

## **Cancun Journal #12: Saturday, 9/6/03**

A 9:00 a.m. meeting to coordinate actions is a challenge on only four hours of sleep. I'm too tired to have opinions, slipping into that place I call the Zone of Deadly Calm, which is something like drifting out beyond the breakers of fear and anxiety and passion into the deep waters where you just give up trying to get back to shore, and accept that if you drown, you drown. It's a useful psychic state in actions--it's what allows you to walk calmly up to tanks or riot cops or general mayhem, radiating inner peace because deep inside your soul is chanting that powerful mantra: "Whatever...."

After the meeting, Rodrigo and Delight and I work on putting together the educational materials for the eco-village. I write some text, Rodrigo translates and formats, we print it up and later Delight and I take it and put it together with photographs to put together displays. They look a bit like 10th grade science projects to our critical eyes, but they will do the job and that's what is important. Delight takes them to get them laminated, I decide to duck out of all further meetings which are continuing nonstop throughout the afternoon, and go where I want to be, which is out to the permaculture site.

Things are coming along beautifully. Abby and the punks are cutting a slit in long pieces of corrugated pipe and fitting it to the edge of the canopy to catch rain. Rio and Tim are carrying buckets of gravel across the football field, pouring it into the graywater barrels and placing the water plants whose roots draw oxygen down into the water and create pockets of habitat for aerobic bacteria. Scotty, who designed the system, is feeling sick, slumped into a roll of corrugated pipe, sweating and feverish. Erik also woke up sick, and Rio's fever only broke a few hours ago. I'm beginning to think we're in one of those doomed jungle expeditions, with the crew dropping by the wayside, wracked with diarrhea and strange tropical diseases, with each mile of upriver progress. Dengue Fever is endemic here in Cancun, but our sick companero/as think it's mostly dehydration and heat exhaustion, and seem to recover quickly

with some rest and fluids.

A truck drives up and delivers the framework for the hand pump Rodrigo has designed. It's a simple system that uses a hand-cranked bicycle wheel to pull a rope fitting with rubber pistons through pipes. Passersby and press are fascinated. The punks are also building a solar oven, and overall we are creating something that I think will really inspire or at least amuse people.

An assembly at night. At last one of the Mexican lawyers comes to speak to us and answer questions. He's big and bearded and cynical and somewhat reassuring. For one thing, he is clear that we don't have to fear torture in jail. Internationals will probably be fined and pressured to immediately leave the country, or for more serious charges, officially deported. "Can you ever come back if you're deported?" someone asks. He shrugs and smiles. "Legally, no, but everyone who wants to does."

And now I'm writing this update at breakfast, interspersed with twelve Tarot readings about action plans, none of which look really good. I don't know why it's so hard for us to admit that forces which control unlimited police and military forces can seal off an island against unarmed demonstrators, but if we were rational we wouldn't be here anyway.

But Dana Lyons is singing "Dancing on the Ruins of Multinational Corporations" on our CD player and Erik is telling me that the French delegation was reportedly saying that the WTO is shit, and we aren't giving up yet.

-- *Starhawk*

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