



30,000 people protest FTAA in Quebec City

Police make streets into a war zone

On August 1 in Southern Africa, indigenous people abstained from food and electricity in a 24-hour fast to show solidarity with those facing “illegal submergence” by construction of the Sardar Sarovar hydroelectric dam in India. In the last few years, similar protests against massive government and industry-supported dam projects have inspired millions to act to force these entities and international “development” bodies such as the World Bank to withdraw support for massive dams that devastate indigenous populations.

According to the World Commission on Dams, a World Bank-supported organization critical of the Bank’s past dam projects, the Bank has provided almost \$75 billion for 538 large dams in 92 countries. Bank-supported dams have displaced at least 10 million people and harmed local economies, especially among indigenous people and those in poverty. The WCD also criticizes the Bank for denying decision-making input from people in a proposed dam’s region. Supporters of huge dams say the dams are necessary to generate efficient, environmentally-friendly power. Detractors say privatization enables powerful entities to unduly profit from natural resources.

Widespread protest has slowed dam expansion and temporarily halted dam-

building in Djenne, Mali, where the Talo dam project threatens the survival of thousands of farmers and the historical Djenne mosque, the world’s largest adobe structure. People are fighting massive dam projects in the Narmada region of India, where Satyagraha (non-violent resistance) is planned throughout the year; in Lesotho in Southern Africa, where the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is a continual source of corruption; in

“Big Dams are to a nation’s ‘development’ what nuclear bombs are to its military arsenal. They’re both weapons of mass destruction.”

—Arundhati Roy, Indian author & anti-dam activist

Southeastern Anatolia in Turkey, where the Ilisu Dam will displace tens of thousands of mostly Kurdish people, and destroy the ancient archeological site of Hasankeyf; and in China, where the Three Gorges Dam will uproot up to two million people.

In some places government and corporate reaction to these activists has been harsh. In 1982, Guatemalan paramilitary units massacred 400 Mayan villagers who refused to leave their ancestral lands to make way for the Chixoy Dam. On June 30, 2001, Honduran anti-dam activist Carlos Roberto Flores was killed from shots by six security guards of a corporation contracted by the government to build a hydroelectric dam on the Babilonia River. Amnesty International estimates 25 anti-dam activists have been killed or kidnapped in the last ten years in Latin America.

