

## CROSS-POLLINATING THE GRASSROOTS

The Beehive Design Collective is a wildly- motivated, all-volunteer, art-activist collective dedicated to “cross-pollinating the grassroots” by creating collaborative, anti-copyright images for use as educational and organizing tools. We work anonymously as word-to-image translators of complex global stories, gathered through conversations with affected communities.

Since 2000, we have disseminated more than 70,000 posters throughout Americas, entirely by grassroots, hand-to-hand distribution! Our graphics have tackled issues from globalization, trade, and resource extraction to energy, biotechnology, and climate change.

A committed group of mostly women, we are working to create holistic, accessible, and educational images that inspire critical reflection and strategic action.

Please get in touch to learn more about the Beehive!

The Beehive Design Collective

1 Elm Street

MACHIAS, MAINE 04654 USA

207 669 4117

[pollinators@beehivecollective.org](mailto:pollinators@beehivecollective.org)

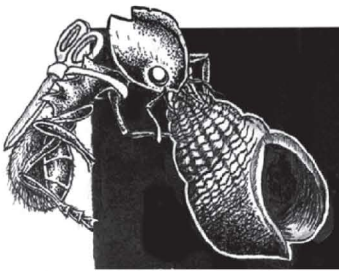
[beehivecollective.blogspot.com](http://beehivecollective.blogspot.com)

[www.beehivecollective.org](http://www.beehivecollective.org)





The Beehive’s Plan Colombia Poster Narration



You hold in your hands the product of many discussions around the issue of colonialism in the Andean region of South American that took place between our collective and organizers over the spring of 2002 in Ecuador, Colombia, and the U.S. These exchanges of information and inspiration were collaboratively sewn together into a quilt of images, and organized in a circuit of progressions and contrasts that inform and engage the viewer throughout their journey of this elaborate graphic. This circuit, with its pathways geared towards fostering a narrative discussion, aids in the functionality of the graphic to be used as a political organizing tool...a powerful tool in which to discuss an overwhelming complex situation in a format that breaks the information down into more digestible, and therefore memorable, chunks. This communication strategy allows for addressing specific elements of the issue, still in the context of the larger forces at hand, while transcending boundaries in language and learning.

The long history of colonialism in the Americas, currently manifested in the Andean Region as “Plan Colombia”, is a strong metaphor of the multi-faceted destructive influences of U.S. foreign policy and corporate monoculture on a global scale. This graphic attempts to expose the lie of the drug war as a smokescreen for multinational corporation’s interests in extraction of the rich biodiversity and natural resources of the Amazon and her peoples. It is an anti-war poster that speaks in the mythology of our times... the cancerous monomyth of corporate globalization, and its antibodies of grassroots resist-ance. in the attempt to overcome the tendency of images to simply portray “what we are against,” this graphic illustrates this story in three “layers” to help the viewer experience the different aspects of an extremely complex, and brutal situation. The mission was to give an illustrated explanation of not just the nightmare, but to also give weight to the inspiring stories of hope, courage and struggle of those that are directly experiencing it.

As North American youth that have endured the destructive and racist brainwashing of television, videogames, cultural appropriation and advertising imagery, our collective felt it was essential to produce this representation in collaboration with organizers in the Andean region. The result, as you can see, is thick with those voices. The tools produced from this collaboration are being distributed, as anti-copyright material, for use in campaigns in both the South and North of the Americas.

“ READING ” THE STORY



The following is an explanation for the purposes of narrating through the images. It is meant as an aid for explaining the story yourself, and for use as a grassroots method of popular education. This is just one interpretation of the imagery, not nearly as rich as the one that your interpretations add to it. Please don’t let these words keep you from elaborating on the story, or pass up the opportunity to give your imagination a good workout!

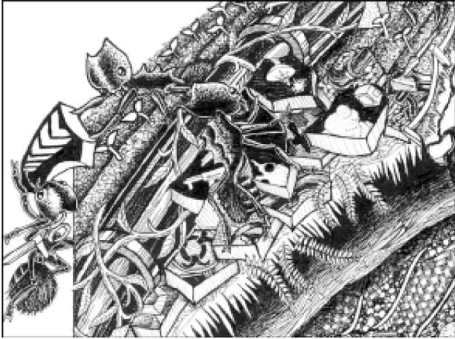
There are three “layers” to this image...THE NIGHTMARE OF PLAN COLOMBIA, on the surface. Being covered up by this madness is the story of 500 YEARS OF RESISTANCE, the hope, struggle and wisdom of the people and critters of this bioregion. On the margins, cutting away, are THE LEAFCUTTER ANTS, swarming the poster, hauling away chunks of the illustration to expose the powerful scene of bio- and cultural diversity that lies under the surface of this nightmare. Let us begin our story here at the top, where three leaves of the ghosts of Columbus’ boats fall from a white branch.



THE HEART OF THE EARTH



In the center of the anthill is an anatomical heart that on one side looks like a petroleum pumping station, alluding to the extraction of what some indigenous communities in the Andean Region consider to be the blood of the earth. On the side of hope, is a living heart with



a spiral in the middle and the Kichwa word ‘pachakutik’ written below it. Pachakutik is an indigenous word with many meanings. It often refers to seeing time as a spiral with the beginning in the middle and the future spiraling ever outward,

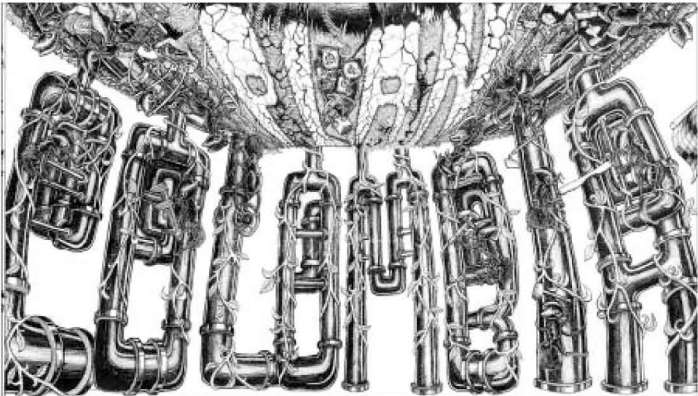
in contrast to the western idea of seeing time as a straight, continuous line. This perspective offers hope, as there is always a new layer covering up the previous one, and “what goes around comes around.” Surely this wise perspective can give context to the irony of current events in the North of the Americas, where there is ever increasing irony in the U.S. calling for “war on terrorism.” .

THE NIGHTMARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE

At the bottom of the poster is a reclamation scene. The leafcutter resistance, streaming up and down the sides of the poster, are carrying in the chunks of the nightmare that they have been busy dismantling. They are further breaking these pieces up with their tools, and taking them back to the soil. Composting of the nightmare, processing it through the filter of the earth, will assure that what grows back in its place will not be just as destructive. With this new hope they are replanting the countryside and bagging up contaminated soil to clean up the many oil spills that have resulted from the pipeline. A team of leafcutters is dismantling the pipeline that spells out “Colombia”, in acknowledgement that many indigenous people consider the concept of “Colombia” to be a mass hallucination. The boundaries that they observe between each other often transcend the borders imposed on them by those who have colonized and continue to exploit their ancestral lands.



In their tireless work deconstructing and dismantling the nightmare the leafcutters embody the phrase "Revolution is the work of the ants". They perhaps represent how small each of us may feel beneath the weight of such a torrential nightmare- but they also inspire us, encouraging the remembrance that great change is in the hands of the small and many.







### MONOCULTURE VS. TRADITIONAL CORN

This story of corn is a separate scene from the other agriculture because it of its significance as a cultural icon and mythology. On the left a farmer's crop, planted in straight, homogenous rows, is depicted as grenades with DNA strand tassels to represent genetically engineered corn. The campesino is wearing a backpack sprayer, as well as the cap he got for free at the Ag store where he bought the chemicals. He is spraying weeds that are attempting to run away to the other side of the story...

On the right, the heirloom, seed-saved, corn is many different colors and heights, and is fluttering with butterflies not endangered by its pollen. A woman, still wearing her traditional hat, has instead, a child on her back. With a machete she is harvesting the small plants from her field that she knows how to use for medicinal purposes.

### "MAMMA COCA" versus COCAINE



This is the dead end to the spiral path that many of the ants have been forced towards. Here, a coca bush has been split down the middle, where on one side is leaves, and on the other they have turned into dollar bills. On the right is an ant that is brewing up a batch of coca tea for a young ant that feels fatigued from altitude sickness. On the left, an ant adds coca leaves to an extractor. It is important to note that he is adding many different chemicals as well, as it is impossible to make cocaine purely from mamacoca. These chemicals, often including kerosene and formaldehyde, are imported almost entirely from the U.S.. The young ant is packaging up the cocaine, into a box to be shipped back up to origin of the demand, those resource craving consumer larvae in the U.S.

### LAYERS OF HISTORY IN THE EARTH



As well as these scenes in the ant tunnels, the complexity of the situation is depicted in the different layers of soil underground. The first layer deep is a layer of the arms and compacted guns that serve to pull communities apart. On the "live" side, are various types of basket weaving, representations of community work that weaves people together.



The second layer down are mass graves of ant skulls mixed with protest signs to represent the massacres of those that have organized against the nightmare. Opposite of this, are seeds that are sprouting. The third layer, the fabric of society is on one side camouflage contrasted with traditional woven fabric made in community. Digging down to the last layers,



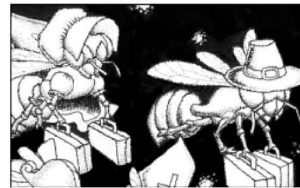
one finds a landfill of discarded bottles, cans, and trash on the side of monoculture, where opposite of this are vessels that are decomposing back into earth.

### THE W.A.S.P. NEST



In order to convey not just the current situation of Plan Colombia, but also the larger historical context of colonialism in Latin America - the origin of this invasion is represented as a W.A.S.P.'s nest. In nature, paper wasp's nests are structured in tiers, where multiple colonies drop out of one another, attached to the previous nest by a stem at its midpoint. Here this is illustrated with the United States nest dropping out of, but still connected to the W.A.S.P.s (White Anglo Saxon Protestants) of Europe...

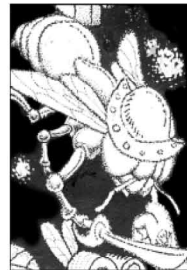
From a W.A.S.P nest shaped like the European Union, the monarchy of Spain is directing the migration of "ghost" colonists towards the Americas. Each of these W.A.S.P. represents a different force in the push for colonization.



Two Pilgrims have packed their bags, ready to move in...

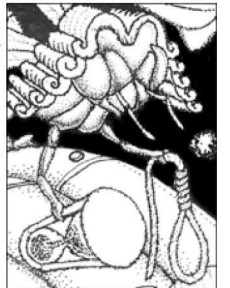


While a Missionary flies in clutching both the cross of the bible as well as the cross of Western medicine...

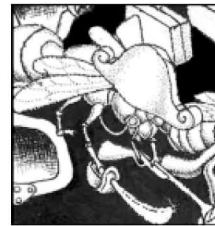


As a Conquistador invades with a sword and blanket covered in smallpox. Much like today's military, these representatives of the state will use any dirty trick available to exploit people's resources.

And a Judge brings in the white man's concept of time and the law...

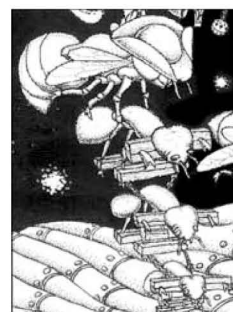


His pal the General has doubled up his arms with a sword and a musket to protect the new landowners...



And they've brought along the Pope to bless their mission with incense and a crucified ant...

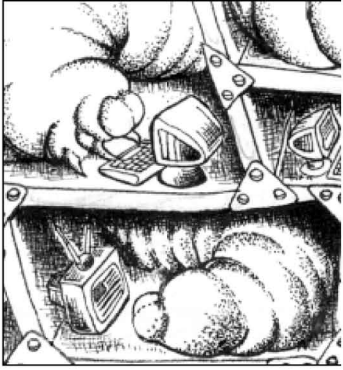
And lastly, the Slave Trader is clutching his load of stolen ants bound in wooden stocks.



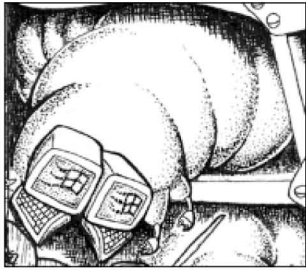
Across the top of the United States shaped W.A.S.P.'s nest, written in a bar code font, is "Plan Colonia: 500 anos de terrorismo." This is a reference to a common graffiti slogan from the Andean Region: "Plan Colombia = Plan Colonia." This heading helps to convey the intense irony of the US using the word terrorism as a justification for war... and remind North Americans of the unforbidden history of terrorism in the Americas, that began with the imperialist push from Europe over 500 years ago.



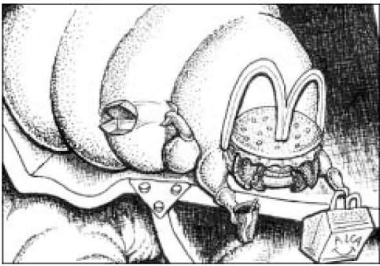




The larvae of these W.A.S.P.'s, hungry with the voracious demands of North American consumerism, are isolated in each of their state cells, mesmerized by American flags on their televisions and computer screens. A few of these larvae have become grotesquely overgrown, for instance.



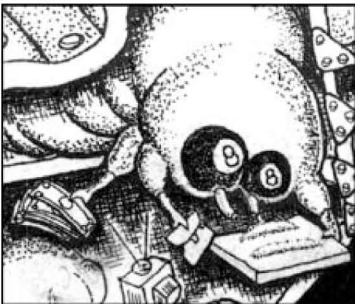
In the Northwest is the Microsoft larvae, constantly thirsty for millions of gallons of fresh water (see FTAA poster for facts on the connections between water consumption and computer manufacturing.)



Next door in Montana, the land of cattle ranching, an enormous McDonalds larva is clutching an "ALCA Meal" as his happy meal. ALCA is the Spanish acronym for the Free Trade of the Americas: Area de Libre Comercio de las Americas.

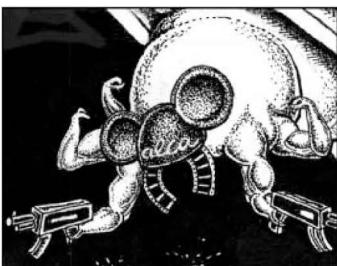
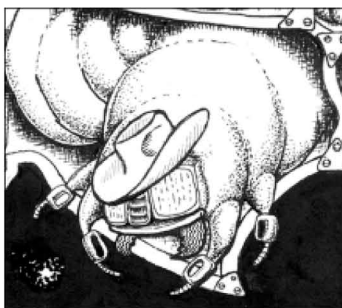
Over in Minnesota, Valerie, the Mall of the Americas larvae, just went on a sweatshop shopping spree, "thanks to ALCA."

Eastward to New York, a cocaine larva reminds us that the number one consumer of cocaine in the world is the United States, where the racist and classist "war on drugs" is rigged to criminalize



those that are economically forced into cocaine production and trafficking, but not those that are truly profiting from demand.

Down in Texas, the oil baron larvae, a close friend of the Bush administration, will give you a tax break...if your vehicle is big enough. Thanks for driving!



Off in California, Larval Schwarznegger's Disneyfication of war abroad keeps the American people mesmerized with its well-timed Hollywood blockbusters.

Emerging from the nest are three praying mantis missionaries parachuting out of Utah into remote areas of the jungle. It's no coincidence they are bringing with them not only the cross of the Bible, but the cross of Western medicine, as these two concepts are simultaneously pushed on indigenous communities. This cultural push is not a thing of the past, as even now, when a corporation seeks to extract



sugar cane. Instead of loading baskets for their own consumption, they are filling burlap sacks, each with a flag of the different countries to where these cash crops will be shipped.



## TEACHING EMPOWERMENT VS. DESTRUCTION

Next are the contrasts between two classrooms. A group of miners are learning about how to organize a union, and having an animated discussion. The teacher is distributing pamphlets while raising a fist and showing them on the chalkboard how to link arms to do a blockade. On the desk is a bowl of coca leaves that miners chew on the job to relieve the fatigue, hunger and pain of their labor.

In contrast there is a classroom at the School of the Americas in Ft. Benning Georgia. The students, all sitting at attention, have on their backs the flags of different Latin American countries where SOA graduates have contributed major atrocities; in this case: Argentina, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chile, and Colombia. The teacher, an Army ant from the United States, is simultaneously distributing diagrams of weapons, while banging his fist on the table and showing them on the chalkboard how to remove arms for torture. Also on the board is the emblem of the new name that the SOA has recently chosen for itself, "the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation," sounds nice, doesn't it? Their emblem includes the Maltese cross as a representation of "Columbus' 500 year legacy of security cooperation in the Americas."

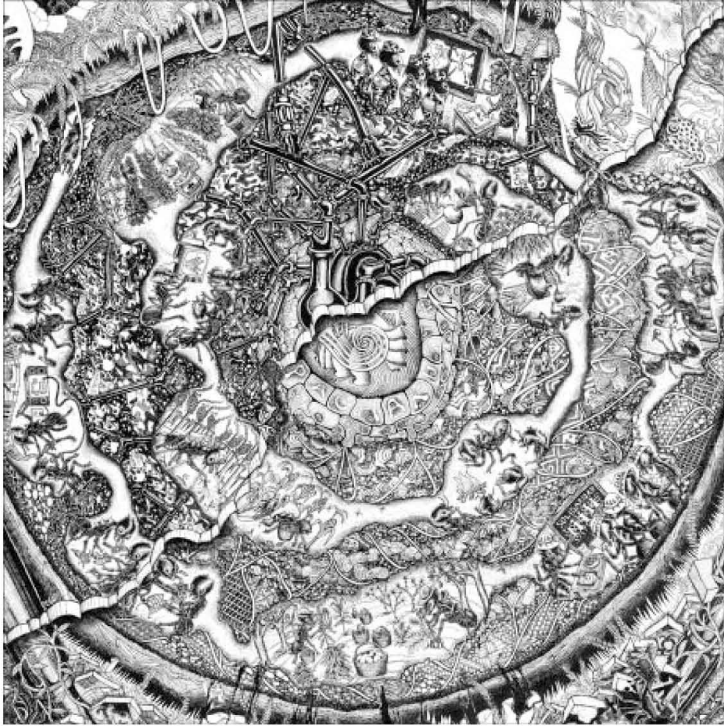


## THE STORY OF THE STORY

Further down in the scenes on the "live" side of the Earth, an elder ant gesticulates wildly, telling stories of "La violencia" to a mesmerized group of youngsters, whose hair stands on end as they are gathered around a campfire. On the side of colonization, this same scene now leaves the children gathered around and mesmerized by the campfire on the television, instead. The elder ant is now reduced to changing the channel for them instead of telling his own story.

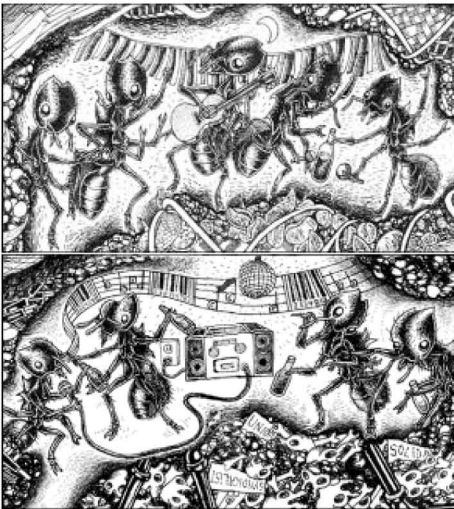






### KARAOKE VS. THE FIESTA

Their adventure begins in the karaoke bar.... But first take a look at the opposite side of the world, where a traditional fiesta is raging. Fiestas have historically been used as a form of rebellion, a refusal to submit to genocide... an action taken by communities to



come together to create joy in the face of madness and war. At this fiesta, five ants are singing, dancing and holding hands as a musician plays under a traditional party decoration and the moonlight. They have one bottle of rum to share between them all.

Back in that karaoke bar, there are only four ants, because a machine has replaced the musician. As the contrast of the anti-social influence of

homogenized culture, one of them is singing some commercial pop music while the have their "fun" by pointing and laughing. They "party" under the disco ball and instead of passing around one bottle of rum they all have their own individual bottle of beer.

### DOLLARIZATION VS. BARTERED GOODS

In the next scene the ant's economy has been dollarized with U.S. currency. They now must trade dollars for corn and specially designed wool ant socks. On the opposite side, with both hands, they are bartering goods with each other that they produced themselves ... in this case a bushel of corn for a specially made wool ant hat.



### AGRI "CULTURE" VS. AGRI "BUSINESS"

The next scene depicts a small indigenous farm that uses ancient permaculture techniques. A square of four plots is surrounded by a ring of local fruit bearing trees to create a buffer zone that help to protect their crops from pests. They have planted beans, quinoa, potatoes, and yucca, and are gathering them into baskets to bring back to their families.

Back on the nightmare side, is a scene on an industrial agri-business farm. The workers, whose traditional hats have been replaced by uniforms, are

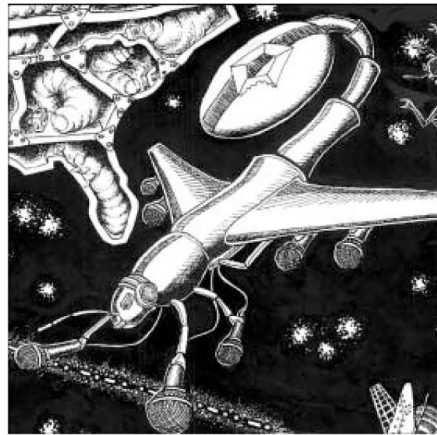


harvesting from massive rows of bananas, cocoa, flowers, coffee, and

resources from indigenous land; they send missionaries first to establish 'friendly contact'

### THE MULTI-LAYERED MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR MILITARY OPERATION

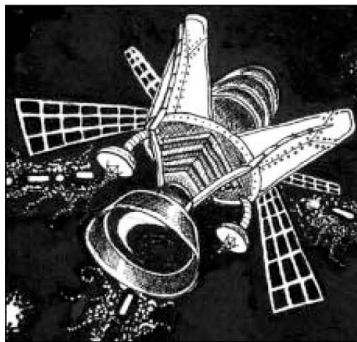
Swarms of metal-armored insects have been unleashed from this nest onto South America, to carry out "Plan Colombia", a multi-billion dollar military operation in the name of the "War on Drugs," that is now being opportunistically morphed into a "War against Terrorism." Here is a description of the layered formation of these operations...



In the air high above all other aircraft in the scene are the ears of U.S. surveillance, a scorpion-like military airship, covered with antennas, with one large, radar disk on its hinderparts... these AWAK planes are used for "listening" by the Pentagon, and communication to smaller planes and helicopters below.

Out in this expanse of space is a web of surveillance satellites scanning the scene from every angle. These satellites, besides giving the obvious, paranoid feeling of big brother / uncle Sam, are a little known element of the extent of the high-tech invasion of the fumigation operations. With co-ordination from a

U.S. military base in Florida, and a contract with the U.S. corporation Dyncorp, satellites are being used to identify the actual chemical structure of plants of the terrain in Colombia, down to four meters. With the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS), this surveillance is supposedly used to guide the fumigation planes to "pin point accuracy". (We heard that about smart bombs too, eh?) Given that these showers of chemicals, often dumped at high-altitudes, rarely hit their said target of coca, many believe that this technology is being used in heat-searching of human forms for covert military operations...



In formation below this, a squad of DH C-47 and OV-10 Bronco planes create a "layer of protection" for the fumigations to take place. The planes are being used to "secure" the area. Many incidents of whole villages, with their inhabitants and farm animals present, being directly fumigated would clearly indicate that the presence of this force is not for the safety of the people in these areas.



A swarm of metal-plated Blackhawk wasp-copters are itching for a fight big enough to justify their multi-million dollar price tags. They hover in formation alongside the fumigation planes, a twisted form of "aid" to the Colombian military, which holds one of the worst human-rights violation track records in the world.





## THE LIE OF THE DRUG WAR, THE HORRORS OF BIOWARFARE

Amidst the ghost trees and animals is seen the depopulated, defoliated and devastated countryside, where the fumigations of Plan Colombia are taking place. On the left, you see a cropduster with the Monsanto logo, and on the right, a duster with Dyncorp's. These are the two U.S. corporations which are the major players in this military operation. Monsanto is the multinational which has developed products such as Agent Orange, BT Corn, Nutrasweet, and holds the patent on "Terminator Technology". DynCorp, a defense contractor based in Virginia, is a lesser known actor in this foreign policy. They are a U.S. corporation that functions as a "private army," and are involved at every level of Plan Colombia, from coordination with satellites, to shipping chemicals and training pilots.

Monsanto's products clearly illustrate the connection between war and agricultural chemicals. Roundup Ultra, a broad-spectrum herbicide also known as glyphosate, is being used at many times its normal strength, and with additives that make it more gel-like, for the purpose of lingering longer on the plants. This chemical is being sprayed to justify the war on drugs to the American people, but has had devastating effects on both subsistence crops and rainforest habitat for some of the most diverse species of plants, animals on earth. T-65 Turbo Thrush planes, being flown by Dyncorp pilots, release stripes of chemical clouds onto the landscape. These planes release chemicals at much higher altitudes than they are designed for, in the attempt to avoid being shot down by guerrillas and angry farmers. This makes for a very inaccurate spraying process that has resulted in the displacement of millions of campesinos and indigenous people from their homes. Faint illustrations of the chemical structure of glyphosate sprinkle down from the clouds, stripping trees of their leaves, and trickling down into the groundwater and earth below.

### A SWARM OF MOSQUITOS HAS LANDED...



to extract the resources of the area. Three petroleum mosquitoes, Occidental from the U.S., British Petroleum from the U.K., and Repsol from Spain have pierced the veins of the earth to pump out its blood. These three companies are the biggest players in the consortium, OCP, that is continuing to build a contentious pipeline in the Amazon Rainforest of Ecuador and Colombia. This, by no coincidence, is where the most intensive fumigations are taking place.

In the trees, a mosquito scrapes a rubber tree to extract for the automotive industry.



As a Nestle mosquito is extracting cash crops like coffee and cocoa from the countryside. Nestle also



owns many of the cattle ranching lands in Colombia as well.

Pharmaceutical mosquitoes are busily extracting genetic material from plants to use in patented medicines that make it technically illegal for indigenous



communities to use these plants in their traditional medicines.

A Coca-Cola mosquito is sucking the water from a river full of fish skeletons that has been polluted by the fumigations. Coca-Cola is one of the major companies that have been privatizing water throughout Latin America. Notice that the can only shows the word coca, to remind the viewer that the big boom in the cocaine industry happened with the introduction of cocaine in their products, and that they have been involved in the massacres of workers and



organizers throughout this time.

Very central in this situation is the OCP (Oleoducto de Crudos Pesados) pipeline, the jugular vein of petroleum extraction in the Andean region. It is owned by a conglomerate of multinational corporations, and has ruptured many times causing irreparable damage to vital rainforest habitat over the years. It has

also been the target of insurgent military groups who are angry at how little the impoverished regions see of the money being made from the mineral wealth that is extracted and transported through this pipeline. As a blatant example of war for oil, the Bush administration has given 98 million dollars to create a special forces branch of the Colombian military to guard this pipeline.

The paramilitary beetle in the foreground is rolling up a ball of ant parts to represent the ferocious massacres that are taking place. Like so many millions that must keep moving to escape this violence, a family of ants is being displaced from their homelands. As they run from the massacre, a comrade ant beckons them to an entranceway of the underground...



There they embark on a journey that takes them through a spiral tunnel where two coexisting realities are juxtaposed on opposite (thanks to the dismantling of the leafcutters) sides of a cross section of the earth. These two layers of the situation, shown simultaneously, help to further convey the multi-faceted invasion of colonialism into every aspect of daily life and culture.