
We all went to Porto Alegre to say "tik"

The World Social Forum surpassed all expectations. Fifty thousand people were expected and some 100,000 attended. Participation in the numerous activities organised in Porto Alegre was very active and we all came out strengthened in our endeavour to work for "another world is possible," as announced by the Forum.

Regarding forests and plantations, the objective set out in our previous editorial was achieved: that of incorporating the issue in the Forum, which was done during a series of important events. Among these, we would like to highlight the Forest Strategy Meeting, the Workshop on Tree Monocultures and a meeting in which a network against tree monoculture was established.

The Forest Strategy Meeting gathered activists from the South and the North involved in work at both national and international levels in defence of forests and the peoples who inhabit them. Beyond the discussions themselves, the meeting had a significant symbolic aspect, because it had been organised in the framework of the World Social Forum. It implied declaring that the issue of forests should be addressed as an essentially social issue. On the one hand, because forests are not empty spaces, but are the home and source of livelihood of hundreds of millions of people all over the world and, on the other hand, because forest conservation is vital for the future of humanity as a whole.

The Forest Strategy Meeting constituted a forum to share, in a friendly environment, different visions around the issue of forests and regarding possible solutions, seeking consensus in accordance with the spirit of the Forum, which aimed at uniting diversities rather than disuniting or eliminating them.

Concerning the issue of tree monocultures and their socio-environmental impacts, a successful workshop was held, with a numerous and active attendance, where in-depth discussions were held on the problem from both national and international angles.

On this same issue, an important step forward was made in resistance to tree monocultures with the creation of the Latin American Network against Tree Monocultures. At the founding meeting, representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay participated, agreeing that action would be coordinated to oppose the expansion of large-scale tree monocultures, including timber, cellulose and oil palm plantations.

However, it is important to note that these meetings, briefly summarised here, were only a sample of other hundreds of similar meetings held in Porto Alegre, where from the different subject areas, people established closer links to face and to curb decisions that other less visible networks (corporations, governments and international organisations) take against people and the environment.

For this reason, we consider it relevant to quote here Eduardo Galeano, known all over the world as the author of "The open veins of Latin America." During his lecture at Porto Alegre he stated that:

"So no one says that in Porto Alegre it was the same old objectors and resentful people who

gathered, we would like to state that we are in agreement with the world's most important leaders: we are also the enemies of terrorism. We are against terrorism in all its forms. We could propose a common platform to Davos, and common actions to capture terrorists that would start by pasting, on all the walls of the planet, posters saying "Wanted":

- Wanted: arms traders, who need the war just as coat makers need cold weather.
- Wanted: the international gang that holds up countries and never gives back its captives, although it collects multimillionaire ransoms which, in the language of the underworld are called debt service.
- Wanted: the delinquents who, on a planetary scale, steal food, strangle salaries and murder jobs.
- Wanted: those who violate the earth, those who poison water and those who steal forests.
- And also wanted are the fanatics of the consumer religion, who have unleashed a chemical war against the air and the climate of this world."

All these "wanted" are responsible --among many other things-- for the loss of forests in the planet, through war, the impoverishment of populations, foreign debt service, excessive consumption, and the destructive activities of logging, plantation, oil, mining, chemical, energy and shrimp companies. In other words, bankers, transnational corporations, submissive governments, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, are all "Wanted."

However, to detain the culprits, solidarity and unity are required, and here again, we want to refer to Galeano's lecture, who concluded by saying:

"What is the word that is most heard in the world, in nearly all languages? The word I, I, I, I. However, Carlos Lenkersdorf, who has made a study of indigenous tongues, revealed that the word most used by Maya communities, the word in the centre of their sayings and actions, is the word "us." In Chiapas, tik means us.

This World Social Forum was born and has thrived in the City of Porto Alegre for this very purpose, as universal model of participatory democracy: to say us. Tik, tik, tik."