

of the PGA. It will start with a “grassroots” tour through Venezuela, as well as Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The agenda is set by a group of “convenors” selected at the preceding conference. Among the Cochabamba convenors are:

CONFUNASSC-CNC (Confederación Unica Nacional de Afiliados al Seruo Social Campesino-Consejo Nacional Campesino), an Ecuadoran peasant movement that has ignited several uprisings;

MJK (Movimiento de la Juventud Kuna), a Panamanian indigenous people’s movement that sparked several actions over the Twentieth Century, and won autonomy for the Kuma people;

FNT (Frente Nacional de Trabajadores), a trade union federation from Nicaragua that includes Sandinista central and other unions;

ONECA/ODECO, the organization of escaped slaves in Ibero-America, who formed societies in the rain forest in most nations there;

Aoteoroa Educators, the training branch of the intertribal Maori independence movement in New Zealand, called Tino-Rangatiratanga;

Krishok Federation, a federation of peasants and landless agricultural workers from Bangladesh, which has been fighting for decades against the “Green Revolution,” as well as against mega-projects, such as dams and levees, that might save hundreds of thousands of lives from flooding;

MONLAR (Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform) from Sri Lanka;

Ya Basta! One of the main Autonomist Zapatista-support networks, based primarily in Italy, which has conducted protests against NATO involvement in the Balkans, for rights for illegal immigrants, and held global days of action against the globalization of Europe.

At present, North America is represented by acting convenors—the **Tampa Bay Action Group** and the **Convergence of Anti-Capitalist Struggles** (Convergence des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes)—which will be replaced, once the conference has convened. **Rainbow Keepers**, a network of radical anarcho-ecologist action groups in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics in Asia, is the acting convenor for Eurasia. At present, there are no convenors from Africa and East Asia, a matter which will be taken up at Cochabamba.

Origins of the PGA

The PGA had its origins in a sequence of events in 1996 and 1997. The first event was the Zapatistas’ call in 1996, via e-mail, for an *encuentro* (encounter) of select activist organizations around the world, to meet in specially constructed arenas in the Chiapas jungle, to discuss common tactics. Six thousand people turned up for the several-day-long discussion.

In August 1997, the European Zapatista support network called for a Second Meeting for Humanity and Against Neo-Liberalism, in El Indiano, Spain, which it had planned with

the Zapatistas during the 1996 *encuentro*. Participants included: the **Landless Movement (MST)**, of Brazilian peasants, a potentially armed insurgency organization, which is tied to the Colombian FARC and carries out land occupations; and, for India, the **Karnataka State Farmers Union (KKRS)**, which has run a “cremate Monsanto” campaign, burning fields of genetically modified crops. French farmer activist José Bové, who gained notoriety by destroying a McDonald’s restaurant during protests in Paris, also attacked a Monsanto plant in Brazil, before suddenly appearing as a major voice in the Hemispheric Free-Trade Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, despite a Canadian security all-points bulletin to apprehend him.

Immediately after the meeting in El Indiano, representatives from activist and terrorist organizations of North and South gathered in the same spot, to plot direct action against the Second Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO, which was going to take place in May 1998 in Geneva, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the General

The Black Bloc Tactic

The message printed on the inside of 9,000 black ski masks distributed at the June 18, 1999 “Carnival Against Capital,” which had been called for by People’s Global Action (PGA) to vandalize the City of London financial district, read:

“Those in authority fear the mask for their power partly resides in identifying, stamping and cataloguing: in knowing who you are . . . our masks are not to conceal our identity but to reveal it. . . . Today we shall give this resistance a face; for by putting on our masks we reveal our unity; and by raising our voices in the street together, we speak our anger at the facelessness of power.”

This “Black Bloc” tactic, which may also include black dress, black helmets, gas masks, padding, steel-toed boots, and sometimes even the equivalent of riot police shields and batons, has been prevalent at every major PGA-linked “global day of action.”

At the Nov. 30, 1999 demonstration and terrorism against the World Trade Organization Summit in Seattle, Washington, somewhere between 100 and 300 anarchists and others adopted the “Black Bloc” tactic, carrying a rucksack with a change of clothes, so that after attacking police lines, they could blend back into the crowd of less militant protesters.

However, as the online news service “A-Infos” makes clear in a piece entitled, “Autonomia and the Origin of the Black Bloc,” there is nothing new about this tactic, which

Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), and to establish communication and coordination among those who wanted to continue those actions against other free-trade agreements and institutions. This was the origin of the PGA, which held its first international conference on Feb. 23-25, 1998, in Geneva's "alternative culture" centers, with representatives from 300 movements in 71 countries, and all the continents.

The PGA Swings Into Action

The first major PGA-linked action was on May 16-20, 1998 against the Group of Eight Summit in Birmingham, England, and the WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva a day later. Apart from direct action at these events, there were over 65 demonstrations in 29 countries. In India, several hundred thousand farmers demonstrated, while in Geneva, 10-15,000 people from all over Europe and other continents carried out three days of the heaviest rioting ever seen in that city.

At a meeting of the convenors' committee in Finland in September 1998, the second international PGA conference

was programmed to take place in Bangalore, India, several months before the Third Ministerial Conference of the WTO, in Seattle, Washington. At this meeting, the convenors endorsed two large projects.

One project was an Inter-Continental Caravan for Solidarity and Resistance, from May 22 to June 20, 1999. This brought together representatives in Europe from 450 movements from the Third World, with the majority from India, but also including: the MST, Zapatista support groups from Mexico, and the Process of Black Communities from Colombia. The Inter-Continental Caravan met with a wide variety of organizations in over 12 European countries. Actions included taking over the Aviano, Italy air field for one day, during which the NATO bombing of Serbia was stopped, and on June 18, the caravan ended up in Cologne, where the G-8 was then meeting.

The second project was a global day of action against financial centers, on June 18, 1999. The June 18 operation (www.j18.org) was most notable in the City of London,

dates back at least to the May 1968 anarchist barricades in Paris. Soon thereafter, in the "Hot Autumn" of 1969, the Italian Autonomia emerged in what "A-Infos" characterizes as "the rapid proliferation of direct action, strikes, rent strikes, mass squats [of buildings], streetfighting, university occupations and other popularly supported radical actions." With the crackdown against the Autonomia Operaia group in 1979, when Toni Negri and 150 others fled indictment by going underground, the movement spread to what was then West Germany in the early 1980s, as well as to the Netherlands and Switzerland. Especially in West Berlin and Hamburg, vast networks of squatters occupied whole city blocks and built walls around them from which "Black Bloc" members would emerge to battle the police, who sought to evict them.

One notable event in Hamburg occurred in 1986, when police tried to evict a complex of houses occupied by squatters, known as the Hafenstrasse. The police were met with a 10,000-person march (under the banner, "Build Revolutionary Dual Power"), of whom 1,500 people employed the Black Bloc tactic, battling police for 24 hours before the latter went into retreat. The next day, fires were set in 13 department stores, causing \$10 million in damage.

Similar tactics were employed in virtual irregular warfare against Germany's nuclear power plants.

More than ten years before Seattle, 80,000 protesters, of whom many used the Black Bloc tactic, mobilized against a meeting of the International Monetary Fund-World Bank in Berlin in 1988.

In an August 2000 public critique of the eruptions in Seattle and elsewhere, written by the Canadian Security

Intelligence Service in preparation for the Quebec City Third Summit of the Americas, the agency notes: "Circumstances also have promoted the involvement of fringe extremists who espouse violence, largely represented by Black Bloc anarchists. . . . Extremists currently achieving the most notoriety are among anarchists and members of the Third Position. . . . The Black Bloc is a loosely organized cluster of anarchist affinity groups and individuals, estimated in North America to number a few hundred, who come together to participate in protests and demonstrations. The Third Position, largely a European phenomenon but spreading rapidly to the U.S.A., is a curious mixture of extreme Left and Right political motivations which include the use of violent means of protest."

The International Third Position ([http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/third position](http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/third%20position)), originally based in England, is truly a strange hybrid. Both the British and the American branches are presently involved in a campaign to stop German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder from using the Constitutional Court to ban the neo-fascist National Democratic Party (NPD) of Germany. The two main ideologues of the International Third Position are G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, who were the feudal Catholic leaders of a movement in the 1930s known as the "Distributists," who allied themselves at that time with the pro-Confederate Nashville Agrarians. The "Distributists," who initially praised Adolf Hitler, tried to reorganize the economy under medieval craft guilds, which is essentially the outlook of Edward "Teddy" Goldsmith, who has his own fascist ties. (See *EIR* Aug. 3, 2001, "How the 'Lost Corpse' Buried America's Intellectual Tradition," by Stanley Ezrol.)