

platforms in Pamplona. They were turned back at the Polish border, where the local farmers were rioting and sent a note of solidarity instead. In Geneva, they marched to the WTO building. “ICC zindabad! WTO murdabad!” they yelled. (Long live ICC, kill the WTO). Italian caravaner Maurizio Cucci describes, “The green scarves of the Karnataka farmers, together with the red flags of Brazilian *sem terra*, the turbans of the Punjabi farmers, the coloured hair of the European squatters, a tractor of Swiss farmers... thousands of voices rise in a multilingual speech of testimony against the threat the WTO poses to their lives.”

Once, back in Karnataka’s capital, Bangalore, the KRRS laughed all day outside the state government’s buildings. The next week the government collapsed. There is a mass arrest of caravaners at the culmination of the ICC when they converge on Köln, Germany for the G8 meeting on June 18. But all is not lost: in downtown Köln – a group of laugh-paraders spot the G8 leaders’ wives visiting an art gallery, and a spooky “Ha! Ha! Ha!” erupts from their lips. Despite the chaos and the contradiction, the caravan has the last laugh.

**UPDATE:** In 2002, Reisel and Bové served six months in jail for destroying the GM rice during the caravan. The judge made no mention of the 150 letters he had received from Indian farmers in 1999, proclaiming their own guilt for this piece of direct action, and insisting they be arrested and charged too.

**Katharine Ainger is one of the co-editors of this book**

## Together We Start A Struggle

excerpt from a speech given by Intercontinental Caravan participant Jorge, of Brazil’s *Movimento Sem Terra* (landless movement), during the protests in Köln, 18 June 1999

### **Compañeras y compañeros:**

We, of the Brazilian and Latin American delegation of the caravan, saw, heard and learned many things on European soil. Two big lessons in particular:

We saw beautiful cities, large buildings, luxurious cars. An architecture that reflected history and radiated wealth. We did not always understand what we heard. For it seemed that amidst all this beauty, people spoke of bad things. We heard little laughter, and saw little happiness.

We saw with astonishment that many seemed half-dead, imprisoned in their own bodies without a spark of life, addicted to television and radio – doped by the sound of the religious ritual of consumption, of cheap and expensive drugs. Doped with indifference and illusion.

Thus we saw humans, empty, in the midst of beautiful things, but – without humanity. That is how this continent, which we call ‘the cradle of Western civilization’, appears to us. Now it is a grave, a cave, a cemetery, a consequence of the human race.

But here we also learned another lesson.

We understood that there is resistance, which attacks this order between all these bad things – when houses are squatted, when war is denounced, when the persecution of

migrants is condemned. When international collectives carry messages against 'Third World' debt, when the environment is defended against economic globalization, whose soul is called capitalism.

We learned that we are many minorities. In us, who fight together, hope catches fire for the coming millennium. The governments of the wealthy G8 countries meet to discuss the fate of peoples under all possible forms of force, forced to suffer the world, the destruction of our rivers and plants and the lives of millions of human beings.

Thus the force of the neoliberal model is imposed on poor countries. For example, in Brazil we have the murder of the example that the *Movimento Sem Terra* embodies, and without condemnation, the murder of more than 56 of our *compañer@s* – this is the cruel face of capitalism. But we know that what remains for us, the peoples of the world, is to mobilize those who still resist imperialism, to carry out our resistance, and not to bend.

We, peoples from different continents, who have joined together in this caravan, started a struggle. We have understood that capital has no boundaries.

Therefore we must create an enormous uprising of peoples on all continents, to continue to call for respect for life and human rights, and also for the environment and nature.

Down with the IMF! Down with the WTO! Down with Monsanto and many other multinational companies, who think only of accumulating capital! The fight of the people lives! The Intercontinental Caravan lives! ICC *zindabad!*

**Note: The use of the "@" in the word *compañer@* is used by some radicals in Spanish and Portuguese to render words gender-inclusive, as the symbol includes an "a" and an "o".**

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per cent. The protest takes place in the industrial zone, San Bernardo, where most of the automotive factories are located. Workers' Party leader Luiz Inacio 'Lula' da Silva speaks at the protest, blaming the central government for the economic crisis and demanding that authorities lower interest rates.

1998

>> January 17 >> The Global March against Child

Labour kicks off in Manila, Philippines with over 10,000 participants, largely children. One march continues for 14 weeks, passing through several Asian countries and hosting educational forums. Many of the marchers regroup in Geneva in June for the annual conference of the International Labour Organization.

>> January 18-19 >> In Stockholm, Sweden,

activists from Action for Social Ecology severely damage four road building machines, temporarily stopping the construction of the southern link road. The link is a part of a large road building project that has extreme environmental impacts. After much hard work in the courts and on the streets, the road project is canceled.

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