

Rights Action
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Shock Doctrine'-Style Laws, 'Shock Doctrine'-Style Resistance A Snap Shot Of Two Weeks

by Karen Spring, of Rights Action

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SNAP-SHOTS OF REPRESSION, INJUSTICE & RESISTANCE IN HONDURAS:

SHOCK DOCTRINE'-STYLE LAWS, 'SHOCK DOCTRINE'-STYLE RESISTANCE

A SNAP SHOT OF TWO WEEKS, July 25-August 9, 2011

By Karen Spring, Rights Action

Since the Pepe Lobo regime took power in January 2010, six months after the June 2009 military coup against the entire government of President Zelaya, Lobo's government, the Honduran Congress & International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and International Monetary Fund have pushed forward neoliberal and 'shock doctrine'- style economic and social policies.

These policies are, after all, the main reason for the military coup that further concentrated economic and political power in the hands of the country's oligarchy ... the same oligarchy that controls the National Congress, the Supreme Court and the private business sector, and that has mutually beneficial financial, investment and business dealings with the IFIs, with the governments of the United States and Canada, and with global investors and businesses.

The main projects and areas under attack by private enterprise, transnational companies, IFIs and the Lobo regime, include: the public education and health systems, the National Energy Company (ENEE), mining and hydro-electric projects, indigenous and campesino territories (for tourism, energy projects), etc.

FNRP – NATIONAL FRONT OF POPULAR RESISTANCE

Despite the mass push for privatization and challenges faced by the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP), “la Resistencia” continues to fight back with a strength not expected by the coup perpetrators prior to the June 2009 military coup.

In the first weeks of August 2011, over two years since the military coup, the country continues to be a breeding ground of courageous and creative resistance, as different organizations and groups, all of which support and are apart of the FNRP, organize marches, education activities, road and land occupations, etc, resisting and criticizing the privatization, pro-big business policies of the regime and it’s international partners, promoting and working to implement community-controlled development projects, that defend the environment, promote all human rights, and re-build the rule of law and democratic institutions, community by community, region by region.

As the repressive Honduran regime, backed by the US, Canada and powerful international financial institutions, keeps attacking the Honduran people and member groups of the FNRP, the resistance keeps getting back up, blow after blow, to keep fighting.

JULY 26TH-AUGUST 9



[Over 300 members of COPINH occupying the road leading to the Presidential Palace in Tegucigalpa, July 26, 2011 (Photos: Karen Spring)]

COPINH OCCUPIES ROADS IN TEGUCIGALPA & SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH HONDURAN REGIME TO STOP DAM PROJECTS & OBTAIN LAND TITLES

On September 3, 2010 the National Congress approved a law, concessioning 47 rivers in Honduras, giving the rights to construct hydroelectric to various national and transnational private companies.

Solely in the western departments of Honduras where COPINH (Civic Counsel of Indigenous and Popular Organizations of Honduras) works with Lenca descendant indigenous communities, over 40 energy projects (hydroelectric dams, wind projects, etc) have been approved, reinitiating a community autonomy and defense struggle that COPINH has been fighting for over a decade.

In late July, over 300 members of COPINH arrived in Tegucigalpa, occupying the main road leading to the Presidential House for over 5 hours and participated in negotiations with the Lobo regime regarding dam projects, land conflicts and health in indigenous territory.

On July 26th, they announced the results of their eight exhausting days of resistance and negotiations when they signed an agreement with various state institutions. In this agreement, the state committed to carrying out community consultation (with the full participation of COPINH) before

constructing over five dam projects, handing over land title for various Lenca communities and the construction of health clinics amongst others points agreed upon by various Government Ministries and COPINH.

NATIONAL ENERGY WORKER'S UNION (STENEE) MARCHES IN THREE MAJOR CITIES AGAINST PRIVATIZATION OF ENERGY COMPANY

On July 8, the Congress approved decree 113-2011 that allows for privatizing the maintenance of street lighting and maintenance of energy transmission in various parts of the country.

These types of policies are one of many in the process to privatize various key aspects of the very profitable energy industry and put it in the hands of private companies while causing increases in energy prices to the detriment of the country's poor.

In resistance to this process, STENEE and its over 4000-member base, supported by the FNRP, called a week-long strike to protest against the decree that will benefit the country's oligarchy, many of who will most likely want a piece of the highly profitable energy industry if it were to be privatized.



["Revolution of the mind. Equal Education for All People"]

TEACHERS, STUDENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS MARCH AND OCCUPY VARIOUS SCHOOLS AROUND THE COUNTRY AGAINST WORLD BANK AND REGIME'S ATTEMPT TO PRIVATIZE EDUCATION

It would be hard to dismiss the thought that in the planning of the Honduran military coup, part of the plan of attack was to destroy the strong 68,000-member teacher's movement, one of the pillars of the FNRP.

The InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank most likely have been waiting for an opportunity to privatize education in Honduras. This opportunity has become much more plausible during the regime of Pepe Lobo when a \$100,000 technical loan from the IDB, Project Number HO-T1149, was approved in February 2011 for a project called "Support of a comprehensive educational model." The loan will most likely coordinate the process of privatization of the education system.

After bankrupting the institution in charge of school teacher's retirement funds (IMPREMA), soon after the coup, repression has been systemic against teacher - over 14 teachers have been killed since the coup. Moreover, many teachers have been illegally suspended. The attack on public education continues with full force.

All over the country (including Santa Barbara, Choloma, Choluteca, Tegucigalpa, La Ceiba, Tocoa and San Pedro Sula), students are occupying schools in support of the teachers movement and to protest the dramatic changes in education including eliminating technical secondary schools, night classes and the strong push to privatize public education. This is despite the regime's threats that students will be evicted by police and military forces.

On August 2, students from the public National Autonomous University marched in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, as well as occupy two toll bridges in San Pedro Sula the day before. Marches and occupations of schools continue despite the post-coup regime reacting with brutal violence against the students who march. Many have been detained & beaten.



[Outside of the courthouse in Talanga, Honduras where community leaders & members of the Siria Valley Environmental Committee are on trial, based on trumped up charges.]

OVER 500 COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM SIRIA VALLEY SUPPORT 31 COMMUNITY LEADERS ON TRIAL FOR DEFENDING THEIR LAND, FOREST AND WATER SUPPLY AGAINST HARMFUL MINING & LOGGING

As Congress sits on a mining law awaiting one more discussion before final approval & as mining companies, many from Canada, wait for the green light to start new mining operations, key environmentalists & community leaders in Siria Valley stand before a Honduran judge for defending two pieces of forested land from logging.

Interesting enough, the same land they are defending from illegal logging interests are concessioned to mining companies.

On August 2 & 5th, over 500 community members from Siria Valley protested outside of the court house where their leaders were on trial. Still facing the environmental contamination, destruction & all the health problems caused by Goldcorp's ten years in operation in the Siria Valley, the communities know all too well that the criminalization campaign is an effort to weaken their strong resistance & push for new mining operations in their communities.



[Cement fence, with parts of it destroyed, built illegally on Garifuna community land, Triunfo de la Cruz]

GARIFUNA COMMUNITY, TRIUNFO DE LA CRUZ, DESTROYS CEMENT FENCE BEING BUILT FOR TOURIST PROJECT ON GARIFUNA COMMUNITY LAND

Many of the same people that supported the June 28, 2009 military coup, are the same people behind the construction of a cement fence in Triunfo de la Cruz as part of the “Mar Bella” gated community project and other projects in the Tela Bay, all in Garifuna communities.

As a strong source of foreign investment, the post-coup regime has been promoting tourism, approving laws such as the Law of Special Development Regions, more commonly known as Model or Charter Cities, and the Law of Public-Private Investment that permits co-investment between the state and private enterprise.

Threatened by national and internationally funded tourist projects illegally entering Garifuna communities along the north coast, particularly in the Tela Bay and Trujillo area, Garifuna communities and the leading Garifuna organization OFRANEH (Honduran Black Fraternal Organization) are resisting their construction.

In Triunfo de la Cruz, the local Garifuna women’s group supported by the community, destroyed part of the 500-meter wall being constructed in their

community. Now guarded during the day by armed private guards, the community insists they will not permit the wall to be completed.

LGBT COMMUNITY MARCHES & CARRIES OUT SYMBOLIC CELEBRATION OF A GAY WEDDING IN TEGUCIGALPA

Since the coup, the LGBT community has reported at least 51 assassinations in various parts of Honduras against members of the LGBT community.

On August 1st, the LGBT community marched in Tegucigalpa demanding respect for and recognition of the rights of all within the LGBT community and - upon arriving at the National Congress - staged a symbolic gay wedding.

In response to the symbolic wedding, the Minister of the Interior and Population, Africo Madrid, was the voice of the homophobic nature of the post-coup regime commenting that the police are able to detain any citizen that threatens the morals and principles of the community.

In various marches, including another August 15th, the LGBT community has demanded justice for the deaths and hate crimes committed in complete impunity in Honduras.



[A campesina of MARCA (Authentic Revindicative Campesino Movement of Aguan) in a land occupation, preparing tortillas]

VARIOUS LAND OCCUPATIONS CONTINUE AS PART OF AGRARIAN STRUGGLE IN AGUAN, COLON.

Various campesinos movements - including MARCA, MUCA Margen Izquierda (Left bank of the Aguan River) and Rigores amongst others - maintain land occupations in Aguan, demanding the State resolve outstanding land disputes between campesinos and various large land owners who are illegally and violently grabbing and acquiring lands for African Palm plantations, including Miguel Facusse, Renaldo Canales and Rene Morales.

The Aguan Valley remains in a constant state of terror as reports show that police, military and private security guards of the large landowners work together to evict, terrorize, kidnap, torture, shoot at & assassinate campesinos. The FNRP Colon reports that 44 campesinos have been killed in the agrarian conflict since the military coup.

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WHAT TO DO – DONATE FUNDS

Rights Action provides general support and/ or emergency response to all the amazing people, organizations and struggles mentioned below.

To fund community organizations in Honduras that are resisting the harms and violations caused by global companies and investors, that are working for human rights and justice, for community-controlled development and real democracy, make tax-deductible check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: <http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

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