

The Ecologist

**CAMPAIGNS
& UPDATES**

September/October 1996

Complaint Filed Over Yacyreta Dam

Local people affected by the massive Yacyreta dam in Paraguay have filed a complaint with the inspection panels of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through the Paraguayan NGO, *Sobrevivencia*.

The complaint charges that both banks have consistently violated their own policies in funding the dam. The World Bank provided a total of \$900 million and the IDB \$840 million in loans for the 70-kilometre dam which spans the Parana River on the border between Argentina and Paraguay and is intended to supply electricity to Argentina.

The project has been plagued by delays, corruption, procurement disputes and lack of funding. It is now nine years behind schedule and has already cost \$8.2 billion.

Over 5,000 people have already been affected by the dam's reservoir, but more than 50,000 will eventually have to be relocated. The claimants charge that the resettlement programme does not compensate them fairly for the homes they have left and that their new houses are shoddily built.

Many claimants have also lost their livelihoods. Damning the river has blocked fish migrations and fouled water quality, seriously reducing fish catches. Ceramic workers have lost access to high

quality riverbank clay deposits which are have been submerged.

Health problems are increasing because of the deterioration in the river's water quality. In particular, the incidence of respiratory ailments, fevers, diarrhoea, skin ailments and intestinal parasites has risen, with children most affected. It is feared that malaria and schistosomiasis will become major problems.

Measures to protect "ecological reserves" set aside in compensation for land lost to submergence are, according to the claim, seriously inadequate. Six reserves have been created, but in most cases the project authorities failed to acquire land titles. Monkeys and other animals "rescued" during the reservoir flooding were removed to a reserve which is now being cleared for cattle ranching.

The claimants are demanding that the filling of the dam's reservoir should be halted until local people have been compensated for all their losses and damages to the environment remedied to the satisfaction of all affected people.

The claim is the first to be filed with the IDB's inspection panel and the seventh with the World Bank.

WRITE in support of the claim to James D. Wolfensohn, President, World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington DC 20433, USA. Fax: +1 202 477 6391; Enrique Iglesias, President, Inter-American Development Bank, 1300 New York Avenue NW,

Washington DC 20577, USA. Fax: +1 202 623 3614

CONTACT: Elias Diaz Peña/Oscar Rivas, *Sobrevivencia*. Tel: +595 21 480 182. Fax: +595 21 24 427. E-mail <survive@ax.apc.org>

• **The planned Nam Theun 2 dam in Laos, which threatens to evict 5,000 people and flood the habitat of a number of rare and endangered species, has run into severe financial difficulties following the cancellation of a power purchasing agreement (PPA) between the dam's private sector developers and the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand. Without a PPA, the project's developers, which include Electricité de France and the Australian construction company, Transfield, will be hard pressed to raise the US\$1.2 billion to build the dam.**

CONTACT: Probe International, 225 Brunswick Ave, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2M6, CANADA. Tel: +1 (416) 964 9223, E-mail <GrainneRyder@nextcity.com>

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Closing Speeches in McLibel Trial

In late October, British activists Helen Steel and Dave Morris started their closing speeches in the McLibel trial, now the longest trial of any kind in British legal history.

They have to summarize 40,000 pages of documentary evidence and 20,000 pages of transcript testimony on a wide range of issues: cash crops and starvation in the South; rainforest destruction; packaging; fast food and major degenerative diseases such as heart disease and cancer;

advertising; animal cruelty; and pay and conditions in the fast food industry.

"We believe the public have the right to scrutinize and challenge the business practices of multinationals", said Steel and Morris, "and for that reason such organizations should no longer be allowed to use the libel laws as a form of censorship".

CONTACT: McLibel Support Campaign, c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, UK. Tel/Fax: 0171-713 1269. For comprehensive information of the case and McDonald's, see <http://www.mcspotlight.org/>

The Ecologist

CAMPAIGNS & UPDATES

Send news, campaigns and updates for inclusion in Campaigns & Updates to: The Ecologist (Campaigns), Agriculture House, Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1DU, UK. E-mail: ecologist@gn.apc.org, Fax: +44- (0)1258 473748.

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Lesotho Workers Massacred

At least five workers were shot dead and some 30 injured when police evicted striking workers from a Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) construction camp in Lesotho on 14 September. For at least a week after the killings, up to 1,000 workers remained in a nearby Catholic Church where they had sought refuge after the massacre.

The workers had been striking for higher wages. When negotiations broke down, the construction company dismissed 95 per cent of the workforce — some 2,300 people. When the workers refused to leave their living quarters, the Lesotho National Defence Force was called in to evict them.

According to the Lesotho Council of NGOs, "police charged upon the workers while they were in peaceful occupation and were not destroying any property. Police threw a great quantity of tear gas and, as the workers started fleeing, they started shooting at them. They shot and injured or killed some of them even after the workers had escaped the camp and were in a nearby gully. The police were also shooting at ambulances that were coming to the assistance of injured people. One driver with injured people in the vehicle was even arrested and shot."

Following the massacre, the contractors have agreed to re-employ 1,700 of the 2,300 dismissed workers.

The World Bank is not only supporting the LHWP with loans, but has also played the leading role in obtaining financing from other official and private sources, thereby allowing the project to go ahead. World Bank funding for the project is specifically targeted at activities to mitigate the environmental and social impacts of the project. A leaked internal Bank memorandum acknowledges that the Bank "is indirectly involved". According to the memo, the Bank has asked the government of Lesotho to ensure that a "credible, open and independent inquiry" examines all the issues relating to the event and to take appropriate action if such an inquiry finds faults with actions of the police or other entities."

CONTACT: Environmental Defense Fund, 1875 Connecticut Ave NW, 10th floor, Washington DC 20009, USA. Tel: +1 (202) 387 3500; Fax: +1 (202) 234 6049; E-mail <korinna@edf.org>; Group for Environmental Monitoring, PO Box 551, Newton 2113, SOUTH AFRICA. E-mail <gem@wn.apc.org>

- **The World Bank has undertaken an "internal investigation" into a series of mass killings in the Guatemalan village of Rio Negro during construction of the Bank-funded Chixoy dam. The massacre, in which nearly 400 people were killed, took place between 1980 and 1982. NGOs allege that the massacre resulted from attempts to force local villagers to evacuate the reservoir area.**

Dockers Protests

Dockers and trade unionists were joined by anti-roads protesters and environmentalists in a march through Liverpool in September to mark the first anniversary of a strike against the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. Dockers in other countries also supported the march through industrial action and boycotts of ships bound for Merseyside.

The strike began when 329 dockers refused to cross a picket line mounted by sacked employees of a freight handling company based at the Liverpool port. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company responded by sacking the dockers. Two hundred new "flexible labour" contracts were offered to those willing to return to work the next day. All the dockers refused. The dockers have accused the company of orchestrating the dispute in order to reintroduce casual labour into the port.

The UK's restrictive trade union laws have constrained the dockers from seeking support from within the trade union movement. Instead, they have looked elsewhere, forging new alliances with a broad spectrum of grassroots movements including anti-car and road protest groups, animal liberationists, and peace and environmental groups. These links have helped to challenge the popular misconception concerning "single issue" pressure groups.

CONTACT: Reclaim the Future! 0171-281 4621 or Liverpool Dockers 0151-207 3388.

Roads to Ruin in the US and Cameroon

A coalition of US environmental and taxpayer groups is calling for a halt to 22 environmentally-destructive highway projects in 15 states.

The 22 projects are detailed in *Road to Ruin*, a report by Taxpayers for Common Sense, Friends of the Earth and the US Public Research Interest Group.

The projects include Pennsylvania's Route 220/322, designed to ease traffic jams after Penn State football games; Red Rock Crossing in Arizona — a bridge which will "shave minutes off the drive to a golf course"; and South Carolina's Bays Parkway, which would pave over some of South Carolina's last valley hardwood forests and more than 300 acres of wetland.

The coalition argues that axing the projects would "save \$10 billion in fed-

eral tax dollars, protect the environment and help preserve local communities."

CONTACT: Friends of the Earth (US), Tel: +1 (202) 783 7400; E-mail: <mrobinowitz@igc.org> *Road to Ruin*, US\$10

- **A leaked World Bank memo reveals that Bank staff misled the Bank's Executive Directors in order to force through a road project in Cameroon. The memo admits that the roads, funded under a transport sector loan, will "give access to protected forest areas where logging is likely to occur" and "increase the incentive for logging". Worried that the loan would not be approved, according to the memo, Bank staff fabricated a letter from the Cameroon government saying that environmental concerns would be addressed.**

Burma Boycott

Dutch brewers Heineken have pulled out of a planned brewery in Burma following international protests by human rights groups. The company has also announced that it will halt all exports to Burma. Carlsberg of Denmark, involved in a rival brewery project, is also withdrawing. The withdrawals follow NGO calls for a boycott of all products made by companies doing business in Burma.

Total Denial, a new report on the involvement of French and US oil companies in Burma, has been published by Earth Rights International and the South-east Asian Information Network.

Copies available £4 (including p&p) from Burma Action Group, Collins Studios, Collins Yard, Islington Green, London N1 2XU, UK. Tel: +44 (1)171-359 7679; Fax: +44 (0)171 354 3987; E-mail <bagp@gn.apc.org>

India Compensation

The government of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh has agreed not to raise the reservoir level of the Bargi dam on the Narmada river until those forcibly evicted are properly compensated.

The decision follows an intense five-year campaign by oustees to receive compensation for their loss of land, homes and property. There was no resettlement plan; most of those evicted have been living on the edge of the reservoir. The government did not even provide basic amenities.

In July this year, activists built a hut on the reservoir banks and declared that they would stay there, despite government plans to raise the reservoir level.

In August, the authorities began to raise the level and the oustees were arrested in a brutal confrontation with police during which many were injured, including children. Other oustees took the place of those arrested so that the protests continued until September when the last batch of protesters were submerged up to their chests. Over 150 people were arrested.

In September, the government agreed that the reservoir level would not be raised above 418 metres and no further submergence would take place until a resettlement package has been agreed. In the meantime, the oustees can farm 5,000 hectares that would otherwise have been submerged. Those arrested have since been released unconditionally.

CONTACT: International Rivers Network, 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94703, USA. Tel: +1 510 848 1155. Fax: +1 510 848 1008.

Chiapas Under Fire and Famine

Hunger in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, has reached famine levels, according to the Texas-based National Centre for Democracy. Approximately 27,000 people are reported to be starving as a result of the Mexican government's low intensity war against the Zapatistas in the state.

Zapatista strongholds have been encircled by nearly 60,000 troops and hundreds of tanks; dozens of villagers are reported to have been imprisoned, tortured or murdered. The US government has provided a vast array of military assistance to the Mexican government for

"Ethnic Cleansing"

A rancher in the Brazilian state of Rondonia has been accused by the Indigenist Work Centre (CTI), a human rights group, of ordering his men to open fire on the surviving members of an uncontacted Indian group, so as to drive them off forest land he is claiming. The forest was subsequently clearcut and the village and its gardens bulldozed.

The incident involving the rancher, Hercules Golvia Dalafini of the Modelo ranch in Xupinaguia, is the latest in a series of killings and evictions of Indians documented by CTI and Santos, a government agency, over the last decade. The killings have yet to be investigated by the police.

Comments Steve Schwartzman of the Environmental Defense Fund, a US NGO which works closely with CTI, "The pattern of terroristic expulsions, evidence of killings and destruction of the Indian's homes and means of subsistence, coupled with complete judicial impunity for the perpetrators, indicates that the genocide of these Indians is commonplace and accepted in the region".

WRITE TO Imo. Sr. Nelson Jobim, Ministro da Justica, Esplanada dos Ministerios Bl. T, Brasilia DF 70064-900, BRAZIL requesting a thorough police investigation and that the responsible parties be held judicially responsible for their actions. Also request that FUNAI be instructed to protect the Indians land immediately.

CONTACT Vincent Carelli, Indigenous Work Centre, Tel: +55 11 813 3450; Fax: +55 11 813 0747; Steve Schwartzman, Environmental Defense Fund, 1875 Connecticut Ave NW, 10th Fl, Washington DC 20009, USA. Tel: +1 202 387 3500; Fax: +1 202 234 6049, E-mail <steves@edf.org>

its campaign against the Zapatistas. In addition, it has promised to supply 73 Huey helicopters, worth over \$220 million, \$1 million dollars for military training, and \$10 million for monitoring and detection equipment. "Without US military aid, the Mexican government would not be able to maintain its militarization of Chiapas" point out the National Center for Democracy, Liberty and Justice.

WRITE TO: Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, The State Department, Washington DC, USA.

CONTACT: National Center for Democracy, Liberty and Justice, 601 N. Cotton Street, #A103, El Paso, Texas 79902, USA. Tel/Fax: +1 (915) 532 8382. E-mail <moonlight@igc.apc.org>

Bolivian Mining

Bolivian labour activists have initiated an international campaign to draw attention to ecologically damaging illegal mining in the state of Oruro. A spokesperson for the labour union leading the campaign described the affected area as "a lunar landscape without a single living being".

In the Achacuchani hill area of Bolivia, national company Empresa Minera Altiplano is prospecting for gold with transnational finance. Residents are concerned about the widespread use of cyanide and enormous amounts of underground water required in the extraction process.

Elsewhere in Oruro, mining company Inti Raymi used some 34,000 tons of water daily to treat 17,000 tons of minerals, causing two nearby lakes to dry up and the pollution of nearby agricultural and grazing land. Large-scale migration to the cities resulted.

To extract tin, lead, silver and zinc on a large scale, Compañia Minera del Sur sets off three explosions every day in its mine, causing structural damage to houses in several nearby villages and increasing the risk of mudslides for people living in the Muruputo foothills. Five such slides have occurred since September 1995.

A coalition of peasant organizers representing communities in 16 provinces of Oruro has filed a legal claim against one the company because of the damage inflicted on local livelihoods, culture and health by mining. The local people have not been compensated, a fact which a local organizer says "answers to the needs of neoliberalism rather than those of our community".

CONTACT: Victor Magne Mamani, Federación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Oruro, La Plata y Rengel N°7011, Caspilla Correo 872, BOLIVIA. Tel: +591-52 52824; Fax: +591-52 60884.

• **After years of intimidation and violence, the Saramaka Maroon community of Nieuw Koffiekamp, the traditional owners of the land, face forced relocation to make way for a multinational gold mine, developed by Golden Star Resources of Colorado and Cambior of Canada.**

CONTACT for further information Forest Peoples Programme, 8 Chapel Row, Chadlington OX7 3NA, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1608 676 691; Fax: +44 (0)1608 767 743; E-mail <wrm@gp.apc.org>

Clearcutting Canadian Old Growth Forest

Environmental activists and native peoples in Canada have adopted civil disobedience tactics to prevent the clearcutting of old growth forests in Slocan Valley in British Columbia (BC), Temagami in northern Ontario and Christmas Mountain, New Brunswick.

In the Slocan Valley, where the British Columbia government has given the logging giant, Slocan Forest Products, permission to clearcut the region's watershed. Water supplies for a number of communities are at risk. Earlier this year, deforestation caused mudslides which threatened many homes. The BC government is the company's third largest shareholder owning \$8 million worth of shares.

Another investor is Forest Renewal BC, a government agency which funds tree planting in the province and which has given several major grants to Slocan Forest Products.

The clearcutting is opposed by 97 per cent of those living in the Valley. Despite a pledge to support community-based land use planning, the government has refused to implement a sustainable forestry policy, drawn up by the Silva Foundation, a national NGO, in conjunction local citizens.

"The BC government's claims to incorporate local input into logging decisions have been shown to be a total fraud," says Colleen McCrory, chair of the Valhalla Wilderness Society. "[They] are running a resource dictatorship, trampling the rights of local residents and selling out the public interest to protect the interests of huge corporations."

At Temagami in northern Ontario, meanwhile, activists have established a Forest Defense Camp and are blockading access roads to old growth red and white pine forests near Owain's Lake.

The forests, which are home to many rare species, are threatened by plans to log or mine all but 25 per cent of them. The old growth represents less than one per cent of the forest's original range which stretched from the St Lawrence River to the Great Lakes.

The land is claimed by the Teme-Augama Anishnabai peoples, who have been blockading logging roads since 1988. There have been over 30 arrests.

Clearcutting is also threatening the last

old-growth forest in New Brunswick, despite promises from the provincial government to establish a protected wilderness area covering 12,000 acres. The logging is opposed by The Friends of the Christmas Mountains.

In June this year, activists blockaded a logging operation in Clayoquot Sound, Vancouver Island, to highlight the failure of International Forest Products and MacMillan Bloedel to abide by the stringent logging criteria agreed with the provincial government. The criteria forbid cutting in "pristine areas" but MacMillan Bloedel is logging an untouched watershed.

WRITE TO: Hon Chris Hodgson, Minister of Natural Resources, 6th Floor, Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St. West, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA to oppose the logging of Temagami:

CONTACT: Valhalla Wilderness Society, PO Box 329, New Denver, British Columbia V0G 1S0, CANADA. Tel: +1 (604) 358 2333; Fax: +1 (604) 358 7950; E-mail <vws@web.net>

Rainforest Action Network, 450 Sansome, Suite 700, San Francisco CA 94111, USA. Tel: +1 (415) 398 4404, Fax: +1 (415) 398 2732

Native Forest Network, Eastern North American Resource Centre, PO Box 57, Burlington, VT 05402, USA. Tel: +1 (802) 863 0571, Fax: +1 (802) 863 2532, E-mail <nfnena@igc.apc.org>

• **In August, Greenpeace activists from Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Germany blocked the logging of the Karelian Forests near Kostamus in Russia. The forests, which provide a vital habitat for brown bear, wolf, Karelian deer and beaver, are part of the last remaining old growth forests in Europe. Logging is being carried out by the Finnish paper company, Enso, despite a promise not to use timber from old growth forests.**

• **Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso has signed a two-year moratorium on the logging of mahogany, although it has still to be approved by the Brazilian Congress. The moratorium follows an international campaign by those opposed to the impacts of logging on the environment and indigenous communities. Under the moratorium, no new licences will be granted in the next two years to log mahogany. The international market for mahogany is the driving force behind much of the deforestation in Amazonia.**

IN BRIEF ●●●●●●●●●●

GULF WAR SYNDROME

The UK Ministry of Defence has admitted that "Gulf War Syndrome" — a variety of illnesses suffered by soldiers who served in the Gulf War — is caused by exposure to organophosphate (OP) chemicals. All servicemen and servicewomen who went to the Gulf were sprayed with OPs to "protect" them against flyborne diseases. Some 750 have since suffered a range of illnesses related to damage to the nervous system.

TOY WORKERS SAFETY

In the run-up to Christmas, the World Development Movement has launched a campaign to pressure toy companies to agree to independent monitoring of their factories.

For copies of the toy action cards, contact WDM, 25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR, UK. Tel: 0171-737 6215; Fax: 0171-274 8232.

IRIAN JAYA MINING

In September, Freeport McMoRan abruptly cancelled its contracts with the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) for political risk insurance for its mining operations in Irian Jaya, Indonesia. MIGA was preparing to investigate environmental and human rights abuses at Freeport, the world's largest gold mine.

PLOUGHSHARES SUCCESS

Four women, who used household hammers to disarm a British aerospace Hawk fighter jet destined for Indonesia, were acquitted in July of causing criminal damage and conspiracy. The women of Seeds of Hope-East Timor Ploughshares had argued that they were preventing British Aerospace and the British government from aiding and abetting the crime of genocide in East Timor.

AMAZON OIL SCRAMBLE

Mobil is spearheading an oil boom in the western Amazon and is poised to invade an area inhabited by 19 different indigenous peoples, many of whom have not had contact with the outside world.

For more information, contact Survival International 11-15 Emerald Street, London WC1N 3QL, UK. Tel: 0171-242 1441; Fax: 0171 242 1771; E-mail <survival@gn.apc.org>