



Jorge Shea/Reuters

Guatemalan farmers block the highway from Huehuetenango to the Mexican border. La Mesilla, Guatemala

## Global Day of Action October 12th 2002

### We Will Not be Recolonized, Las Américas

The month of October sees massive resistance throughout the Américas, from Canada to Chile, as outraged people rise up against the new colonialism,

focusing particularly on Plan Puebla-Panama (PPP, a \$20 billion project of industrial and transportation infrastructure encompassing all of Central America and half of Mexico, which will greatly affect the region's 64 million inhabitants, displacing rural communities, and leaving ecological destruction in its wake), and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and demanding an end to the militarization that accompanies 'free' trade,

especially Plan Colombia.

The 510th anniversary of the first invasion of the Américas by Christopher Columbus is called as a hemispheric day of action by the Latin American Cry of the Excluded network. In El Salvador over 20,000 people initiate 11 simultaneous blockades, paralyzing the country, bringing commerce to a halt, and shutting down the four largest border crossings. Bus drivers and



Sioux activist is arrested while protesting at Columbus Day parade. Washington, US

money-changers at the border join in spontaneously as traffic backs up into Guatemala; police close the border in response. In Comalapa, residents join the airport workers' union and shut down the airport (home to a US military base). The largest blockade is at the Puente de Oro, where over 5,000 *campesinos* block the coastal highway for six hours. Local bands play on a stage in the middle of the highway, while clowns on stilts entertain

the children. In Sonsonate, several women's groups block the highway to the port, targeted for development by private industry. When the blockades are lifted, thousands march to state-run hospitals and clinics around the country to support striking health care workers. A peasant organizer declares, "We think that this sent an important message to our government, to the other Central American governments, and to the US

that we are not going to stand back and let our countries, our *pueblos* be annexed to the US. This is just the first of many actions yet to come." Meanwhile, in Mexico, thousands of indigenous people march through the streets of Mexico City, while Zapatista base communities blockade 20 highways, ports, and airports in Chiapas; the Pan American Highway is also blocked in Oaxaca. In Guatemala, 1,000



**Pehuenche women perform a traditional dance during Columbus Day demonstrations. Santiago, Chile**

indigenous people block the Pan American Highway, and 6,000 block airports and border crossings in Petén. In Honduras, marches draw thousands of people protesting against the privatization of health care, water, and education, while unionized teachers support the blockade at the Salvadoran border, and a network of over 30 organizations and 4,000 people block the borders to Nicaragua and Guatemala. In Nicaragua,

thousands protest in front of the Inter-American Development Bank headquarters in Managua, and the Pan American Highway is blocked in Esteli, while in San José, Costa Rica, protests rage against the PPP-driven construction of the Terraba Dam, which will evict thousands of small farmers. Indigenous activists from Panama march 200 miles from Costa Rica to Panama City, to protest the ecological destruction caused by

mining on their lands.

Further south, in Santiago, Chile, thousands of indigenous protesters are joined by hundreds of gay and lesbian rights activists in their protest against the FTAA, while over 1,000 people march in Buenos Aires, singing, dancing, and demanding that land be returned to the indigenous. In Quito, Ecuador, the Hemispheric Social Forum concludes with a festival; 1,000 people fill the



Salvadorian protesters paralyze the country with simultaneous roadblocks. Los Chorros, El Salvador

Plaza del Teatro. In Barcelona, 500 people denounce the new massacre of people and culture heralded by the FTAA; in Paris, hundreds listen to indigenous speakers from the Américas.

In the US, two dozen cities respond to calls made by the Latin American Solidarity Coalition and the American Indian Movement (AIM). Defying harsh restrictions around the US-Mexico border, people from all over

Arizona, US and Sonora, Mexico organize a joint action; Mexican activists, restricted from setting foot on 'US soil' block traffic while US marchers easily cross into Mexico for a cultural exchange and fiesta. The US/Canada border is also a target as hundreds gather in Washington State and British Columbia. A member of AIM in Washington DC breaks a vial of his blood on a Columbus statue, demanding the release of AIM's

Leonard Peltier, wrongfully imprisoned for decades. Just two weeks later, actions against the FTAA summit in Ecuador spring up across the hemisphere, as people cry out, "Another integration is possible!"