like a holy and terrible rain that plays upon the black figures who hold their ground below.

Saturday morning: About twenty of us gather in the house where we're staying. Everyone is braver than before. I am awed. Some of us have been activists for decades, and carry into the actions a slow courage that has grown over many, many years. But some of our people have made that internal journey in one night. And it's one thing to decide, in the safety of your home, to go to a demonstration. It's another thing to face the reality of the chaos, the tear gas, the potential for violence.

I am here, I have done my best to

*"If you want peace, prepare for war." - Quebec Public Security Minister*

*Serge Menard shortly before the FTAA summit*



The "security" fence is easily pushed down as thousands say no to the FTAA. Quebec City, April 2001.

Padded up and ready to go. Tutte Bianchi tactics spread across the world. Barcelona, June 2001.





inspire and encourage other people to be here with me, because as scared as I might be of the riot cops and the rubber bullets, I'm a thousand times more scared of what will happen if we aren't here, if we don't challenge that meeting going on behind these walls. Even if the river seems placid, I can hear the roar of the waterfall in my ears. In the beauty of the woods, in the quiet of the morning when I sit outside and listen for the birdsong, in every place that should feel like safety, I know by the feel of the current that we are headed for an irrevocable edge, an ecological/economic/social crash of epic dimensions, for our system is not sustainable and we are running out of room to maneuver. In the meeting we are protesting, protected by the fence, wall, riot cops, and the army, they are planning to unleash the plundering forces and remove all controls. Water, land, forests, energy, health, education, all of the human services communities perform for each other will be confirmed as arenas for corporate

profit making, with all of our efforts to regulate the damage undermined.

Saturday afternoon: I am standing in the alley with Juniper who has never been in an action before and with Lisa who has been in many. There is an opening in the wall, but the riot cops stand behind, defending it, their shields down, impermeably masked, padded and gloved and holding their long sticks ready to strike.

Willow moves forward, begins to read the Cochabamba Declaration. The cops interrupt shouting and moving out from behind the fence. Their clubs are ready to strike: one holds the gun that fires tear gas projectiles and points it at us. Lisa and I look at each other, one eye on the cops, the other on the crowd behind us. "What do we want to do here?" she asks me. The cops begin to

*"Proponents of civil disobedience  
have permeated all levels of our  
society " - Royal Canadian Mounted Police*

*Commissioner Guiliano Zaccarelli*

advance. "Sit down," someone calls behind us, maybe someone we ourselves trained to sit in this very situation. We sit down. The cops tense. We are holding hands. I consider whether we should link up, make a stronger line.

We pass the Cochabamba Declaration back to someone who speaks French and begins to read it out loud. I pass my drum back, hoping one of my friends will pick it up. I see one of the cops slightly lower his baton. Another wavers: their perfect line now shows some variation. They are beginning to relax.

From behind, someone passes up flowers.

Heather brought them in the morning, saying she wanted to do something nonviolent, give them to the police. I remember thinking that hers was an idea so sweet that it belonged in some other universe than the one I anticipated being in that day. She had not looked too happy when I explained that we intended to follow CLAC and the Black Bloc up to the perimeter. "People might think we're supporting them," she said. "Well, we are supporting them," I explained. At least, for some of us that's what we feel called to do - to be right up there with them in the front lines, holding the magic, grounding the energy, not

preaching about nonviolence but just trying to embody it. Now Heather and her flowers are here.

Lisa gets up, holding out her hands to the cops in a gesture of peace, and attempts to give them the Declaration. I watch, holding my breath,

*"Fortunately, we're no longer aware of any alternative to capitalism. The market has privatised everything... Business is so taken for granted that it has become invisible You only notice it when it's not going on."*

ready to back her up if they attack. "We can't take it," one of them whispers to her through clenched teeth. She lays it at his feet. A young man comes forward, lays down a flower. A woman follows with another. Somehow, in that moment, it becomes the perfect gesture.

Everyone relaxes. After a time, we decide to make our exit. The River must flow on. Others move forward to take our place. We snake back to the intersection. Behind us, the young men of our cluster are helping to take down the fence along the cemetery. We begin a spiral in the intersection: masses of people join in with us. From a rooftop above, two of the local people shower us with confetti. We dance in a jubilant snow. The power rises, and as it does an absolute scream of rage tears out of my throat. I'm drumming and wailing and sending waves and waves of this energy back at the Congress Centre, and at the same time we are dancing and confetti is swirling down while behind us the tear gas flies and the fence comes down.

In front of the gate on St. Jean Street, five

young men and one woman stand, their backs to the massed groups of riot cops behind the barrier, their feet apart, one arm up in a peace sign, absolutely still in the midst of of chaos, unmasked, unprotected, in a cloud of tear gas so strong we are choking behind our bandanas. We file behind them, read the Cochabamba statement, and then flow on. They remain, holding the space as their eyes tear, steadfast in their silence, their courage, and their power.

When the Bay Bridge fell in the last San Francisco earthquake, we learned that structures resonate to a frequency. A vibration that matches their internal rhythm can bring them down. Beneath the overpass, they are drumming on the rails. The city is a drum. Massive structures tremble. And a fence is only as strong as its point of attachment to its base.

- **Starhawk**

In the World Bank's opinion, there are "too many" African students and their numbers should be cut.

African students fighting education cutbacks and economic restructuring due to the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the World Bank and IMF over the past twenty years are described as 'hoodlums', just like their counterparts in the global North. Hundreds of African students have paid the ultimate price of resistance. But this testimony speaks not just of death, but of hope, as a new generation of young people carry the message of the African student dead to the Washington doorstep of the World Bank and IMF.

## An April of Death:

### **African students fight World Bank policies**

The ten days between April 9 - 18, 2001 were bloody ones for African students and youth. They epitomised the literal war African states (which are committed to the structural adjustment ideology of the World Bank and IMF) are waging against African youths who see no future for themselves or their countries in the path these states are following.

On Monday, April 9 a Zimbabwean science student, Batanayi Madzidzi, 20, died from injuries suffered during clashes with the police on Sunday. The clashes arose from a demonstration organised to protest the late payments of their stipends. This was one of many demonstrations in the last decade the students of the University of Harare have organised focusing on the rising costs of food, accommodation and studying due to the government's structural adjustment policies. The immediate trigger of the students' anger was the apparent suicide on Friday, April 6 of a first-year woman student who was found dead in a female students' hostel with a note beside her body that referred to a relationship gone sour. Apparently many women students in the context of the economic crisis

are financing their education through making liaisons with wealthy men. The results are not, however, always under their control.

On Wednesday, April 11 students of the Addis Ababa University were demonstrating against the police presence on campus and demanding elementary academic freedom rights like freedom of assembly and expression on campus. Apparently two plain-clothes policemen were spotted by the students in their midst; this triggered an attack by riot police bent on rescuing their colleague. The police riot ended in the injury of fifty students that night. In the following days, student demonstrations and strikes were echoed by rioting in the city by youths who state officials called "hoodlums and lumpen." Shops were looted, government buildings burned and cars were trashed. The state unleashed a deadly response, killing 38 people and wounding 252 others. The deaths were due largely to gunshot wounds caused by policemen's fire. Thousands of students were arrested and sent to a concentration camp in the village of Sendafa, 38 km (17 miles)

northeast of Addis Ababa. Students returned to campus in early May, but continued to demand the release of all their fellows. They eventually left the university campus en masse on June 12, concluding that the government was not seriously negotiating with them.

On Wednesday April 18, while the deadly confrontation in Ethiopia between students and police was beginning to quiet, Algerian police killed a student, Germah Massinissa, in the Kabylia region during a demonstration anticipating the huge annual gathering celebrating 'Berber Spring' on April 20. The killing of the student was followed by demonstrations of protest throughout Kabylia and by sympathetic demonstrations in Algiers and other parts of Algeria where students chanted, "We are all Berbers!" These demonstrations were met with determined violence by state forces. As of the moment, at least fifty people have been killed in a long series of demonstrations demanding the right to practice Berber culture. But they are continuing, and they threaten the government's hold on power. **85**

We present these moments of Zimbabwean, Ethiopian and Algerian state violence as an indication of African states' confirmation of the World Bank's judgment on the students of Africa: there are too many of them and they should be expendable. At the same time, the political leaders of Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Algeria through their decision to respond to demonstrating youth with massive mortal force have lost hold of the future while these students, far from defending their ivory tower detachment, are expressing the aspirations of the mass of African youth in the streets.

The main change in this April of Death, however, has not been in the brutality of the African state (for there have already been hundreds of African students killed in anti-SAP demos), but in the attitude of the World Bankers. They used to think that the African students' struggle could not touch them as they were safely ensconced on H Street in Washington. They were happy to have their “front

**86** men” in Africa get their hands dirty dealing with

the opposition to their programs. But the anti-globalisation movement, which had as one of its sources the persistent anti-structural adjustment student movement in Africa, has finally leaped from the streets of Harare, Addis and Algiers into Washington DC in April and Prague in September last year. The World Bankers now know that they cannot expect to carry on their planning and comfortable get-together in tranquillity. They have been hounded, finally, by a truly international youth movement which has carried the African student dead to their door.

**- editors of the Committee for Academic  
Freedom in Africa newsletter**

*When it was announced that the G8 were to meet in Genoa, many activists laughed with glee, anticipating a radical response from the infamous Italian movements. But as the date grew nearer, concerns were raised; three protesters were shot in Goteborg, and several predicted a death in Genoa.*

*The first demonstration, organised by the Genoa Social Forum (GSF) and immigrant organisations, was a festive march. Despite the its nonviolent nature, the police presence was massive; somewhere in tanks with tripod-mounted machine guns, foreshadowing the days to come.*

*On July 20, thousands took direct action; by the end of that day, 23 year old Carlo Giuliani had been shot dead by police, and hundreds had been brutally beaten and arrested.*

*The next day a 200,000-strong demonstration sustained police attack for hours; that night, the police raided the indymedia centre / GSF headquarters and brutally attacked sleeping people in a school across the street.*

*International solidarity was astonishing. Demonstrations against the repression occurred in over 240 cities the following week, and in 250 cities one month after Giuliani's murder.*

*Because these events are so recent, so tragic, and so clearly indicative of a turning point for the movement, a few excerpts seem the only way to fill these final pages and move forward.*

## Genoa: Testimony of Tension

The first thing I noticed was that the people across the room were getting down on their knees and putting their hands up in signs of peace... I immediately did the same thing. The police rushed into the room... The first thing I recall the police doing was kicking a chair into the group of people kneeling on the floor.

I could hear things smashing this whole time... One came over to our corner and, as I was kneeling with my hands extended, he kicked me in the side of the head, knocking me to the floor. Sherman and another man helped me back up to my knees. Another policeman came to where I was kneeling and started beating me with his club. I was up against the wall, and I curled over with my right side against the wall and my hands and arms covering my head for protection. I tried not to move because I thought he would stop beating me sooner if I lay still. I am not sure how many policemen were beating me. I looked up and saw Sherman being beaten.

After they stopped beating us, Sherman and I lay curled up by the wall for about five minutes or so... I

noticed that there was a lot of blood around us, and that blood was smeared on the wall. I think it was our blood because we were both bleeding from the head, and I was bleeding from my hands and wrists.

At this point I noticed that my bleeding right hand was swollen, and my little finger was sticking out at a strange angle. Sherman's eyes looked glazed and he wasn't responding to questions normally.

**excerpt from sworn testimony - Morgan Hager**

## **Will A Death in the Family Breathe Life into the Movement?**

The message from the world's authorities is clear: "Go back to your homes, do not meddle in what doesn't concern you, return to your televisions, and leave the intricacies of global economics alone - because if you don't we will kill you. "

For decades, the poorest of the planet's families  
**88** from Asia, Africa and Latin America have been

burying those who have dared to confront global capitalism. But Carlo's death spells something different. For the first time the global elite has begun to kill the children of its own people. The whip of economic dictatorship is finally cracking at home.

True enough, there were cops in ski-masks leading attacks on corner shops, bus stops and post offices. But the agitators can be addressed. If everyone who takes action knows why they are taking it and what sort of action they think is necessary to achieve their goal, then the police will not be able to steer the crowds, the meetings, the discussion groups or "the movement." The problem is less one of infiltration, more one of focus.

If we put this dynamic to work away from the mega-summits we can become a threat again. But we need to be imaginative and we need to stay ahead of the beast. Where we choose to go from here is crucial to whether we are in the process of sparking serious global change or merely are in the death throes of another cycle of resistance.

**excerpt from an email - el flaco**



The Zapatista cry of "¡Ya Basta! - Enough!" reverberates around the world. Quebec City, FTAA summit April 2001.



Police block the path of 200,000 protesters at the G8 summit. Genoa, Italy, July 2001.



## Embracing contradictions after Genoa

Genoa was a watershed for the anti-globalisation movement. It's clear now that this is a life or death struggle in the first world as it has always been in the third world. How we respond will determine whether repression destroys us or strengthens us. To come back stronger, we have to understand what actually happened there. ... Let's be clear: In Genoa we encountered a carefully orchestrated campaign of state terrorism. The campaign included disinformation, the use of infiltrators and

provocateurs, collusion with avowed fascist groups (and I don't mean fascist in the loose way the left sometimes uses the term, I mean fascist as in "direct inheritors of the traditions of Mussolini and Hitler"), the deliberate targeting of nonviolent groups for tear gas and beating, endemic police brutality, the torture of prisoners, the political persecution of organisers, and a terrorist raid on sleeping people by special forces, who broke bones, smashed teeth, and bashed in skulls of nonresisting protesters. They did all this openly, in a way that indicates they had no fear of repercussions and expected protection from the highest sources. That

against 200% price hikes of water in Cochabamba, Bolivia due to World Bank-imposed privatisation, the President, Banzer, declares a state of emergency, restricting civil liberties. Protest leaders are arrested. Rubber bullets are replaced by real ones. 8 people are killed before the company is forced to withdraw. The waterworks are later taken over by a cooperative.

**[April 16]** Thirty thousand converge in Washington DC to shut down the World Bank / IMF annual meeting.  
**[June 5]** The Nigerian government accepts IMF-mandated cooking fuel price hikes, which result in a general strike. 40 people are killed, hundreds injured, and over 1000 arrested. Eventually the government backs down.



expectation implicates not only the proto-fascist Berlusconi regime of Italy, but by association the rest of the G8, especially the U.S. since it now appears that L.A. County Sheriffs helped train the most brutal of the special forces.

The Black Bloc was not the source of the problem in Genoa. The problem was state, police fascist violence. So the issue is not 'How do we control the violent elements among us?', although that might be an issue someday. It's 'How do we forestall another campaign of lies, police-instigated violence, and retaliation?' There's no easy answer to that question. The simplest strategy would be to go back to a strict form of nonviolence, which many people are proposing. I don't know why I resist that answer. I'm a long time advocate of nonviolence. ... One reason might be that I can no longer use the same word to describe what I've seen even the most unruly elements of our movement do in actions and what the cops did in Genoa. If breaking windows and fighting back when the cops attack is "violence", then give me a new word, a word a thousand times stronger, to use when the

cops are beating nonresisting people into comas. Another might be just that I like the Black Bloc. I've been in many actions now where they were a strong presence.

In Seattle I was royally pissed off at them for what I saw as their unilateral decision to violate agreements everyone else accepted. In Washington, I saw that they abided by guidelines they disagreed with and had no part in making, and I respected them for it. I've sat under the hooves of police horses with some of them when we stopped a sweep of a crowded street using tactics Gandhi himself could not have criticised. I've choked with them in the tear gas in Quebec City and seen them refrain from property damage there when confronted by local people. I'm bonded. Yes, there have been times I've been furious with some of them, but they're my comrades and allies in this struggle and I don't want to see them excluded or demonised.

We need them, or something like them. We need room in the movement for rage, for impatience, for militant fervor, for an attitude that says "We are

badass, kickass folks and we will tear this system down." If we cut that off, we devitalise ourselves. We also need the Gandhian pacifists. We need room for compassion, for faith, for an attitude that says, "My hands will do the works of mercy and not the works of war." We need those who refuse to engage in violence because they do not want to live in a violent world.

How do we create a political space that can hold these contradictions, and still survive the repression? How do we go where no social movement has ever gone before? Maybe these are the questions we really need to ask. In a life or death situation, there's a great temptation to attempt to retreat to what seems like safe ground. But all my instincts tell me that going back to what seems safe and tried and true is a mistake. I no longer see any place of safety. Or rather, I see that in the long run our safest course is to act strongly now. ... Either we continue to fight together now when we can mount large-scale, effective actions, or we fight them later in small, isolated groups, or alone when they break down the doors of our

homes in the middle of the night. Either we wage this struggle when there are still living forests, running rivers, and resilience left in the life support systems of the planet, or we fight when the damage is even deeper and the hope of healing slim. We have many choices about how to wage the struggle.

We can be more strategic, more creative, more skillful in what we do. We can learn to better prepare people for what they might face, and to better support people afterwards. But those choices remain only so long as we keep open the space in which to make them. We need to grow, not shrink. We need to explore and claim new political territory. We need the actions of this autumn to be bigger, wilder, more creatively outrageous and inspiring than ever, from the IMF/World Bank actions in Washington DC at the end of September to the many local and regional actions in November when the WTO meets in Qatar. We need to stay in the streets. **excerpt from Why we need to stay in the streets, and After Genoa asking the right questions - Starhawk**

## Protecting the Movement and its Unity: a realistic approach

Genoa showed that anti-globalisation has become a vast social movement: 2-300,000 people demonstrated, despite the intense criminalisation campaign conducted since Prague and Goteborg. And opinion polls in countries as different as Greece, Switzerland, France and Italy indicate that a large majority is in favour of the movement.

To this massive popular pressure, our rulers (right and "left") have not made even the slightest, the most reformist concession, over the past three years. They have only one answer: police violence. Their plan is simple: frighten as many as possible so that they stay home and condemn the radical part of the movement; radicalise and criminalise the rest.

We must all abandon (at least in the short run) our self-important illusions that we can persuade or impose a single perspective on the whole movement. Debate must continue of course, but

**94** whatever our particular position within the

movement, the really subversive approach is to think how to protect the whole movement and make it grow. This is true of movements in general, and even more of this one in particular, for whom diversity is a central value and goal. Any attempt to hegemonise the movement is a blow against it.

Over and above our very real differences, paradoxically we actually need each other. Without the "radicals" this whole movement wouldn't have existed and would now be quickly recuperated. Without the "reformists" we would be isolated and wiped out. We are at once opposed and allied. And the sooner the regime can drive a wedge between us, the more difficult it will be for us. So we would like to say to the "nonviolent" side: - If you try to impose nonviolence without discussion as though it was obviously the only legitimate means, you will lose all credit with the young radicals, for you will appear to align yourselves on the position of the police and to implicitly accept the idea that the changes needed are possible without challenging the rules of the game set by the regime, and its legitimacy. Should we really scrupulously respect

the property of multinationals amassed through murder and exploitation ?

Rightly or wrongly, violence of different kinds has been inseparable from practically every movement for radical change in our culture, and has often been considered necessary to provoke real change.

The "Black Block," as such, doesn't really exist. There are just different persons and groups - often dressed in black - who share the opinion that destruction of property, and in some cases violence against police, can be an effective and legitimate political tool. Implicitly, they invoke the legitimacy

of self-defence against a regime whose own illegitimacy and incredible violence is every day more obvious.

So repeating the enemy's revolting propaganda about these people (that they are purely destructive, "nihilists," etc.) will not moderate or dissuade them. On the contrary, it can only confirm them in their desperate suspicion that they are alone in a sea of corruption and political naivety. On the other hand it is urgent to start a serious debate on the pros and cons of violence with them. Because we have been through all this already. We have seen the most generous and determined of a generation

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**[2001 January 27]** Davos, Switzerland is turned into a fortress and all protests banned against the World Economic Forum. Inside the conference a bizarre sit-in by WEF delegates, frustrated by incessant security sweeps by the US secret services, delays Bill Clinton's speech.  
**[February-March]** 23 Zapatista commanders and their subcommander

travel through 13 Mexican states and into the capital on the March of Indigenous Dignity, joined by thousands of members of national and international civil society. Their demands are constitutional recognition of indigenous rights, the release of all Zapatista political prisoners, and the removal of 7 out of over 250 military bases from the state of Chiapas.



abandoned in isolation cells, suicided or killed. And the world is in too bad a state to let history go on stuttering.

To the "Black Block," we could say: By violence we refuse to renounce the right to violence as a legitimate right of self-defence against an inherently violent system. And that is an important idea. But at the same time we recognise that perhaps our principle demand is a less violent society and that the movement that builds that society must resemble the society we want. So our violence must always be as minimal as possible. We won't win by force, we will win because people like our practices and the ideas behind them. And the right to self-defence is just one of our ideas. Let's not get hung up on it or identified politically only with that.

Another of our ideas is precisely that we want a less macho society in which force isn't the only recognised way of deciding things. And that idea is much better expressed by consequent nonviolent direct action, by the sober and determined refusal to accept injustice. Yet another idea is that we are

for a diverse and nonhierarchical society in which all can be heard, without being silenced by the behaviour of others.

It is also important that our movement should not always be expressing rage, but also the joy, the life and laughter of a real movement of liberation. We want to leave this grey and violent world behind, reproducing it as little as possible in our forms of struggle. All these ideas, and more, are as important as the legitimacy of our violence, and can all be eclipsed by the excessive imposition of violent methods.

Victorious movements are ones that can adapt to circumstances, use violence when really necessary, but also humour, music, reason, patience. Which can be stubborn in one case and negotiate in another. Flexibility is the secret of survival for any living thing.

Anyhow, no one part or tendency of the movement can seriously expect to convince the others in the short term. And if they seek to destroy the others, they will assure the victory of the enemy. For me, consciously trying to spoil other



groups' game or to impose their opinions on others is the only thing that can de facto put a group outside the movement. Whether those who do this kind of thing consider themselves anarchists or autonomous or pacifists, they are acting like stalinists. The movement must be like the society it is building: a place of autonomy, diversity, and respect.

Objectively speaking, this movement would not exist without the "radicals." It was non-violent but illegal action and the Black Block that reawoke the world's political imagination. But without the mass of "moderates," the radicals would all be in jail

already. Is it not possible for us to see, beyond our narrow views, how to preserve the whole movement, keep ALL of it as safe and wise as possible, make it grow?

The debate will continue. But there are also other urgent things to discuss. In particular, how to profit from the truly historic opportunity, that the human tide of Genoa is a small part of. The regime has not appeared so totally illegitimate for decades. In three years, anti-globalisation movement has practically become a subject of consensus. Anti-capitalism is following close behind.

**[excerpt from] - Olivier**

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**[March]** South Africans take the streets protesting the pharmaceutical companies imposition of patents on essential AIDS medicines.

**[June 26]** Four students are killed and up to 20 injured during a five-day blockade of government buildings in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in protest against World Bank-mandated privatisation.

**[September 30]** Tens of thousands will converge on Washington DC to protest against the IMF and World Bank meetings.

**[November 9]** The WTO, unwilling to risk a re-run of Seattle, will meet for the Fourth ministerial in Dohar, Qatar. As they flee to the desert, decentralized local actions will occur across the planet.



# The Low Road

What can they do to you?  
Whatever they want..

They can set you up, bust you,  
they can break your fingers,  
burn your brain with  
electricity,  
blur you with drugs till you  
can't walk, can't remember.  
they can take away your  
children,  
wall up your lover;  
they can do  
anything you can't stop  
them doing.

How can you stop them?  
Alone you can fight, you can  
refuse.

You can take whatever  
revenge you can

But they roll right over you.  
But two people fighting  
back to back can cut  
through a mob  
a snake-dancing fire  
can break a cordon,  
termites can bring down  
a mansion

Two people can keep each  
other sane  
can give support, conviction,  
love, massage, hope, sex.

Three people are a delegation  
a cell, a wedge.  
With four you can play games  
and start a collective.  
With six you can rent a whole  
house  
have pie for dinner with  
no seconds  
and make your own music.

Thirteen makes a circle,  
a hundred fill a hall.  
A thousand have solidarity  
and your  
own newsletter; ten thousand  
community and your own  
papers;  
a hundred thousand, a  
network of communities;  
a million our own world.

It goes one at a time.  
It starts when you care to act.  
It starts when you do it again  
after they say no.  
It starts when you say we  
and know who you mean;  
and each day you mean  
one more.

**- Marge Piercy**

### Who is working on this project:

Our collective has emerged to work on this project and will soon disappear, like a surgical thread melting into a wound, back into the work of assisting the decay of capitalism. It is made up of activists, writers, and artists - all of whom have deep connections to this movement. Some of them were involved in the shutdown of the WTO in Seattle, others have worked in movements of the global South or were involved in Reclaim the Streets in the UK, some are deeply rooted in their local struggles, others are nomadic organizers, some spend time teaching, others writing, some have jobs, some are in militant marching bands, some have kids, and most manage miraculously to do all of these things. Living in different cities, on different continents, they manage to remain connected by their irresistible optimism and insatiable desire to turn the world upside-down.

*"The protesters are winning. They are winning on the streets. Before too long they will be winning the argument. Globalization is fast becoming a cause without credible champions."*

*- Financial Times, August 17, 2001*



**“The world is made up of stories, not atoms”**

- Muriel Rukeyser

