

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER SAMBA, SEA & SUN...



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GOOOAALLL!!!

TERRA-ISTS STRIKE BACK

It was the largest march in Brazilian history, but was much more than a march. For a start it lasted 17 days. The landless farmers' movement, the Movimento Sem Terra, or MST, is maybe the most dynamic direct action movement in the world. Embarking on their most ambitious action to date they brought 12,000 marchers from 23 states to walk 238 kilometres to the Brazilian capital Brasilia to demand land reform. From a frail 97-year-old man to an 18-year-old seven months pregnant, the marchers took on not just the government but Brazil's big landowners in the decades-old fight for land.

"The camp is like a glimpse of humanity happy with itself".

- Leonardo Boff, theologian.

If you saw what effort went into running the G8 protests last week, consider this for an operation...

In dry heat, every day for 17 days 12,000 men, women and children marched sixteen kilometres, occupied land and camped on it. Like a giant festival on the move every day, it was an epic of eight months planning. Each marcher had with them a knife and fork, four rolls of toilet paper, a water bottle, a straw hat, a roll-up mattress, first aid, MST caps and t-shirts and a bucket to wash with. They were also given a rucksack, a plastic rain cover, a card for their name and state, pen, notebook, a book on agrarian reform written by MST groups, and a transistor radio.

Every day began with a wake-up at around 4.30am to pack, get into groups and form three lines stretching over 4 km along the BR-060 motorway. The march would set off before dawn, joined by two sound systems, six ambulances and fifteen water trucks,

and arrive four or five hours later at the campsite. The sound system truck, a carnival-style 'trio electrico' was large, loud and transmitted a radio signal along the route for the walking-with-headphones masses. They gave information and, most of the time, just mucked about jammin' on the roof.

Meanwhile another 350-strong team would pack up the entire camp, and drive it in thirty one trucks and eight buses to the next site. There they would find a farm, cut down the wire fences, smash down the wooden poles with the buses and drive in en masse. Then the site would be sketched out on paper and then re-constructed entirely before the marchers arrived around 10am. Kitchens were set up at two points along the route. A team of 420 cooks - a group from each state - would rise at 3.30am and start preparing 24,000 meals a day with rice, beans, vegetables and a little meat brought from MST encampments. The hot food would then be packed into individual metal trays and driven to and back from the current campsite twice a day.

After showering, washing clothes and

WHAT'S THE HULLA-BA-LULA?

"Government is like feijao (beans). You have to apply pressure for it to cook."

- Popular Brazilian phrase.

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was a former metal-worker who led a huge wave of strikes against the military dictatorship in 1978. In 1980 he helped form the Workers' Party. The MST was formed four years later and the two are now the biggest political party and biggest social movement in South America. When Lula became the first working class President of Brazil in 2002 there were big hopes that change would come fast but this was overly optimistic. The Workers' Party said they supported the march - and the MST say that Lula is still an ally, although the movement is independent from any political party. So what's going on? SchNEWS spoke to Gilmar Mauro, the national coordinator of the MST to find out:

"Lula's government came good on all contracts with financial capital but not with the MST and Brazilian society as promised in his election campaign. Lula's government is different. It respects social movements and doesn't criminalise the MST, but yet has settled less landless families than the last one. It has been subsidising big agribusiness but it won't release funds for agrarian reform. We are seeing a Lula who is completely different from the one who was a candidate (who'd have thought it? - ed).

There is a lack of political will and capacity to confront the big landowners in our country. It's a timid government which is hostage to international finance. If the government continues like this the re-election of Lula in 2006 will be difficult and he'll have to make even bigger alliances with the right which will make change even harder.

Our salvation is to pressure the government. The story of marches by humanity is a rich one from ancient Egypt, to Gandhi and numerous other indigenous marches. We understand the march as an action engaging with society. Our challenge is to continue mobilising and struggling. We have to mobilise society, I don't believe in change from top to bottom. Change will only be sustainable from a historical point of view if it is a process that our own people win. I don't believe that we'll change Brazil because of one figure becoming president."

Brazil Fact File

Brazil has 186 million people and is the fifth largest country in the world. Less than one per cent of the people own 46-50 per cent of the land. It has the second worst distribution of wealth in the world, second only to Sierra Leone, according to the UN. There are 50 million people under the poverty line, of which 30 million are malnourished.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

...for hugging a fairy!

A Clown-clad activist has been arrested and charged after hugging a person dressed as a fairy during the G8 protests in Scotland. The fairy was in the process of being arrested at the "Boogie on the Bridge" event when the Strathclyde police, keen on nipping any clown/fairy cross-breeding in the bud (imagine the offspring!), charged the clown with obstructing police business and attempting to free a prisoner.

having lunch came the study hours; from 3-5pm invited speakers would give a lecture through the radio headsets and groups would then debate issues such as the 16-point demands of the march. At the same time, two teams of thirty negotiators would take it in turns to get in a bus to Brasilia and spend all day going from ministry to ministry (28 meetings in all) hammering out their demands, armed with the pressure the march was bringing to bear. And then there were the teams for health, childcare, theatre, finances, security (by the MST themselves of course), transport, general secretary, tents, toilets and the press.

Nightfall was music from every corner of Brazil around countless fires fueled by cachaca, beer and, as half were under-25s, plenty of trying to shag people from other states. By 10pm practically the whole site was asleep.

Vocab: Terra = land.

TERRA-TORIAL ARMY

The US is to set up its first official permanent military base in South America with a provision for 16,000 soldiers by the end of 2006. After an agreement signed on May 26 in the Paraguayan Congress, soldiers will enjoy totally immunity and diplomatic status as they get set to tackle 'drugs, corruption and terrrrrists.' Other nearby countries - Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela and Uruguay - have lefty governments and weren't interested in helping.

The base, near Mariscal Estigarribia, just happens to be 700 km from the biggest hydroelectric dam and the largest source of underground freshwater in the world - stretching 1,200,000 square km under Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay... but the US of course have their sights on this 'blue gold'. The new agreement just formalises the existing clandestine US presence in the region - the base already has a runway for B-52 bombers and C-5 Galaxy personnel carriers. According to local commentators, the US are seeking to stop the convergence of social movements in the region and intend to wage a low-intensity war against supposed terrorists in the Triple Frontier area where Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay converge.

For more info about MST see:
www.mstbrazil.org

"When the extraordinary becomes everyday, then it's a revolution" - Sign outside MST camp.

HIGHWAY TO SHELL

Live8 has come and gone and nothing has changed. St Bob failed to end poverty by simpering and slobbering over Blair's collar. But one multinational is determined to make a difference: Enter Shell, capitalists with a conscience. Eager to establish a level playing field between Europe and Africa, they have taken a radical approach, and for the last few years they have been working on a plan which is breathtaking in its simplicity: create global equality by treating Irish communities as they would Africans – with total contempt!

The story started in 1996 when the Corrib oil field was discovered by Enterprise Oil 70 km off the west coast of Ireland. Years of court wrangles followed, with locals fighting Shell's plans to build a right next to their community. This pipeline is planned to run over bogs to an inland refinery on land which residents describe as "wobbly as blancmange", and prone to landslides. Not safe ground for a pipe which has a "burn radius" of half a mile – threatening a nearby school and pub. And these pipes do go off – like in August 2000 when a gas pipeline exploded in New Mexico killing twelve, and last year when

another in Belgium blew up killing fifteen.

Now five locals from Roscommon have been jailed indefinitely for refusing to allow access to their land. They were jailed on 29th June for contempt of court and have been told they will remain there until they have "purged their contempt". The parallels with Shell's infamous human rights abuses of the Ogoni tribespeople in Nigeria have led some to dub the prisoners the 'Bogoni'.

Imprisonment of the 'Roscommon Five' has sparked protests across Ireland, including a march of 3000 in Belmullet and pickets of Shell's petrol forecourts. Blockades have stopped work starting at the proposed refinery site, and some workers have downed tools. A security guard who resigned said: "I didn't agree with the company being able to send critics to jail because they got in its way."

Despite being guinea pigs for Shell's dangerous cost-cutting, locals will gain little from the fabulous wealth being sucked out of their territorial waters. Campaigners are demanding an inquiry into the shonky deals by bent politicians which signed away royalties to the oil-fields – reckoned to be £9 - 17 billion worth of

gas – with super low tax rates.

A camp has been set up near the blockade which welcomes people, plus money and resources to run it. Call 086 3201612/086 1682416 or visit www.corribos.com

* Send letters of support to the prisoners Willie Corduff, Philip McGrath, Brendan Philbin, Vincent McGrath and Michael O'Suighin all at Cloverhill prison, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

* **15,000 Southern Oil Company workers** from the General Union of Oil Employees – Iraq's largest independent union – had a 24-hour strike last Sunday stopping most oil exports from the south of Iraq. They are demanding higher wages and the removal of Saddam's old henchmen from the Ministry of Oil. www.basraoilunion.org

* **"Life in the Amazon"** Two independent filmmakers speak of their journey to the Amazon rainforest to investigate the current oil boom and the effects it has had on people and environment. This Friday (22) Sanctuary Cafe, Hove (23) Worthing Labour Hall, Lyndhurst Rd. 7pm (25) West Chiltington Village Hall, 7pm nicolapeel@hotmail.com

SEEING RED OVER THE GAS BILL

British Gas, along with the Spanish company Repsol and French company Total, has formally initiated legal proceedings that could end up with Bolivia being taken to international court in January 2006. Their aim is to secure changes to the hydrocarbons law passed by Congress in May. They claim that the very modest changes in the law are equivalent to "expropriation" which is forbidden without substantial compensation under the various Bilateral Investment Treaties signed with France, Spain and the UK.

Their objections haven't been publicly articulated since the passing of the law. However in a leaked letter, British Gas stated: "BG invested in Bolivia on the basis of mutual commitments supported by a framework which guaranteed a stable legal environment for foreign investors... The new Hydrocarbons law has radically changed that framework and BG... are in dialogue with the government to discuss ways in which the differences may be addressed since we expect Bolivia to respect the commitments it made to us."

In other words, we are not prepared to accept changes to our contracts, even if many of the original contracts have been declared illegal due to the fact they weren't approved by Congress. Even if the new law is democratically supported, we will push for the government to back down.

It is thought that they object both to the rise in taxes, and the change in the law which means

that oil and gas resources now are the property of the State at the point of extraction.

Previously, gas and oil only legally belonged to the State whilst it remained in the ground, becoming the property of the companies as soon as extracted. Whilst the new law doesn't in practice mean any change to the multinationals' control of the transport and sale of gas and oil, it does allow the possibility that the State could exert more control in the future.

This in fact will be vital if the gas and oil reserves are to truly benefit Bolivia, but it is something the companies are determined to avoid.

Bolivia is in a difficult position because during the 1990s it signed highly unfavourable investment treaties that invariably prioritise multinationals rights to profit over the Government's right to assert sovereignty over its own resources. A fight is on the cards, and Bolivia is unlikely to win unless it has massive international solidarity.

Fortunately it has been shown that international solidarity can force companies to back down. Whilst keen to secure changes to the law for their benefit, multinational companies also can not afford huge amounts of bad publicity. In Nov. 2001, Bechtel, the privatised US water company that had been kicked out of Cochabamba by a popular uprising, filed a demand of \$25 million against Bolivia at the International Center for Investment Settlement Dis-

putes, however a major global campaign eventually forced Bechtel to back down.

Like many companies, British Gas in recent years has been keen to emphasise its corporate social responsibility. Yet despite all the rhetoric, they are trying to force the poorest country in South America to reverse modest changes to a hydrocarbons law which would increase resources to tackle poverty. They are trying to overturn a democratically-passed law to ensure their profits, which in 2004 increased by 22% to £1522 million.

In Oct 2003, more than 60 people lost their lives in demonstrations calling for Bolivia to regain control of its vast natural resources which for centuries have been extracted and exported with little benefit for the vast majority of Bolivians. In May and June this year, hundreds of thousands took to the streets calling for the re-nationalization of gas.

British Gas's legal action is an action against the Bolivian people. The Bolivians need to democratically decide how the second largest reserves in Latin America should be used to tackle the huge levels of poverty and inequality in the country. Their decisions should not be confined by the actions of multinationals whose only consideration is profit. Our solidarity with Bolivians and our opposition to the legal actions of the companies could be crucial in the fight for a more just Bolivia.

www.greenleft.org.au/back/2005/620/620p19.htm

ROCKIN' ROD

British Airways boss Rod Eddington got a taste of how it sounds being next to an airport runway last Tuesday morning (19th) at 5am when a sound system blasting loud aircraft noises was set up outside his £2.5million country house in Berkshire. This was courtesy of protesters dressed in pyjamas who paid Rod a visit the same day as the BA Annual General Meeting to make him rethink plans for expansion of Heathrow and Stansted airports. It was Rod's last AGM at BA as he is about to become a Transport Adviser to the Government, and John Stewart from anti-noise group Hacan ClearSkies said, "Residents under the flight path wanted to say farewell to Rod Eddington by giving him a taste of his own medicine. The majority of night flights using Heathrow are operated by British Airways or one of its subsidiary companies. And BA is amongst the strongest supporters of night flights." For more info call John Stewart on 07957 385650 or see www.hacan.org.uk

Inside SchNEWS

Two prisoners nicked during the G8 protests are being held on remand till their court cases open in August. Please write letters of support to **David Boudon**, 92018, HM Prison Barlinnie, Glasgow, G33 2QX and **John Mackie**, 18769, HM Prison Edinburgh, 33 Stenhouse Road, Edinburgh, EH11 3LN

SchNEWS in brief

Mad Pride Party this Saturday (23rd) - bring picnics and insanity to this autonomous gathering in celebration of mad culture during mad pride month, with live bands, ceilidh and 'find your marbles' competition! 1pm onwards Queens Park, Brighton ** **'Uzbekistan and British Foreign Policy in Central Asia'** A free talk and discussion with Craig Murray, Former British ambassador to Uzbekistan. Thursday (28th) 7.30pm Hanover Room, Brighthelm, North Road Brighton ** **Brighton Dissent!** meeting. Planning for post-G8 events. Cowley Club, Tues (26th) 6pm ** **Dissent! Gathering** - A chance to evaluate the G8 mobilisation and discuss the future. South Wales, 6-7th Aug. see www.dissent.org.uk

...and finally...

Five teams have been forced to pull out of the Homeless World Cup in Edinburgh after several players were refused entry into the UK. The Foreign Office said this was because several of the players from the countries concerned – Zambia, Nigeria, Kenya, Burundi and Cameroon – had said that they were unable to pay their expenses whilst in Edinburgh. Bizarrely the Foreign Office seems surprised by this fact. Maybe they have forgotten that Africa is one of the most deprived areas in the world. G8 was a whole 12 days ago after all.

Jazelle Kebakile, marketing co-ordinator for the Big Issue magazine, said in the *Cape Times*, "It is quite ironic that this is the same country where recently the world's richest nations met to discuss ways to eradicate world poverty". Indeed they did. In a 5 star hotel where a suite can put you back a mere £1,800 a night (breakfast included). The cup will now involve 27 teams - see your local Ladbrokes for betting details.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers a Brazilian is much better than a Californian... Honest!

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