DO OR DIE #6

EARTH MY BODY
FIRE MY SPIRIT



WE ARE HOWLING OUT OF THE CAGES
IN THE ARMS OF ETERNITY MY SOUL IT RAGES
MY HEART IS CRYING, MY SOUL IS ON FIRE
I'VE UNLEASHED MY DEMONS AND ARMED MY DESIRE

— Casey Neill

Voices From

Earth First!



Bumper Rabid Navel Gazing issue

So another issue of Do or Die is out. You're probably as surprised as we are; it's been a year and a half. This is largely because DoD is written, produced and funded by activists who are more likely to be found occupying someone elses's office, than in their own doing Do or Die. It's also because people are atrocious at respecting deadlines. We got an article from a Catholic priest based in the Phillipines a month after requesting it, but had to wait six months to get an article about Newbury, *Sort it out*. This time the deadline is for real.

This issue is a bit of a departure for us. We have concentrated less on reporting action after action, more on analysing the strengths and weaknesses of our movement. As one contributor puts it: "From the outside, the direct action movement appears to be stronger than ever. From the inside the picture is quite different". We need to talk about what we are trying to achieve, and the strategy we intend to use to get there. There is a danger that if we do not do this then we will be crushed by state violence. Or worse, we could become an acceptable part of the political environment—strange and a bit annoying yes, but essentially irrelevant. The Socialist Workers' Party in trees.

We've got loads of stuff from other countries because we can learn a lot from them. For instance while British activists have only just begun sabotaging genetic fields, Germans have been doing it for years. By communicating with activists in other countries we can realise the strengths and weaknesses of our own tactics and ideas.

Do or Die: "missing deadlines and suicide attempts since 1992"
A Bureaucrat Tendency EF! production

Contributing Groups

Ecodefense Russia, EF! Finland, DELTA, Avon Gorge EF! Melbourne F0E! Cascadia Forest Defenders, PIANO (Prague), Green Partisans (Poland), The Anarchist Teapot, Freiburg tree Camp, Naturfreundejugend, Groen Front! (Holland), South Downs EF! EPIC/Headwaters EF! Big Mountains EF!(Vancouver), Primitivist Network, Road Alert! Warwick EF! East Devon EF! Umweltprojektwerkstatt, SHAG! Reclaim the Valleys! Manchester EF! Reclaim the streets, and various other undesirables. Thanks to the countless individuals we can't name, And to the capitalist © freaks, fuck you, ha ha ha!

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Send your articles, rants, artwork, photos, poems, letters, international news, reviews and turgid pseudo-academic tracts (whoops, I forgot—we take care of them...) to:

Do or DTP collective, c/o South Downs EF!
Prior House , 6 Tilbury Place
Brighton, BN2 2GY

Although not essential, we would prefer articles as text files on disk (Mac or PC) cos we're good little primitivists. All hatemail gratefully received.

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November 5th 1997
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Reclaim The Streets!

"We are not going to demand anything. We are not going to ask for anything. We are going to take. We are going to occupy."

The direct action group Reclaim the Streets (RTS) has developed widespread recognition over the last few years. From road blockades to street parties, from strikes on oil corporations to organising alongside striking workers, its actions and ideas are attracting more and more people and international attention. Yet the apparent sudden emergence of this group, its penetration of popular alternative culture and its underlying philosophy have rarely been discussed.

The Evolution of RTS

RTS was originally formed in London in Autumn 1991, around the dawn of the anti-roads movement. With the battle for Twyford Down rumbling along in the background, a small group of individuals got together to take direct action against the motor car. In their own words they were campaigning:

"FOR walking cycling and cheap, or free, public transport, and AGAINST cars, roads and the system that pushes them."[1]

Their work was small-scale but effective and even back then it had elements of the cheeky, surprise tactics which have moulded RTS's more recent activities. There was the trashed car on Park Lane symbolising the arrival of Car-mageddon, DIY cycle lanes painted overnight on London streets, disruption of the 1993 Earls Court Motor Show and subvertising actions on car adverts around the city. However the onset of the No M11 Link Road Campaign presented the group with a specific local focus, and RTS was absorbed temporarily into the No M11 campaign in East London.

This period of the No M11 Campaign was significant for a number of reasons. Whilst Twyford Down was predominantly an ecological campaign–defending a 'natural' area–the urban setting of the resistance to the M11 construction embodied wider social and political issues. Beyond the anti-road and ecological arguments, a whole urban community faced the destruction of its social environment with loss of homes, degradation to its quality of life and community fragmentation.

Beyond these political and social considerations, the M11 developed the direct action skills of those involved. Phone trees were established, lots of people were involved in site invasions, crowds of activists had to be manoeuvred cunningly to outwit police. The protesters also gained experience of dealing with associated tasks such as publicity, the media and fund-raising.

Then in late 1994 a political hand-grenade was thrown into the arena of the M11 campaign: the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. Overnight civil protesting became a criminal act, but what the government hadn't counted on was how this piece of legislation would unite and motivate the very groups it was aimed at repressing. The fight of the anti-road activists became synonymous with that of travellers, squatters and hunt saboteurs. In particular, the suddenly politicised rave scene became a communal social focus for many people.

The M11 Link Road campaign culminated in the symbolic and dramatic battle of Claremont Road. Eventually, and with the repetitive beats of The Prodigy in the background, police and security overpowered the barricades, lock-ons and the scaffold tower, but the war was only just beginning. The period of the M11 Campaign had linked together new political and social alliances and in the midst of the campaign's frenzied activities strong friendships had been formed. When Claremont Road was lost, this collective looked for new sources of expression and Reclaim the Streets was reformed in February 1995.

The years that followed saw the momentum of RTS flourish. Street Parties I and II were held in rapid succession in the summer of 1995 and there were various actions against the likes of Shell, the Nigerian Embassy and the 1995 Motor Show. More recently, in July 1996 there was the massive success of the M41 Street Party, where for nine hours 8,000 people took control of the M41 motorway in West London and partied and enjoyed themselves, whilst some dug up the tarmac with jack-hammers and in its place planted trees that had been rescued from the construction path of the M11.

At a base level the focus of RTS has remained anti-car but this has been increasingly symbolic, not specific. RTS aimed initially to move debate beyond the anti-roads struggle, to highlight the social, as well as the ecological, costs of the car system.



Saturday 13 July 1996 - M41 Motorway

"The cars that fill the streets have narrowed the pavements.. [If] pedestrians ... want to look at each other, they see cars in the background, if they want to look at the building across the street they see cars in the foreground: there isn't a single angle of view from which cars will not be visible, from the back, in front, on both sides. Their omnipresent noise corrodes every moment of contemplation like acid."[2]

Cars dominate our cities, polluting, congesting and dividing communities. They have isolated people from one another, and our streets have become mere conduits for motor vehicles to hurtle through, oblivious of the neighbourhoods they are disrupting. Cars have created social voids; allowing people to move further and further away from their homes, dispersing and fragmenting daily activities and lives and increasing social anonymity. RTS believe that ridding society of the car would allow us to re-create a safer, more attractive living environment, to return streets to the people that live on them and perhaps to rediscover a sense of 'social solidarity'.

But cars are just one piece of the jigsaw and RTS is also about raising the wider questions behind the transport issue–about the political and economic forces which drive 'car culture'. Governments claim that "roads are good for the economy". More goods travelling on longer journeys, more petrol being burnt, more customers at out-of-town supermarkets–it is all about increasing "consumption", because that is an indicator of "economic growth". The greedy, short-term exploitation of dwindling resources regardless of the immediate or long-term costs. Therefore RTS's attack on cars cannot be detached from a wider attack on capitalism itself.

"Our streets are as full of capitalism as of cars and the pollution of capitalism is much more insidious."[3]

More importantly, RTS is about encouraging more people to take part in direct action. Everyone knows the destruction which roads and cars are causing, yet the politicians still take no notice. Hardly surprising–they only care about staying in power and maintaining their 'authority' over the majority of people. Direct action is about destroying that power and authority, and people taking responsibility for themselves. Direct action is not just a tactic; it is an end in itself. It is about enabling people to unite as individuals with a common aim, to change things directly by their own actions.

Street Parties I, II and III were an ingenious manifestation of RTS's views. They embodied the above messages in an inspired formula: cunning direct action, crowd empowerment, fun, humour and raving. They have evolved into festivals open to all who feel exasperated by conventional society.



in West London closed by 8,000 people

To some extent it is possible to trace the tactics behind the Street Parties in RTS's history. The mobilisation, assembly and movement of large crowds draws on skills from road protests. The use of sound systems draws on dominant popular culture whereas the initial inspiration for Street Parties certainly reflects the parties of the Claremont Road days. However, RTS have retrospectively also realised that their roots lie deeper in history. The great revolutionary moments have all been enormous popular festivals–the storming of the Bastille, the Paris commune and the uprisings in 1968 to name a few. A carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchy, rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Crowds of people on the street seized by a sudden awareness of their power and unification through a celebration of their own ideas and creations. It follows then that carnivals and revolutions are not spectacles seen by other people, but the very opposite in that they involve the active participation of the crowd itself. Their very idea embraces all people, and the Street Party as an event has successfully harnessed this emotion.

The power which such activities embody inevitably challenges the state's authority, and hence the police and security services' attention has increasingly been drawn to RTS. The organisation of any form of direct action by the group is closely scrutinised. RTS has been made very aware of this problem. Vehicles carrying equipment have been broken into, followed and impounded en route to Street Parties, RTS's office has been raided, telephones have been bugged and activists from RTS have been followed, harassed and threatened with heavy conspiracy charges. On top of this a secret RTS action in December 1996 (an attempt to seize a BP tanker on the M25) was foiled by the unexpected presence of two hundred police at the activists' meeting point. How such information is obtained by the police is uncertain and can easily lead to paranoia in the group; fear of infiltration, anxiety and suspicion which can themselves be debilitating.

Yet RTS has not been deterred, they hold open meetings every week, they continue to expand and involve new people, and are also frequently approached by other direct action groups. Alliances have sprouted with other groups–the striking Liverpool Dockers and Tube Workers to name two–as recognition has grown of common ground between these struggles. Throughout the UK and Europe new local RTS groups have formed and late this summer there are likely to be Street Parties worldwide. These new groups have not been created by London RTS, they are fully autonomous. London RTS has merely acted as a cata-



lyst; stimulating individuals to replicate ideas if they are suitable for others to use as well.

In many ways the evolution of RTS has been a logical progression which reflects its roots and experiences. Equally the forms of expression which RTS have adopted are merely modern interpretations of age-old protests: direct action is not a new invention. Like their historic revolutionary counterparts, they are a group fighting for a better society at a time when many people feel alienated from, and concerned about, the current system. Their success lies in their ingenuity for empowering people, their foresight to forge common ground between issues and their ability to inspire.

The Future Street Party?

"From the moment of birth we are immersed in action and can only fitfully guide it by taking thought." - A.N.Whitehead.

Tactics need to move. If they do not those involved become tired or bored. One way to 'move' is to grow; doing it all bigger and better. Relying on tighter organisation and a more specialised activist. This can have immediate benefits that confer 'success' on the group using them: wider media coverage, more 'subscribers' to your mailouts, a certain notoriety. Another way–dialectically opposed to the former, though also a type of growth–is to diffuse. Enable more and more people to experience organising the tactic or be affected by its presence and possibilities directly.

The Street Party 'tactic' has, to date, been 'growing' in both ways. Three parties in London, each more organised and 'successful' than the last, and the erupting of parties around the country, locally organised and controlled, have shown that, as well as being a serious affair, resistance can be a festival. But what is the point of the street party? What is its future ? What could it be, potentially? These questions should be answered if the street party, conceived as a means to a free and ecological 'end', is not to become a victim of its own success.

A simple, but limiting, answer to the first question is: *"to highlight the social and environmental costs of the car system."*[4] Which is fine, as far as it goes, but the rationale of the street party, certainly the experience, suggests that a more organic, transformative, even utopian approach may bring other replies and an answer to the last two questions–its future and potential. The concern is that the street party risks becoming a caricature of itself if it becomes too focused on the spectacular and its participant–the mass. The speculation is that, inherent within its praxis–its mix of desire, spontaneity and organisation–lie some of the foundations on which to build a participatory politics for a liberated, ecological society.

Selling Space

The words 'street' and 'road' are often taken to mean the same thing, but they can be defined in opposition to each other, to represent different concepts of space. In everyday usage the distinction is still common. We talk of 'the word on the streets', 'taking to the streets' and 'streetculture'. A street suggests dwellings, people and interaction, in a word: community. A road, in contrast, suggests the tarmac, the horizon, 'progress' and the private enclosure of the motor car. We speak of *'roadworks'* and *'roadrage'*.[5]

The road is mechanical, linear movement epitomised by the car. The street, at best, is a living place of human movement and social intercourse, of freedom and spontaneity.[6] The car system steals the street from under us and sells it back for the price of petrol. It privileges time over space, corrupting and reducing both to an obsession with speed or, in economic lingo, 'turnover'. It doesn't matter who 'drives' this system for its movements are already pre-determined. As Theodore Adorno notes in Minima Moralia:

"Which driver is not tempted, merely by the power of his engine, to wipe out the vermin of the street, pedestrians, children and cyclists? The movements machines demand of their users already have the violent, hard-hitting jerkiness of Fascist maltreatment."

Or, as an RTS Street Party flyer put it, *"Cars can't dance..."*[7]

The modern city is the capitalist 'machine' extended. A factory city serving dominant elites; a transportation hub for import and export, its 'citizens', as wage slaves, are kept in huge dormitories close to their place of labour. Its inhuman scale, impersonality and sacrifice of pleasure to efficiency are the very antithesis of a genuine community.

The privatisation of public space in the form of the car continues the erosion of neighbourhood and community that defines the metropolis. Road schemes, business 'parks', shopping developments–all add to the disintegration of community and the flattening of a locality. Everywhere becomes the same as everywhere else. Community becomes commodity–a shopping village, sedated and under constant surveillance. The desire for community is then fulfilled elsewhere, through spectacle, sold to us in simulated form. A tv soap 'street' or square mimicking the arena that concrete and capitalism are destroying. The real street, in this scenario, is sterile. A place to move through, not to

be in. It exists only as an aid to somewhere else–through a shop window, billboard or petrol tank.

To rescue what is left of the public arena, to enlarge and transform that arena from a selling and increasingly sold space to a common, free space–from controlled locality to local control–is fundamental to the vision of reclaiming the streets. The logic of this vision implies, not only ending the rule of the car and recreating community, but also the liberation of the streets from the wider rule of hierarchy and domination. From economic, ethnic and gender oppressions. From the consumerism, surveillance, advertising and profit-making that reduces both people and planet to saleable objects.



"The barricade blocks the road but opens the way"
- Paris, May '68

Street Party as public meeting

That the city space presently given over to traffic and trafficking can be transformed into a festival site, 'beach' or 'forest' is clear. But equally important is the potential for this space to be used for an authentic politics. For the recreation of a public arena where empowered individuals can join together to collectively manage social affairs. Without the communal sphere, defined here as 'the street', there can be no real community. Without this sphere community is easily identified with the nation-state, and politics–the self-management of the community–is reduced to the practice of statecraft.

The street party, in theory, suggests a dissolution of centralised power structures in favour of a network of self-controlled localities. The street party could easily involve a public meeting or community assembly that works in opposition to the state; towards taking direct control of its locality and giving all an equal voice in decision-making. By including and engaging with other struggles, by involving more local associations, clubs, tenants', work and community groups, by helping others organise smaller street parties that bypass official channels, we extend the practice of direct action and make such a politics possible. In practice that is already what is happening, but without an understanding of where we wish the street party to go, it becomes all too easy for 'authority' to co-opt or subvert its form.

The participatory 'party' or 'street' meeting could be a real objective for the future street party. For an event that goes beyond temporarily celebrating its autonomy to laying the ground for permanent social freedom. Discussion areas, decision-making bodies, delegates mandated to attend other parties; in short the formation of a 'body politic', could all happen within the broader arena of the street party. Such participatory communities, in traditional anarchist theory, were called communes. Based on self-government through face-to-face grassroots or street level assemblies they were the final authority for all public policy. Linked together in confederal co-ordination they formed the Commune of communes which, translated, into current terminolgy, gives us the Network of networks or, more appropriately: the Street Party of street parties. That such a 'street party' would tend to undermine centralised state and government structures, constituting a 'dual power' in direct opposition to them, is obvious.

The Street Party of street parties

"Revolutionary moments are carnivals in which the individual life celebrates its unification with a regenerated society" wrote Raoul Vaneigem.[8] The street party can be read as a situ-esque reversal of this assertion; as an attempt to make Carnival the revolutionary moment. Placing 'what could be' in the path of 'what is' and celebrating the 'here and now' in the road of the rush for 'there and later', it hopes to re-energize the possibility of radical change. The continuing emergence of street parties in Britain and increasingly in

other countries shows that the desire for this change is not limited to economic equality, to ending injustice or ensuring survival. It is an expansive desire: for freedom, for creativity; to truly live. This desire, for the present social order, is revolutionary.

While four out of five westerners live in the city, while two-thirds of the world's population share the common space of its thoroughfares, it is:

"On the streets that power must be dissolved: for the streets, where daily life is endured, suffered and eroded, and where power is confronted and fought, must be turned into the domain where daily life is enjoyed, created and nourished."[9]

To 'street party' is to begin reconstructing the geography of everyday life; to re-appropriate the public sphere; to rediscover the streets and attempt to liberate them. To 'street party' is to rescue communality from the dissection table of capitalism; to oppose the free market with a vision of the free society. This vision, which the street party embodies, is collective imagining in practice. It radically dissolves political, cultural, social and economic divisions in a utopian expression. A utopia defined, not as 'no-place', but as this-place, here and now.

The ultimate street party–the Street Party of street parties–is one where each person in each street in every village, town and city, joins with every other in rejecting capitalism, its exploitation and divisions. Indeed rejecting all hierarchy and domination, embracing instead an ecological vision of mutual aid, freedom, complementarity and interdependence. When the streets are the authentic social sphere for a participatory politics based on self-activity and direct action. When co-operation and solidarity are the social practice of society. When the 'street party' helps make possible, and dissolves into such a future, then, we can begin...

"At first the people stop and overturn the vehicles in their path...here they are avenging themselves on the traffic by decomposing it into its inert original elements. Next they incorporate the wreckage they have created into their rising barricades: they are recombining the isolated inanimate elements into vital new artistic and political forms. For one luminous moment, the multitudes of solitudes that make the modern city come together in a new kind of encounter, to make a people.'The streets belong to the people': they seize control of the city's elemental matter and make it their own."[10]

For more information contact: Reclaim The Streets, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY, UK. Telephone: 0171 281 4621. E-mail: rts@gn.apc.org. They have a internet web site at: http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk./campaigns/rts.html

References:

1. Reclaim The Streets leaflet.
2. 'Immortality' by Milan Kundera (Faber and Faber. London 1991) - page 271.
3. Reclaim The Streets Agit-Prop (Distributed at the M41 Street Party on Saturday 13th July 1996)
4. What is Reclaim the Streets? leaflet.
5. To take a facile example, imagine singing: "We're on the 'street' to nowhere" - not quite right is it? On the other hand, how about: "Our house, in the middle of our 'road'." Trivial maybe, but indicative of the difference.
6. And to 'reclaim the streets' is to enact the transformation of the former to the latter. In this context the anti-roads movement is also a pro-streets movement. The struggle against the destruction of 'nature' is also a struggle for the human-scale, the face-to-face, for a society in harmony with its natural surrounding
7. Leaflet for Street Party 2: Rage against the Machine - Saturday 23th July 1995
8. 'The Revolution of Everyday Life' by Raoul Vaneigem. (1967)
9. 'Post-Scarcity Anarchism' by Murray Bookchin. (1971)
10. 'All That Is Solid Melts into Air' by Marshal Berman. (1982) - quoted in 'A Shout in the Street' by Peter Jukes (1990)



WELL, IT'S BETTER THAN BOTTLING IT UP.

Never Mind The Ballots... Reclaim the Streets!



The Chairman of the Bored leads a delegation to Downing St

His deputy on the wall is about to ransack the foreign office

"Art for all or none at all." - graffiti on The National Gallery, Saturday 12th April 1997.

On Saturday 12th April 1997, there was a 'March For Social Justice' called by the Liverpool Dockers, the Hillingdon Hospital Workers and the Magnet Strikers. This event, three weeks before the General Election on 1st May, was called to signify the need for radical social change. The organising group of the march extended the invitation to attend to all people, including, in their own words "the trade unionists, the unemployed, pensioners, people with disabilities,the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers, environmentalists and the young."

Reclaim The Streets were already planning to do a massive action surrounding the issues of the election and 'democracy', and because of this, and the close connections that had developed over the past nine months between the sacked Liverpool Dockers and RTS, it was decided that RTS should organise and add their own dimension to the day's events. From this initial idea the original plan grew into a 'Two Day Festival of Resistance', with a number of different events planned for the whole weekend.

RTS publicity confirmed the goal of social change that all participants in the march were agreed on, but qualified it by stating: "Whilst sharing this aim RTS believe that such a change will be brought about, not through the mediation of professional politicians, but by individual and collective participation in social affairs. In short - by direct action." Another leaflet produced by RTS urged people to take to the streets; to forget voting and working for change inside the system but instead it to take "direct action in the streets, in the fields and in the workplace, to halt the destruction and create a direct democracy in a free and ecological society."

As the leaflet went on to say, working for change within the system, or voting for the lesser evil, was pointless and disempowering. Voting is a weapon of government to delude people into thinking that they have a say in how the country is run, to reinforce their passive role and encourage them to leave the 'politics' to the specialists. The alternative message that RTS were pushing was one of empowerment - for people to participate in direct action, not only in the political arena, but in all aspects of their lives. It was an attempt to dissuade people from the belief that we can change things by working within the system, when it is the system itself that we must destroy if we are to have any meaningful and lasting change.

This clearly anti-election and pro-direct action event at first seems far removed from RTS's original message, but in reality the practical methods that RTS use, and the theory behind them, lead naturally into confronting and questioning the totality of the current political system. The election merely provided the

opportunity to make explicit the links between ecological destruction, social issues and the political system. RTS were saying that all 'choices' in the election were false ones, and that you could vote for an alternative government, but never an alternative to government, and that the spectacle of the election was manufactured by the state and mass media in order to give us the illusion of choice. That whoever wins the basic function of all government remains the same–the maintenance and continuation of power and authority, with the end result of continued exploitation of both people and the natural world. Reclaim the Streets a single issue group? Well, if the overthrow of all hierarchy, domination and exploitation is single issue, then yes, single issue! As the RTS mailout had said three weeks before: "And you thought we were all about cars!"



Reclaim Your Streets!

Sun 14 May 95 - Camden High St, London.
Sun 23 July 95 - Upper Street, London.
Sat 5 Aug 95 - Alcester Rd, Birmingham.
Sat 21 Oct 95 - Deansgate, Manchester.
Sat 21 Oct 95 - Oxford Road, Manchester.
Sat 28 Oct 95 - College Green, Bristol
Sat 16 Dec 95 - Merrion Street, Leeds.
Wed 14 Feb 96 - North Road, Brighton.
Sat ? Apr 96 - Cross Street, Manchester.
Sat 18 May 96 - Cookridge Street, Leeds.
Sun 8 June 96 - A6, Leicester.
Sat 13 July 96 - M41 Motorway, London.
Sat 17 Aug 96 - Pershore Rd, Birmingham.
Sat 17 Aug 96 - Walcot Street, Bath.
Sat 24 Aug 96 - most of Brighton!
Sat 31 Aug 96 - Broad Street, Oxford.
Sat 14 Sept 96 - Mill Road, Cambridge.
Sat 19 Oct 96 - Oxford Road, Manchester.
Thur 31 Oct 96 - Cowley Road, Oxford.
Sat 12 Apr 97 - Trafalgar Square, London.
Sat 19 Apr 97 - Grinstead R'bout, Colchester.
Sat 3 May 97 - Springbank, Hull.
Sat 17 May 97 - Charter Row, Sheffield.
Sat 31 May 97 - Bishopthorpe Road, York.
Sun 8 June 97 - Evington Road, Leicester
Sat 21 June 97 - Bristol.

Why Reclaim the Streets and the Liverpool Dockers?

"The others talk about doing something–this lot actually do it." - a Liverpool Docker.

In linking up with the Dockers, Reclaim The Streets has taken what for some is a surprising and yet predictable route. Surprising in that there is no obvious link between 'anti-car activists' and 'sacked dockers', and yet predictable in that there is an obvious affinity-between them and the radical ecology movement.

Both the Dockers and radical ecologists argue for some form of social change, although so far in this country for wholly different reasons and, perhaps even with vastly different goals. RTS is suggesting that it is time we recognised the common social forces against which we are fighting in order to combine our strengths, and come up with a consensual approach to achieving significant social change.

We're saying that the power that attacks those who work, through union legislation and casualisation, is the same power that is attacking the planet with over-production and consumption of resources; the power that produces cars by 4 million a year is the same power that decides to attack workers through the disempowerment of the unions, reducing work to slavery.

That this power is capital. As long as economies run on the basis of profit for business, social and ecological exploitation will occur. The question is: can we come together as a movement that will effectively challenge and dissolve this power, before those in control lead society into the social and ecological catastrophe that is currently just beginning?

That the question 'Why Reclaim The Streets and the Dockers?' is even asked shows that there is a common perception that ecology does not include social issues. The belief that the environment is nothing to do with how society runs, that it is something remote and 'out there', somewhere to drive to for the day, something that just happens to be suffering because of the way we live. That we work in repetitive, meaningless jobs and that this is organised for the sake of profit is taken for granted, and remains somehow unconnected. This separation and presentation of the ecological crisis as unconnected to other forms of exploitation only serves the interests of business and state, and needs to be overcome if society is to survive. Indeed it is precisely the industrialisation process itself that has separated us from ourselves, each other and the earth.

At some point in history we placed ourselves outside nature and inside cities so that the brutal forces we were about to unleash didn't attack ourselves. Under the guise of civilisation, a small class of business men organised such an intense economic scramble which, far from advancing humanity, has attacked both the planet and its population. In 200 years we have almost depleted the world's resources, organised the most vicious and sophisticated methods of war, and created





a level of social inequality unprecedented throughout history.

So how did we get from the car to the dockers? First of all we haven't left car culture. Street parties will always oppose any tyranny on our streets. The form of opposition is, however, much more than simply 'against' car culture. Street parties cut straight to the alternative in the form of collective empowerment. As soon as the street is taken, the rule of the state is dissolved and a temporary autonomous zone is created. An active crowd celebrates its own strength and enacts its own unmediated diversity; and we all experience, albeit briefly, moments of collective control. Whilst cars dominate our streets, street parties will always be anti-car, but the tradition of empowered crowds taking control in the streets has a long and interesting history. RTS enters that tradition by inspiring people to take the initiative and maintain its momentum. We've seen crowds of 500 take a street for several hours, 8,000 take a motorway for 12 hours and so far all we've done is practice.

As a new form of direct action, the street party can only gain in popularity as we are now seeing. After the 'Never Mind the Ballots'/ Social Justice event, where 20,000 marched with the dockers for a rally plus a street party outside the National Gallery, the future of the street party is looking healthy–despite the state hamming it up for the cameras. As an old form of direct action picketing has looked like a failed method of struggle for the last few years. After a year of daily pickets at the gates of the Port of Liverpool, the dockers were entering their second winter with little hope of success in their fight for reinstatement. Having been cold-shouldered by their union the TGWU, (fearing sequestration of union assets under trade union legislation), the dockers sought support outside the union movement.

When RTS took action in support of the striking Tubeworkers in August 1996, the dockers had little left to lose in asking for our support. We gladly accepted the opportunity to extend links to workers in struggle, and the result was not just an empowering action that involved activists from all over the country, but a fascinating shape-shift in the direct action movement. The occupation of the gantries and office roof meant that the picket refused to disperse until all activists came down without arrest. 150 pickets managed to storm the port and get a docker on the roof, and throughout the day we all stood up for each other and the right to determine how we live. Far from sinking into oblivion, the dockers showed they were prepared to take the opportunity to innovate and take action inside their workplace, and (although only briefly), take over the means of production. As one docker said, "it was like a blood transfusion."

The process was symbiotic. The dockers revitalised their struggle and made good friends in the course of collective action, and we enhanced our movement by extending perceived boundaries for direct action. Suddenly, direct action was not just a fringe sport for extremists, but turns out to have been around for a long time, a central form of human activity.

On days of mass action, international support for the dockers has now reached 140 ports worldwide, and that's every port in Japan and Australia and most in the US. In uniting with the Liverpool Dockers we have laid some interesting foundations for the future growth of a movement for radical and lasting social and ecological change. How it now grows is, and always has been, up to all of us to decide.

!NO PASARAN!

For more details (and to send donations to) contact: Merseyside Port Shop Stewards, C/O TGWU, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool, L3 8EQ. Telephone: 0151 207 3388.



Stop Making Sense

Direct Action and Action Theatre

In 1973 Jacques Camatte indicated:'It is now becoming generally accepted that demonstrations, marches, spectacles and shows don't lead anywhere. Waving banners, putting up posters, handing out leaflets, attacking the police are all activities which perpetuate a certain ritual–a ritual wherein the police are always cast in the role of invincible subjugators. The methods of struggle therefore must be put through a thorough analysis because they present an obstacle to the creation of new modes of action. And for this to be effective, there has to be a refusal of the old terrain of struggle–both in the workplace and in the streets.'.[1]

The response to insights like Camatte's has been, to a certain extent, a shift of the terrain of struggle away from demonstrations and street fighting to the creation of autonomous zones and communities of resIstance, as well of course as the development of direct action tactics. Despite this shift in emphasis, however, a ritualistic element still remains in many direct actions. As in the forms of resistance Camatte discusses, the ritual all too often still casts resisters as valiant, earnest protesters set over and against stern, repressive cops and security guards, and all too frequently the resisters end up playing the roles of victim and martyr–victim of police brutality and martyr to the direct action cause.

This essay is intended to make some suggestions as to how this ritual–of casting resisters as victims, and cops as victimizers–can be disrupted and perhaps broken. I want to state though that this essay can only offer suggestions, not answers. Moreover, some of these suggestions may already be taking place. The blossoming of actions means that it is impossible to keep up with all the developments currently taking place. No claim to originality is being made here! I also want to stress that the proposals in this paper should not be regarded as an alternative to or a replacement for direct action, but as supplemental to it.

When I spoke just now about ritual (the scenario that is set up for resisters and cops), I deliberately used a theatrical terminology. Resisters, I suggested, were cast as victims and cops were cast as victimizers. In short, in the scenario that has emerged at the site of many direct actions, the participants assume particular roles. As a result, direct actions are already theatrical events in which the various players act out their parts. My proposals are based on a recognition of this fact,



Subversion on stilts at the Manchester RTS

and suggest that direct action activists should take advantage of direct action's dramatic elements. This does not mean deliberately staging events for the media as Greenpeace, for example, have done, because that merely means playing for the cameras–and once the cameras have gone, the whole momentum of the action can disappear, which sometimes means that the whale campaign disintegrates. On the contrary, taking advantage of the dramatic nature of direct actions means manipulating events by consciously intervening and shaping them in ways that are positive for the resistance.

In "Notes on Political Street Theatre, Paris 1968-1969", Jean-Jacques Lebel deliberately talks of the Paris uprising of May 1968 in theatrical terms. He says: *'The first stage of an uprising ... the first stage of*



any revolution, is always theatrical ... The May uprising was theatrical in that it was a gigantic fiesta, a revelatory and sensuous explosion outside the "normal" pattern of politics.'[2] It is in this sense that I wish to propose direct action as theatre: not as a dull ritualized scenario with pre-formulated roles for cops and resisters, and with an almost inevitable outcome, but rather as an explosion, as a riot of colour and effective action. In short, I propose the direct action as a prefiguration of uprising, as insurrection in miniature.

As part of the theatrical outburst of the May '68 uprising, Lebel refers to actual theatrical events on the street:

'Street theatre as such started to pop up here and there in mass demonstrations, such as the 13th of May, which gathered more than a million people. Large effigies appeared of the CRS (French riot police), of DeGaulle and other political clowns. Short, funny, theatrical rituals were performed around them as they burned. When the officially subsidised Odeon Theatre was occupied by the movement, many small groups of students and actors began to interpret the daily news in the street in short comic dramas followed by discussions with the passing audience.'[3]

Lebel, who was directly involved in what he calls political street theatre, or 'guerrilla theatre', indicates the rationale for utilizing drama in this way:

'The main problem, then as now, is to propagandise the aims and means of the revolutionary movement among those millions who, while not actually being hostile, have not yet taken part in the action. Since the mass media are totally controlled by the State, all they pour out are lies befitting the State's psychological warfare ... [So] we tried to use street theatre as a means to provoke encounters and discussions among people who usually shut themselves off from each other.'[4]

Here, Lebel is referring to an extension of agit-prop (agitation and propaganda) theatre to the streets. In the 1920s and 1930s, radicals staged agit-prop plays in theatres, community centres, on picket lines and dole queues. These were explicitly didactic plays–i.e. they had specific political messages to convey, and were designed as a form of political agitation and propagandising. Lebel indicates that in May 1968 these agit-prop productions were shifted even further away from the private space of the theatre to the public space of the streets, in order to address wider audiences. Lebel comments: *'Our orientation was agit-prop, yet we wanted to be creative and not just limited to old political cliches-above all we considered "theatre" only as a means of breaking down the Berlin Wall in peoples' heads and helping them out of their state of passive acceptance. We didn't give a shit about "art"-we were interested in sabotaging capitalism by helping to blow its arsenal of images, moods, perceptual habits and tranquilising illusions of security.'*[5]

In other words, political street theatre was regarded not as a work of art but as a weapon, an important tool in the revolutionary struggle.

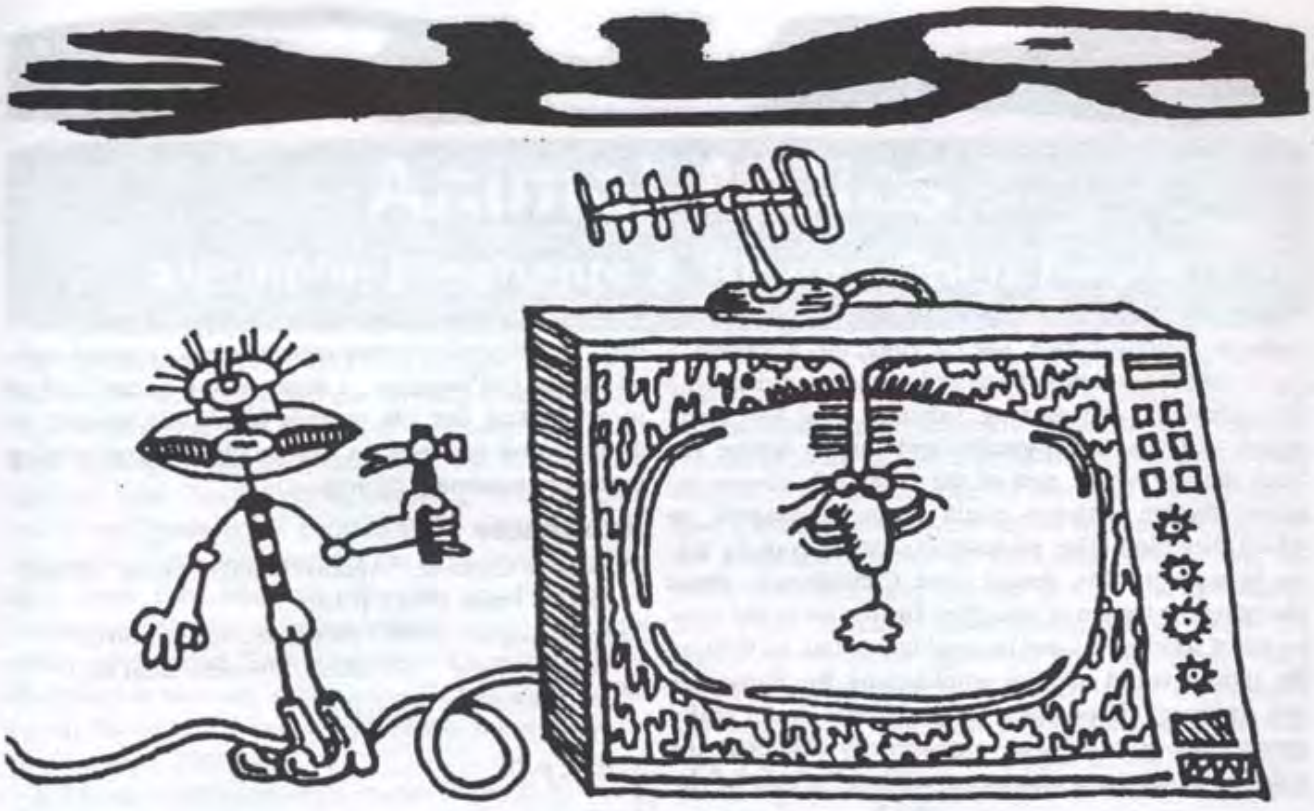
This is an important issue, but the scripts of the two street plays from May '68 appended to Lebel's essay now appear very stagey and hackneyed. Remember that Camatte, writing five years after May 68, remarked that 'demonstrations, marches, spectacles and shows don't lead anywhere'. And the reproduced scripts seem very much like spectacles and shows. Conditions have changed–not least through the development of direct action tactics–and although something could perhaps be achieved through the kind of political street theatre discussed by Lebel, it no longer seems particularly relevant to the needs of today.

Nevertheless, Lebel points the way to uses of the theatrical that could be used to complement and increase the effectiveness of direct actions.

Avant-garde artists have often dreamed of demolishing the barriers between life and art, and have indicated that this dream is part of the revolutionary project. In one respect, the trajectory of political theatre in the twentieth century shows a progression towards precisely that aim.

Agit-prop theatre began the process by reclaiming and redefining the theatrical. Agit-prop took drama out of the private space of the theatre and into more public spaces: away from professional writers and actors and toward amateurs and activists; away from a middle class audience and toward a more popular audience; away from depoliticised representations of bourgeois life and manners, and toward explicitly politicised representations of resistance: and away from spectacularised, commodified forms of theatre and toward more everyday, face-to-face, interactive types of theatre.

Political street theatre, as Lebel indicates, took this process on a stage further (no pun intended !), by taking drama into the streets, and the sites of resistance. It attempted to use street theatre as a way of breaking down allegiance to capital and the State without replacing that allegiance with the cosy 'answers' provided by alternative political ideologies. Now, however, with the advent of direct action, this process–the process of integrating art and life as part of the revolutionary project–can be taken even further.



CONSUMER STRIKE: NOW IS THE HOUR TO GET VIOLENT WITH YOUR TELLY. FLY INTO THE STREETS AND CREATE CARNIVAL AND FESTIVAL ....

In political street theatre, allhough the script is collectively written and the actors are activist-amateurs, the relationship between performance and audience remains unchanged. The actors act out a play and the audience passively watches a performance. Moreover, the theatrical performance only plays an indirect role in events. In the case of direct action, however, this need not be the case. The 'performance' can become an integral component of the direct action. This is what I term 'action theatre'.

Action theatre would take planning and preparation of course, but there is no need to write a script—just a general scenario and a broad understanding among participants that they know what roles they are playing.

Suppose, for example, that there is a small group of people of different ages, races, genders, shapes, sizes etc–some of whom look 'straight' or conventional. They plan a scenario, the parts they will play, and what they intend to achieve. They target a site: maybe a shop, a bank, a McDonalds. They enter the site separately, at different times, and pretend not to know one another. One starts making a fuss, asks to see the manager, and starts having a loud row with him/her. One by one, others join in. Some may initially appear to offer counter-arguments to the politicised points put forward by the initiator, but then be won over. Maybe the 'real' customers will be drawn into the seemingly spontaneous debate (maybe they could be drawn in by someone turning to a 'real' customer and asking, 'what do you think?'). Maybe they won't, but even so, they will be alerted to some issues. The security guards will be loath to get heavy with seemingly legitimate customers–particularly if there seem to be many people involved.

The concrete achievements of this scenario are many: business will be disrupted, alternative perspectives raised in public spaces, 'everyday'people will be alerted to or even drawn into issues, and a general impression will be given that unrest and dissatisfaction are widespread and regarded as legitimate by many. Moreover, with this type of theatrical direct action, particularly if it is terminated at the right time, arrests are likely to be minimal or non-existent.

A variation on this scenario is to place the group of actors in (say) a store that is about to be occupied. Again, these 'plants' will act as legitimate customers. When the direct action commences, the 'plants' can support the action, complaining to staff about security guards and police, threatening to report them, and encouraging 'real' customers to do the same. The out-



comes here would be preventing cop brutality and false arrest, as well as indicating to store managers, cops and customers that direct action is legitimate and widely supported.

Alternatively, staged events (which do not look staged, but spontaneous) could be used to create diversions–at a construction site, a store, or wherever a direct action is taking place–with the aim of diverting cop attention, and gaining valuable time for direct action activists. Additionally–and this is where the 'stop making sense' part of the essay title comes in–action theatre activists could arrange scenarios in which they (and other protesters) confuse cops by acting in unpredictable, absurd ways. Camatte talks about changing the terrain of struggle. The terrain of the cops is one of seriousness and rational behaviour, so shifting the terrain could involve emphasising the humorous and irrational. If prepared properly, this could really spook cops. It could also very directly challenge the scenario which casts resisters as earnest but also as victims. It could empower resisters in ways which cops might find it hard to cope with.

Action theatre is not an alternative to direct action; rather action theatre can complement direct action. It can cause disruption, but also be funny and fun to do. Moreover, it can get people involved who, because of their age, fitness, criminal record, job or personal commitments, can't engage in direct action or can't afford to get nicked, but can provide invaluable support for direct action activists, as well as directly contributing to the revolutionary project.

References

1) Jacques Camatte, "Against Domestication" (Black Thumb Press 1981), p.15.
2) Jean-Jacques Lebel, "Notes on Political Street Theatre, Paris 1968-1969", Drunken Boat no.1 (Autonomedia, n.d.), p.27.
3, 4) Ibid.
5) Ibid, p.28.

Lights! Camera! Direct Action!

American activist Saul Alinsky's 'Rules for Radicals' has been a key inspiration for the theatre of direct action. Alinsky is part of the same tradition as all the pranksters, situationists, subvertisers, surrealists and absurdists, from 60s Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman who threw money on to the New York Stock Exchange, to 90s comedian Mark Thomas who took drought-ridden Yorkshire Water boss a tank of water flown in from Ethiopia. Alinsky's fifth rule, for example, states "ridicule is man's most potent weapon. It's almost impossible to counterattack ridicule, also it infuriates the opposition who then react to your advantage." Today, CCTVs are wide open to this approach.

Much fun can be had trying to destabilise the confidence in the relationship between the camera operator and the police on the ground. For example, some seafront boy racers were caught pouring from a petrol can onto a car in front of a CCTV camera. When the police raced to the scene, the lads got out some sponges and said they were just cleaning it (the can contained water). The possibilities are limitless—breaking into your own car, fake fights, huge dope-less spliffs, fake drug dealing... Making a false weapon from trashed circuit boards and bits of metal junk and pointing them at the cameras has also proved effective and arrest-proof. One man in Bournemouth dressed up as an eight-foot alien (see Undercurrents 6) and completely freaked the police. Making plays in front of a range of cameras simultaneously sends a direct message to the control room that we are watching them watching us. It is also unusual and very difficult for police to deal with a group that is not grouped, but split across a wide space.

Secrecy for more VIDA (Violent Indirect Direct Action) is vital as the targets for a surveillance action are, well, obvious. Identical masks (and clothing) can be used for protection and confusion.

Many cameras use microwaves to send information back to the central control room, and these can be disabled using reflective industrial foil strips attached to helium-filled balloons at the correct height. (in theory—mind the wind!). Camera poles can be useful 'lost children' stations. Simply make a sign, and have a child with the same balloon idea. Now who would take a balloon off a child? The great thing about getting police to come to protect the camera/find out what is going on is that simply by being there they negate the very existence of the camera. Finally, manipulating signs and symbols by being a mental environmentalist can be just as effective. Several thousand yellow and black stickers bearing the words "WARNING You are being watched by Closed Circuit Television" have been placed in hundreds of toilets and personal spaces, provoking debate and outrage. Strategically placed 'Danger! Radioactive Microwaves' signs, with a bit of police and workman's tape to cordon off the camera will also get people asking questions. Lights! Camera! Direct Action!

Animal Antics

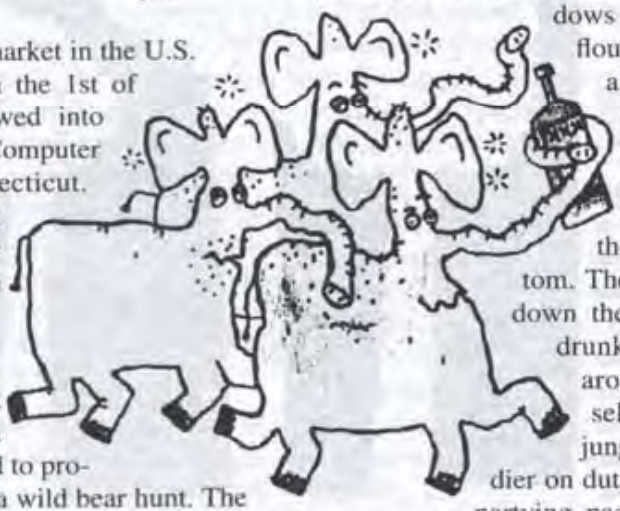
Alcoholic Elephants & Rioting Polar Bears

1. Officers of North Yorkshire Police have been defeated by an unexpected enemy–half a million starlings with a penchant for carpet bombing. The birds have roosted at Newby Wiske Hall, the forces headquarters near Northallerton, alarming resident peacocks and prompting a petition from villagers. They whirl around raining droppings for an hour or so before they roost. Bird muck on your car has become an unofficial indicator of which officer works late, said police spokesman Tony Lidgate. The sound of the droppings is like rain, said villager Dennis Pullan, who covers his cottage window with sheets at 6pm.

- *Guardian*, 23/3/94

2. The second largest stock market in the U.S. was halted for 34 minutes on the 1st of August when a squirrel chewed into power lines near the Nasdaq Computer Centre at Trumbull, Connecticut. Though Nasdaq never lost power completely, automatic systems tried in vain to switch over to a standby generator.

- *Guardian*, 4/8/94



3. A Russian bear was bought from a Russian circus by a tourist agent after he was asked to provide an American visitor with a wild bear hunt. The tourist was set up in Moscows Perdelkino forest and the bear was released. As the hunter closed in on his prey a postman passed by on his bike and tumbled off in surprise, according to the local newspaper, Vecernaya Moskva. The bear, recalling his big top training, grabbed the bike and pedalled off. The American was suing for fraud.

-*The Sun*, 21/6/92. Quoted in *Fortean Times* #71

4. Jakarta, Indonesia–Termites that can tunnel through concrete and metal are devouring Indonesian buildings at the rate of $145 million a year. The domestic news agency Antara Wednesday quoted researchers as saying the country was home to about 200 different types of termites. They said the insects not only ravaged wooden structures but could break through concrete, brick, metal plates and plastic pipes.

- *Reuter* 5/5/93

5. A herd of thirsty elephants have broken through Indian army defences to steal the soldiers winter rum rations. The animals regularly break into an army supply depot in the jungle area of Bagdogra, in Northern Bengal, to get to the stores of food and spirit. Soldiers have tried to keep them at bay by lighting fires around the base and putting up electrified fences. But the crafty creatures have learned to hose out the flames with water stored in their trunks, and to flatten the fences by dropping uprooted trees on them. Once inside the depot, the huge raiders have no problem smashing down thin steel railings and wooden windows to get to the rum, sugar, flour and bananas inside, said an army spokesman. An officer recently posted there explained that the elephants broke the rum bottles by cleverly curling their trunks around the bottom. Then they empty the contents down their throats. They soon got drunk, he said, and swayed around. They enjoy themselves and then return to the jungle. But woe betide any soldier on duty who confronts one of the partying pachyderms, said the officer. One elephant never forgot the man who poured hot water on him one night–and has returned regularly to demolish his hut.

- *Daily Telegraph* 14/12/91

6. A few years ago the cousin of a Sumatran friend of ours was killed by a singularly persistent elephant. He came across it raiding his fruit garden, unwisely wounded it with buckshot, and was chased up a tree for his trouble. He remained there for what must have been an anxious day and a night while the elephant returned to and from a nearby stream with trunkfuls of water with which it was finally able to loosen the roots of the tree, push it over, then trample its victim just as his belated rescue party arrived on the scene.

- *Ring of Fire*. Lawrence and Laura.Blair, Bantam 1988.



[This example does not mean that we take a malicious glee in the tragic situation in India, Africa and elsewhere, whereby poor humans are thrown into a desperate struggle with other creatures (tigers, elephants etc.) for diminishing resources. How is it that a tradition of thousands of years of (relatively) stable co-existence has been turned on its head in less than a century? A story such as the one above is instead intended to give the lie to the scientific myth that animals are little more than instinct driven automata.]



7. Millions of tiny fish forced nuclear power station bosses to shut down two reactors. Sprats blocked underwater screens on a cooling water system at Dungeness power station, near Rye. Dr. Andy Spurr, station manager, said: The shoals have to be seen to be believed. This isnt the first time we have suffered through the problem–about the same time in 1994 we again lost both reactors. The sprats are drawn towards the shore at this time of year at particularly high tides. They block screens on pipes used to pump in cooling water. Officials stressed there was no hazard and the reactor shutdown was a routine procedure.

- *Sussex Evening Argus*, 16/2/95

8. On Alaska's North Slope in November 1993 the village of Kaktovik suffered some bizarre vandalism. Dozens of lights illuminating the village airstrip were destroyed–knocked out by polar bears. Tracs in the snow showed the bears were methodically moving from one light to the next. On another occasion, witnesses saw them punching the lights one by one. Was this aggression, or were the lights just playthings glowing irresistibly in the night? Will any scientist ever know? Sometimes animals seem to play even with them.

- *National Geographic*, Dec 1994

9. In Ceres, California, a gopher was found on school grounds by a student, who turned it over to three school janitors. The janitors attempted to kill the gopher by freezing it to death with the spray from several cans of a freezing solvent used to clean floors. After the attempted extermination, one of the janitors tried to light a cigarette, which ignited the solvent and blew the janitors out of the utility room. Nineteen people were injured by the explosion. The gopher survived, and was later released to a field.

- *EF! Journal*, Brigid 1996.



10. The blackbirds of Guisborough, Cleveland, have learned how to imitate car alarms. They mastered the knack after an individual bird suspected his territory was about to be invaded. His wailings were taken up by other birds, and now the towns dawn chorus is driving many residents up the wall. I started hearing this irritating noise outside at 5am every day, said journalist Mark Topping,32. It certainly seemed to be a car alarm, but there wasnt one close enough to be making such a row. Then I saw this one particular blackbird sitting in our alder tree, outside the bedroom window. It was giving it everything, but instead of the usual pleasant song of the blackbird it was recreating the din made by a car alarm. After I heard that one bird I began to realise others had picked it up as well. David Hirst, a spokesman for the RSPB, explained that the birds had incorporated the sound into their song on the assumption that they were fellow birds requiring a response.

They are very good imitators and very adaptable to urban conditions. In the past Ive known them imitate trim-phones and even cats. Liz Taylor of Melrose, Borders, suggests that the blackbirds are enjoying a good joke at the expense of their sleeping neighbours. When I lived in Bombay, she said,We had a trio of large crows in our garden, one of which could imitate exactly (and in a Scots accent) my voice calling out for the bearer. When he arrived in response to the summons, they would jump up and down on the wall, cackling horribly.

- *Daily Telegraph* 16 and 22nd May 1996, Daily Mail 16/5/96, quoted in *Fortean Times* #90.

11. On a number of occasions I have played a botanical version of the parlour game called Murder. Six subjects are chosen at random and told the rules. They draw lots and the one who receives the marked card becomes the culprit, but keeps his identity secret. Two potted plants of the same species, are set up in a room and each of the six subjects is allowed ten minutes alone with them.

During his period, the culprit attacks one of the plants in any way he likes. So at the end of the test hour, the foul deed has been done and one of the plants lies mortally wounded, perhaps torn from its pot and trampled into the floor. But there is a witness. The surviving plant is attached to an electroencephalograph [EEG] or a polygraph and each of the six subjects is brought in briefly to stand near the witness. To five of these, the plant shows no response... but when confronted with the guilty party, the plant will almost always produce a measurably different response on the recording tape.

It is entirely possible that the machine, or the combination of the plant and machine, are responding to an electrical signal produced by the culprits knowledge of his own guilt... But on one occasion there was a result that seems to show that these are not the answers. During that particular experiment the potted cyclamen accused two of the six subjects. I called these two back and discovered that one was indeed the culprit, but that the other had spent an hour earlier that same morning mowing his lawn. He came in, with no guilt feelings, but to the plant it was apparent that he had blood on his hands.

-*The Biology of Death*, Lyall Watson, Sceptre 1987.

12. And Finally... an example of how NOT to do it–Cops in Chimps Clothing, apeing Jack Straw: take this case of law enforcement, noticed among the chimps of Arnhem Zoo: when two young females refused to come indoors for the night, zoo rules meant that the entire colony had to wait more than two hours for supper. Next day the miscreants received a thrashing from their companions, ensuring they obeyed the rules in future.

- From *Frans de Waals Good Natured*, in BBC Wildlife July 1996.

- *Those who do not learn from [human] history are condemned to repeat it.*

(With thanks to the shadowy Dr.H, late of Lyonesse, and of course not forgetting The Duchess)

Symbiosis 2: Who needs Detox!

Symbiosis is an ecological relationship where various organisms co-exist and co-evolve for mutual benefit. As the 19th century anarchist, geographer and evolutionary theorist Kropotkin argued, mutual aid is as important a factor in evolution as competition.

"Bluebottles (Calliphora erythrocephala) and Blowflies (Calliphora vomitoria) are the large-eyed flies that can often be found around dustbins and near animals. The female lays her eggs on decaying matter of all kinds (animal corpses, tainted meat or fish); anything that will provide food for the developing larvae. One of the places most favoured as an egg laying site is a festering wound. When the larvae hatch they feed only on dead tissue and pus, not on the healthy tissue surrounding the wound. They require the rich source of plasma and red blood cells found in dead tissue. The excretions of these larvae act in a similar way to a disinfectant and so also help to clean out the wound. By eating infected tissue and disinfecting the wound these grubs provide the host animal with a valuable service and could often save the host's life by preventing the infection spreading all over its body.'

-Taken from '*Symbiosis: Nature in Partnership*', Nicolette Perry, Blandford 1983 & 1990, London, p61.



Earth First!–But What Next?

From the outside, the direct action movement appears to be stronger than ever. Mainstream groups, like Friends of the Earth, are finally endorsing our actions and protest is a regular media feature. From the inside the picture is quite different: it is likely that without some serious thought about where we are going and what we are trying to achieve, we will soon become part of environmental history.

Two basic problems need to be addressed; firstly to define the major changes to society that we seek and secondly, do we want to build a mass movement or are we content to remain a small band of young, noisy, white, middle class, unemployed, physically able "extremists?"

Our Limitations

1. Unsustainability - big campaigns like Newbury and Selar are great for inspiring people and getting us into the media. However, they are unsustainable on several counts; firstly, they are costly - it is unlikely that Newbury would have survived without massive inputs of cash from FOE or donations raised on the back of FOE produced publicity. Yet this diverted cash from other worthy campaigns; if another Newbury kicked off tomorrow, would this cash be available again?

2. They are physically unsustainable too. Burnout is becoming an all too frequent occurrence, with the worst examples being the number of Newbury protesters who have ended up in psychiatric hospitals or as alcoholics. Holocaust survivor Primo Levi has said "leaders of rebellions ... must possess moral and physical strength ... oppression deteriorates both".

Burnout raises the question of how we can keep going into the long term. Where will current activists be in 20 years time? I fear that those that are not teachers, academics or social workers will be tending their permaculture plots, all saying "Well, I did my bit back in the 1990's - but it didn't work". The rest will be in looney bins or night shelters.

At present, direct action requires only the physically fit and alienates those who are older or less able. If this continues, our actions will always be isolated and limited. We also require people full-time (plus some!), unemployed and prepared to live in poverty.

Direct action has to be accessible to all, otherwise we will lose more and more individuals to burnout, and risk losing momentum as a movement.

3. Protest camps are unsustainable environmentally too - there is too little knowledge of living lightly (did I hear that there was human shit in a badger hole at one camp?) and because of the demands of protest it is almost impossible to live sustainably on camp, which means that we are only fighting half the battle.

4. Overempowerment - did we ever think that this was possible? To define it, it is being so assured of your own capabilities and of your right to stand up for what you believe in that you become unable to think of the consequences of your action and whether or not another (probably less exciting or daredevil) course of action might be more appropriate. In short, it stops people listening and thinking.

Overempowerment has created bad protests. They are too often dangerous, lacking in aims and with too many unnecessary arrests. Training on tactics is not enough, we need to start using them and we need to get away from the attitude that only pain and arrest make good actions, or that these experiences are to be worn like medals.

Overempowerment has created chaos, not anarchy. Anarchy is, in the words of Germaine Greer, "subtle forms of co-operation". It is not the "fuck you" atittude pervading on protests today.

Like unsustainability due to burnout, overempowerment is a symptom of who we are recruiting. We are dominated by English, middle-class youths. Their natural arrogance can be an asset to direct action, but it is coupled with a lack of responsibility to others and an opposition, on principle, to anybody who attempts to create (not impose - create) any order or structure to a protest. At Newbury evictions, I witnessed at least fifty people standing staring at the climbers' activities, whilst a digger was driven past (those attempting to stop it were just stared at too) and only a few feet away surveyors were working unhindered.

5. Stagnation as we lack incentive to move forward. This is partly because of our power base of young people, unwilling to break out from peer group pressure. Too much emphasis is placed on evictions, not on looking at the whole scenario - why are roads being built, who wants them built, how can we damage the economy that demands them? I have met road protesters with

no idea of these questions and of who engineers a road based economy. We have to teach ourselves the facts and learn to strike hard at the biggest enemies.

Oh! And can we drop the "spikey-fluffy" debate now!? It is meaningless and hinders discussions on how groups with different limits/agendas can work together.

6. Media backlash - we have never really prepared ourselves for this and yet it is already bubbling under. The worst is not the denunciation of our actions as violent, but the revelation of our protests as useless. What better way to render us ineffective than to tell the world that we are?

7. Lack of connection with other struggles - Thatcher's foulest achievement was to make the whole nation forget its social history, and that we are part of an ongoing struggle between those with power/money & those without (including the planet), who are exploited in the quest for more money & power. We have to learn from past struggles.

This is coupled with a lack of revolutionary thought - we need to change what is happening to the planet and encourage all people to live sustainably. We are not just trying to stop the destruction of one wood or one treehouse.

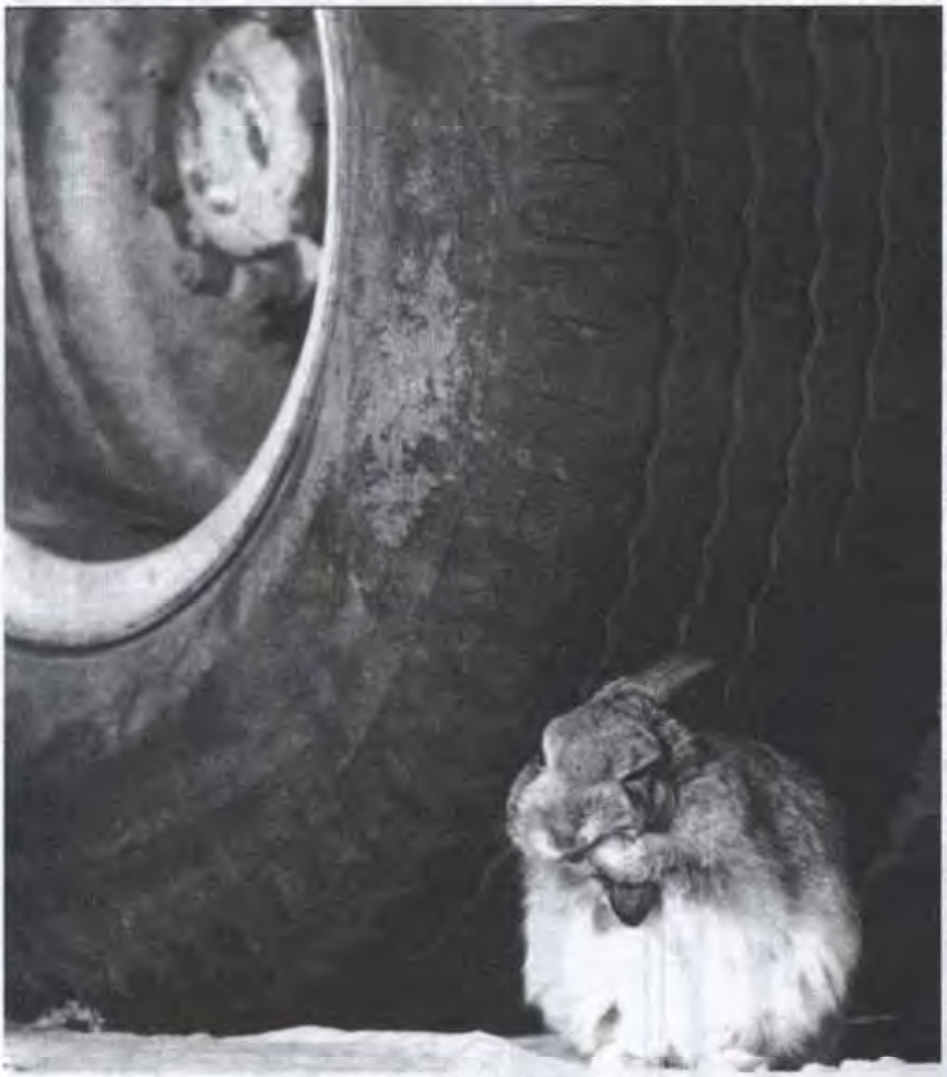
Our ultimate aim has to be the destabilising of global industrial capitalism. This is the system that demands that there are always rich people exploiting the poor. If we do not challenge capitalism itself, we cannot hope to put environment and people at the top of the world agenda.

8. We have to assess our relationship to the rest of the environment movement too. Why are we not Greenpeace or FoE, what can we do that they can't? At present FOE is making every effort to empower its local groups more - they have resources, credibility and good networks. But they are also much more restricted and less creative than us.

They have never put the destabilisation of capitalism on their agenda and hence are "reformist". It is no coincidence then that their membership is the complacent middle-classes, but can they be radicalised rather than written off?

If we can work with other organisations, without compromising our own opinions, we can radicalise others. We have to allow individuals the time to become empowered, but if we can build a diverse, united environmental movement, we would become a force to be reckoned with. Our currently isolated position and attitude only plays into the hands of the politicians and multinationals.

9. Is "everybody welcome"? We hand out thousands of leaflets saying so, but it is not true. If we are to continue to protest and to win, we have to



Oblivious to oblivion?

accept different levels of commitment and ability. Those we have welcomed have not always been the best activists and we are too nice to turn some away. Whole sections of road campaigns have been abandoned to "Brew Crew" and "acid casualties", as the rest of us find their behaviour offensive.

Enough Whinging—Here's Some Positive Ideas.

1. Learn how to agitate - successful movements like the Civil Rights movement, trade unions etc, spent lots of time out in communities talking to people and offering solutions. We need to do this to build a mass movement, reclaim our social history and stop being an elite. Simple histories of rebellions and protest would help.

Talks to community groups (Womens' Institute branches ??!) and reviving the Earth First! roadshow would be good. ECOTRIP does not, as yet, fulfill this role as it concentrates on the party-festival-veggieburger scene. Too many young people are cynical and apathetic, they need to know what sort of world they are inheriting, who makes it that way and how it can be salvaged. I am sick to death of being told, 'there is nothing for me, why should I bother?' Ours is the most materially well-off generation ever - that should breed responsibility to care for the world and for others. Outreach into this group is essential as they are the decision-makers [??] of the future.

2. Remember "the Earth is not dying, it is being murdered and the people murdering it have names and addresses". The worst perpetrators of global destruction need to be given a hard time. Use Corporate Watch for info and be persistent.

3. Create a movement that people want to join and stay in. This means having a clear agenda and including everybody - not just asking them to bake an activist a cake! We need to create a system that reduces our dependency on capitalism and destabilises it. By working closer with LETS schemes etc. we could create a parallel economy that would make the capitalist one irrelevant - AND make links with a wider group of people.

4. Counteract the media backlash by pointing out our successes more.

5. Criminal damage must be talked about! You don't have to say you do it, but always say that it is understandable, given peoples' frustrations. Criminal damage can be a threat, can be shown to parallel the damage to the Earth, but it should not be unfocussed vandalism. Sometimes it is inappropriate and we have to have the intelligence to know when this is.

6. Learn from current "successful" organisations like The Land Is Ours and Friends of the Earth, who score by being well connected, wealthy and strategic. But let's not allow them to set the agenda - use their networks and work with them on local issues. Public Inquiries are often criticised for being undemocratic and part of 'the system'. This is true, but if we could win a few battles at this level, our work would be easier and unless we stand up and point out the flaws, they will go unchallenged.

7. Should EF! develop itself? a difficult one this. We are, by nature and necessity, shy of centralised structures, but could we do with a little more centralisation for fund-raising, resource gathering, concentrated outreach, access to expertise, etc? What was the role of groups like EarthARC and Road Alert! - how can we replicate them if we need to? Do we need to provide more space for people who want to take a more passive role by raising money, providing subscriptions,etc?

Think About It!





The Business of Conservation, or the Conservation of Business?

"In order to underline the problem [of destruction of SSSIs], *FoE has launched a campaign centring on a 'Magnificent Seven' group of threatened sites. But some of these may already be doomed. In September, for example, British Coal* [now 'Celtic Energy'] *began open-cast mining at Selar Farm in West Glamorgan, a traditionally managed area of meadows, which are rich in wildflowers and rare butterflies such as the marsh fritillary. The mining will "totally obliterate" the SSSI."*

- From *BBC Wildlife* November 1994.

"'Pastures New: How to Create and Care for Wildflower Meadows', by the Wildlife Trusts, supported by British Coal Opencast. - Since 1945, 97% of British wildflower meadows have vanished. This booklet aims to reverse this trend."

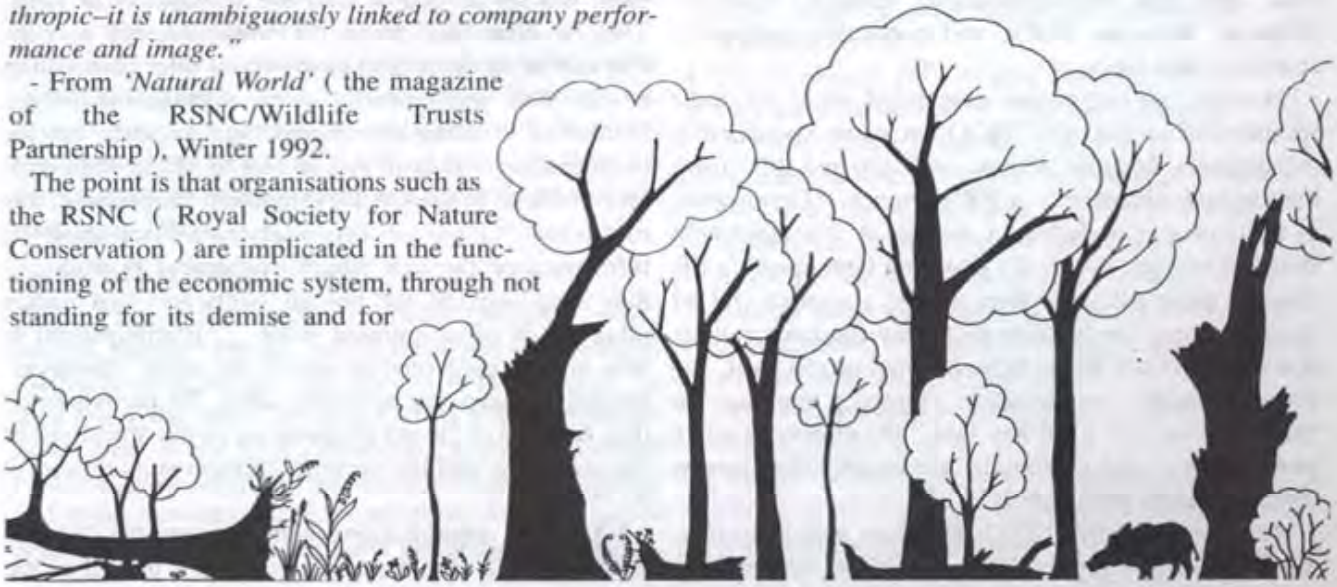
- From the Reviews Section of the same issue of BBC Wildlife.

"Everyone [?] *in the country inevitably takes a share of the hardship in a recession and the voluntary sector is no exception. In fact charities today are very sensitive to recession ...* [however] *business sponsorship has not fallen back and remains at approximately 40% of fund-raising income, but we are having to work much harder for it. Our corporate clients have become much more demanding about what they get for their money and we are asked more searching questions about the marketing and public relations benefits of their involvement. Sponsorship is no longer philanthropic–it is unambiguously linked to company performance and image."*

- From *'Natural World'* (the magazine of the RSNC/Wildlife Trusts Partnership), Winter 1992.

The point is that organisations such as the RSNC (Royal Society for Nature Conservation) are implicated in the functioning of the economic system, through not standing for its demise and for their own redundancy/ies. Their fortunes rise or fall with that of the overall economic system. The economic boom that trickles down to them from their corporate mentors is, as Fifth Estate point out, founded on ecologic bust.[1] Therefore a recession is cause for celebration—it is a temporary let-up in the economic war being waged against the earth and all its peoples. It should not be a cause for anxiety over the potential drying up of funds - at the loss of the RSNC's share in the spoils of that economic war.

However, the RSNC and others are not just implicated by virtue of their quiescence. As the passage from Natural World makes abundantly clear, they are beholden to capital. The "sponsorship" isn't "philanthropic"—they are expected to play an active role in the waging of the war. In the realm of representation—of image pressed into the service of capital—they have a job to do; like everyone else, they must "work harder". Being associated with a neutral and benevolent organisation like the RSNC lends an air of credibility—the green seal of approval—to British Coal's activities. In this context, the RSNC act as image janitors, cleaning up 'corporate pollution'. In our upside-down world, this term refers not to actual damage to the environment caused by the company, but to the 'pollution' of the company's image by such damage. The presence of (for example) the RSNC in all this serves to reassure a nervous public—in the words of Fifth Estate, it gives





"the appearance of management through the management of appearances".[2]

Of course, such 'greenwashing'[3] is rife. Other examples are Greenpeace's involvement in the development of fuel-efficient cars, the Shell "Better Britain' campaign[4], the Ford Conservation Awards, Esso Tree Week, Tarmac's astonishing, sanctimonious conversion to 'environmentalism' (pass the sickbag)—the list is endless.

A related problem is that of convergence—the way in which NGOs have become ever more similar to the corporations in their institutional structure and needs: "They found themselves managing increasingly large projects and budgets. Their staff mushroomed and demanded better employment conditions. They needed people, project and financial management skills of the same kind as business. So downsizing companies seconded managers to NGOs ... And NGOs appointed people from business to their boards and top management posts".[5] The personnel and interests of NGOs and companies became ever more interchangeable—indeed, by virtue of their similar structures, they began to develop an affinity with one another, they began to understand each others' needs—they recognised, as Thatcher said of Gorbachev, that here were people they could do 'business' with. Cooperation began to replace confrontation, and the euphemistically named 'strategic alliances' between NGOs and particular companies started to develop.



Likewise, as companies demanded more for their sponsorship money, the "NGO corporate sponsorship departments became almost indistinguishable from mainstream advertising or PR agencies".[5] Greenpeace in particular is hailed as a master at manufacturing stunning images. While we may find Greenpeace's PR product more palatable than that of a commercial ad agency, do we really want to follow the corporations down this route? Regardless of who produces it, the form of media manipulation carries a message in itself—as Jacques Ellul has said, "the effects of one's propaganda on the personality are exactly the same as those of enemy propaganda".[6]

More generally, the RSNC and others perform a role, albeit an unwitting one, similar to that of modern day unions in the world of work. Both traffic in popular concerns, witholding or delivering the 'block vote' in exchange for certain concessions. Like the labour struggles of the late 19th and early 20th century (and, to a lesser extent, those of today), environmentalism in its undiluted form can pose a fundamental challenge to the operation of capitalism—it is one of the latest 'arenas of contestation'. As Nicaraguan environmentalist Lorenzo Cardenal has said, "The ecological movement as a form of popular mobilisation has enormous political potential and could even be said to be revolutionary in the Third World, because it questions the very basis of the social order ... The influential developed world, primary beneficiaries of the existing order, have seen this political potential and attempted to neutralise it.".[7] Likewise, in the US, a leaked memorandum from the Government's Environmental Protection Agency described the "'environmental justice movement'... as the greatest threat to political stability since the anti-war movement of the 1960s".[8]

The RSNC, et al, act as the domestic face of this process of neutralisation and recuperation. If capitalism "must above all prevent a new setting out of revolutionary thought",[9] then the function of the RSNC, like that of the unions, is to disarm meaningful dissent and to muddy the waters—the public can rest easy because 'something' is being done—the environment has its advocates, and the situation is in hand. They mediate and divert the environmental concern that can be so disturbing to the status quo, channelling it into less antagonistic, more manageable forms. Instead of refusing the system outright, they opt for participation within it. According to Majid Rahnema, an ex-official of the UN Development Programme, this means that "Grassroots organisations are becoming the infrastructure through which investment is made, or they help provide the human 'software' that makes other kinds of investment work ... [Participation] is now simply perceived as one of the many 'resources' needed to keep the economy alive. To participate is thus reduced to the act of partaking in the objectives of the economy, and the societal arrangements related to it."[10]

UK green organisations help deliver this "human software" too. Professor Chris Baines describes the



boom years of the 1980s, when job creation schemes for the unemployed drafted a huge new workforce into the conservation movement.[11] Yes, environmental restoration work desperately needs doing, but a far less lofty political agenda fuels this approach to the problem. We are about to witness a repeat performance of this scenario—the Tories' new "Project Work" is (initially) intended for the voluntary sector, and one of Tony Blair's proposed taskforces for the unemployed is intended to focus on 'environmental work'.

Basically, the problem with organisations such as the RSNC is that they seem locked into the sinecure of the "professional environmentalist"—a position which itself represents an accomodation with the prevailing ecocidal order. It smacks of the 'loyal opposition', subdued witness to the horrendous works of late 20th century capitalism, with an interminable series of crises presenting themselves to the conservation ambulance service for resolution or amelioration. It is "Once more unto the breach", time after time after time. For them, there appears to be little sense of urgency, immediacy or passion—everything seems to take place within the slow, tortuous unfolding of 'bureaucratic time' ('In bureaucracy, no one can hear you scream'). At their worst, they appear little different from their counterparts on the side of destruction—both mindlessly and mechanically toiling towards their respective ends, the mirror-image sleep-walking drudges of the apocalypse. But you can't fight business with business—regardless of the content, the form itself is barren.

Instead, one must break with it, and establish a deep sense of acting for and with life. An unbridled, exultant, unapologetic and deeply 'irrational' affirmation, both of your own life and of all that surrounds you, must be set against the nullifying language of death. This is why we have achieved so much with comparatively little—we are learning to give up trudging and to start dancing. This is the reason why, as Fourier says, it takes "workers several hours to put up a barricade that rioters can [erect] in a few minutes".[12] They are carrying out the same activity—it is the form, or 'animus', that differs.

(Sort of) A Disclaimer.

This piece is not intended to decry the RSNC—and related groups—per se, but to point out the (perhaps inadvertent) niche that they occupy in this society. As with even the most mealy-mouthed green organisations, there is always a glimmering spark of wildness within at least some of their initiatives and personnel, and their 'rearguard action' mentality is understandable, if misguided. As with any grouping of people, it would be foolish to think that all its members share the same opinions, or that the group identity is fixed and unchanging. But to step outside the format that such groups currently assume could liberate the members themselves, as well as immeasurably strengthening a true green movement.

References:

1. "Revolution Against the MegaMachine", George Bradford, Fifth Estate Winter 1989.
2. Ibid.
3. For a good insight into this process, see the review of E. Bruce Harrison's "Going Green: How to communicate your company's environmental commitment" in Do or Die No.5. Also, "Democracy for Hire: Public Relations and Environmental Movements", Stauber and Rampton, The Ecologist September 1995. This article highlights the significant threat from corporate 'divide and rule' strategies—co-opting the moderates and marginalising the 'intransigent' radicals. (In this context, see also "Who are the realists?" Editorial, The Ecologist July/August 1995.)
4. Also, what might be termed their "Better Ogoniland" campaign: in the wake of the image crisis caused by the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and others, Shell dispatched David Bellamy's Conservation Foundation to Nigeria to 'do a study' (aka. clean up the 'corporate pollution').
5. "Green world alliance plc", John Elkington, Links Supplement, Guardian 20/11/96.
6. "Propaganda", Jacques Ellul, Vintage 1973, p.137.
7. In "500 Years of Environmental Destruction in Latin America", Environmental Network for Nicaragua 1992.
8. The Ecologist, July/August 1992, p. 162.
9. Guy Debord, quoted in "The Most Radical Gesture", Sadie Plant, Routledge 1992.
10. Quoted in The Ecologist, July/August 1992, p. 163. See also the excellent review of "Conflict Resolution: Cross Cultural Perspectives", Ed. Avruch et al., in The Ecologist Nov/Dec. 1994. Among other things this describes 'sustainable development' as "perhaps the most ambitious conflict resolution project of all time".
11. The Baines Report, Chris Baines, BBC Wildlife March 1995.
12. From: "Enrages and situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68", Rene Vienet, Autonomedia/Rebel 1992.

Newbury

An adrenaline junkie's idea of heaven



This is an article of limited scope—it is not intended as any kind of a history or analysis of Newbury. It's aim is rather to give a sense of the day to day realities of living in that situation. As such it is bound to miss out a lot of what happened at other times and places within the campaign.

I spent the initial clearance/evictions phase of the living at several of around thirty camps constructed along the route. Every camp developed a very specific character, and had a different mix of people living there, from those who constantly built defences on site, to others who put in long hours at the office, to those living on a camp because it involved the shortest stagger back from the pub. Newbury continued the road protest 'tradition' of totally unsafe climbing practices—people teaching others to climb when they can't do it properly themselves. People trying to figure out how to get into a treehouse for the first time, pissed, tripping or in the dark an dodgy constructions ,(one treehouse turned out to be completely suspended from one piece of 4mm rope with two half hitches tied in it). Fortunately the tradition of largely getting away with it also continued, and despite some serious injuries nobody was actually killed during the campaign (despite the efforts of some of the bailiffs, climbers and chainsaw operators).

There were two distinct periods during the clearance of the route—the first involved taking the offensive and disrupting their cutting and bulldozing wherever possible. However, after the legal battles over possession of the land covered by the camps were decided in favour of the Department of Transport, a much more defensive attitude emerged and people became unwilling to leave their home camps undefended while they hunted out the mobile chainsaw crews and generally concentrated on building more defences.

During this first period the day would start early (4 or 5ish) on site, waiting for confirmation over the C.B radio or mobile phone of where the destruction work was taking place and sorting out transport as quickly as possible, either via the office or using anything available near site. Visiting journalists were always useful for this as they needed to get to where the action was just as much as we did .People would arrive at the worksite until we had enough numbers to begin trying to breach the security cordon.

During the first week of (attempted) work there were so many of us and so few security guards that they were quickly reduced to asking if they could please have their diggers back so they could take them back to the compound for the rest of the day. However, massively increased security and a far greater willingness on the part of the police to get involved soon made this level of disruption very difficult to achieve. In the gaps between attempts at breaking the cordon, people would often harangue the security guards with an incredible variety of techniques. Some would simply play music



to them, others would try rational arguments about road-building, or confronting them with hippyish rants about raping their mother the earth, while others would just stand nose to nose with a guard and scream abuse at him (there were very few female guards). About the only form of interaction that most people seemed to agree on was throwing snowballs at them, weather permitting. Some activists also made a hobby of stealing security guards' helmets while they stood in line—the rank and file white helmets were almost too easy to be worth taking and the red or yellow hats of the management became more of a target.

There was often a surreal feeling to events such like two people dressed as a pantomime cow being arrested, or a person in a yeti costume sat up a tree surrounded by grim faced police and security. Stranger still was the local foxhunters coming down on their horses to take direct action against the road that would cut through their hunting land, protesting alongside activists many of whom were hunt sabs!

The security guards themselves were there for a wide range of reasons. The vast majority disliked the job but saw it as their only option to earn a living A minority were there on a hippy-bashing mission, and their were some with bizarre justifications such as one ex-squatter who was there to gather material for a new play he was writing.

There was a marked dislike of the police amongst security—many of them had previous convictions themselves and there were quite a few ex-miners who had been involved in confrontations with the police during the 1984 strike. This dislike occasionally extended to warning potential pixies of police teams lurking in the woods at night (a common police tactic especially when construction machinery and fencing were brought in) and advance warnings of when the police had been called in to deal with a situation.

Later in the campaign relations between security and the remaining activists (mostly) improved. With all construction work going on behind razor wire fencing, actions became centred around trashing things at night. Given that numbers fell dramatically when the last of on-route tree camps were cleared, there was little that could be done during the day, so security had an easy job and nothing better to do than chat and share cigarettes with us. Also many of them realised that they only had a job at all because we were there.

As the threat of camp evictions loomed following the court cases, many people diverted their energies into building up defences on-site. This was done with such manic enthusiasm that the actual usefulness of what was being done was sometimes overlooked; for example a lot of effort was put into building a moat and barricade, complete with scaffold poles and barbed wire, whose only effect on invading bailiffs equipped with diggers would have been psychological. The far simpler action that prevented any machinery accessing the site was flooding the area with two dams.

With the variety of people living on site conflicts were inevitable—one of the most persistent being between those with a strong work ethic who disapproved of alcohol and drug use and those who saw no problem with getting wrecked a lot. This often degenerated into mutual insults ('fascists' and 'brew crew') and general bad atmosphere. It is obviously unacceptable to have people on site who's behaviour is totally selfish and anti-social people who never contribute with either their effort or their money because they're too pissed to care and too skint after spending all their money on getting that way. Such people are simply parasites. However it is too easy to ignore the contributions that people do make by slipping into lazy assumptions—just because somebody drinks more than you do or takes drugs it doesn't follow that that is all that they do. An important part of this type of campaign is that it is often an enjoyable thing to do—amidst constant stress a party or trip to the pub can be an important relief. Very few people are attracted to live in an atmosphere of self righteous sacrifice and guilt tripping. Fortunately there were enough camps at Newbury for people to find one where the atmosphere suited them, which, to an extent at least, helped to resolve such problems. One camp for instance was exclusively vegan, while another was called 'Camp Carnivore'.

During the campaign, and especially during the first months, we were constantly visited by the media, both British and international; from national TV to magazines for teenage girls. It very quickly became obvious who loved the attention and who saw it as basically irritating to be hassled

Bypass Police Condemn Dangerous Protest Tactics

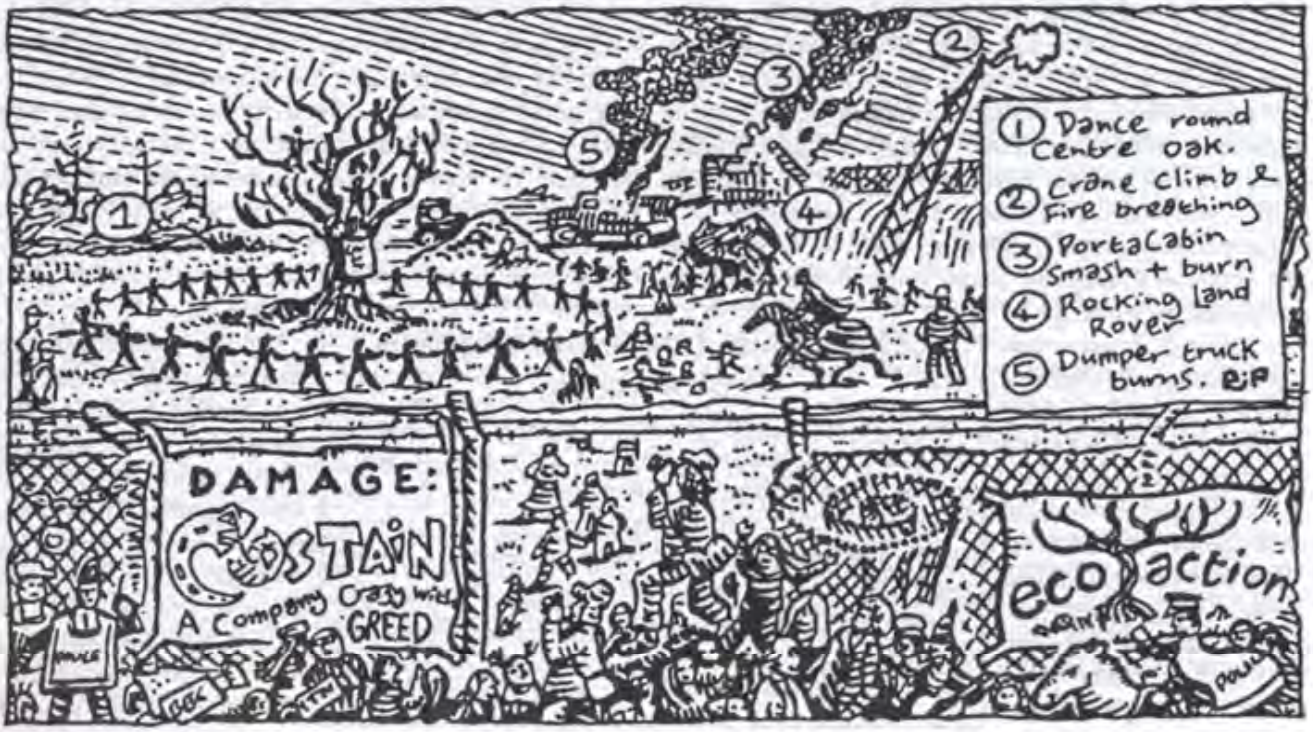
"Police on the Newbury Bypass site today condemned the tactics of protesters who last night took a heavy tractor from roadworks unconnected with the site. They drove to a construction area off the Andover Road, where they damaged compond fencing, lighting equipment and a portacabin building. Police were called but the offenders ran away before they arrived at the scene."

-Thames Valley Police Press Release, 11/11/96

by reporters while trying to do something useful. More welcome visitors were the anti-bypass locals who came up, often with bags of food. While this support was much appreciated it is unfortunate that so few locals felt able to become more actively involved in the campaign, (much respect to those who did!).On the other hand some locals became actively involved in attacking the camps and vigilante attacks became a regular feature of the campaign—petrol bombs, guns and catapults were all used against camps and their vehicles. Less seriously but more often, people from camps were attacked in the town centre, especially on weekend nights. The courts showed their approval of these attacks when one man who had been arrested for petrol bombing an occupied bus was found not guilty despite admitting making molotovs and taking them up to the camp while drunk, (too drunk, he claimed, to remember what he did with them when he got there). The obvious comparison that springs to mind is what the same court would have thought of an activist caught throwing petrol bombs at a digger....

By the autumn/winter of 96 the overt on-site aspects of the campaign had mostly ended, although a few people remained near the route. Resistance continued however, and the 6th Jan saw a determined effort at disrupting Costain's EGM in London. Like the previous two meetings infiltrated by shareholding activists, security was heavy. After earlier experiences of the causation board's ability to completely side-step so-called awkward questions about their company's environmental policies, many activists immediately tried to storm the stage and prevent the meeting happening at all. Attempts continued for the duration of the meeting, with pauses for some of the more interesting questions being fielded, such as the apparently 'genuine' shareholder who complained that the board had no understanding of the beauty of geometry and proceeded to ramble on about dodecahedrons for a while. Bringing the same mixture of serious struggle and the blatantly surreal which characterised the on-route actions to the costain meetings seemed rather appropriate. A few days later hundreds of people converged on Newbury for the reunion rampage, marking the first anniversary of the start of clearance work. The event had been promoted as a symbolic fence decoration and candlelit vigil, but it quickly became obvious that most people were not prepared to stand passively around a working construction site. Quite spontaneously, many people began to shake and kick the fence, and several holes appeared. Mounted and foot police intervened and attempted to secure the gaps in the fence, but more and more people were becoming involved by this stage and it seemed likely that a large scale site invasion would occur. At this point, however, the crowd was encouraged by event stewards into a neighbouring field to hear the planned speeches, from the likes of the FoE leadership, and the situation was diffused.

Upon returning to the compound however, people almost immediately began to enter the site, more and more holes being cut in the fence. The outnumbered



police and security were unable to prevent this situation developing and soon retreated to a corner of the compound, leaving the crowd in control of the site. Machinery was occupied as operators retreated with their security, leaving people to vent their anger on the symbols of destruction around them. Despite the blatant wrecking going on everywhere the police were totally impotent.

The machines, supposedly safe behind hundreds of security guards and miles of razor wire turned out to be vulnerable. For many of the people attending what they expected to be a passive rally the day must have been a short shock of an education in what people are capable of doing when they act together. There have been many rational arguments about the usefulness of this action to the campaign, but to anyone who watched the route being transformed from beautiful countryside to churned mud and charred stumps, there is at least a sense of natural justice to the sight of the last tree on route silhouetted by the flames of burning machinery.



The majority of those on the rally went inside the Middle Oak compound, and if not actively involved in sabotage, at least gave it their tacit support. Double decker buses hired by local FoE groups were full of cheering when the diggers went up in flames. FoE national's condemnation showed they were out of touch with their own membership.

A Critique of Newbury

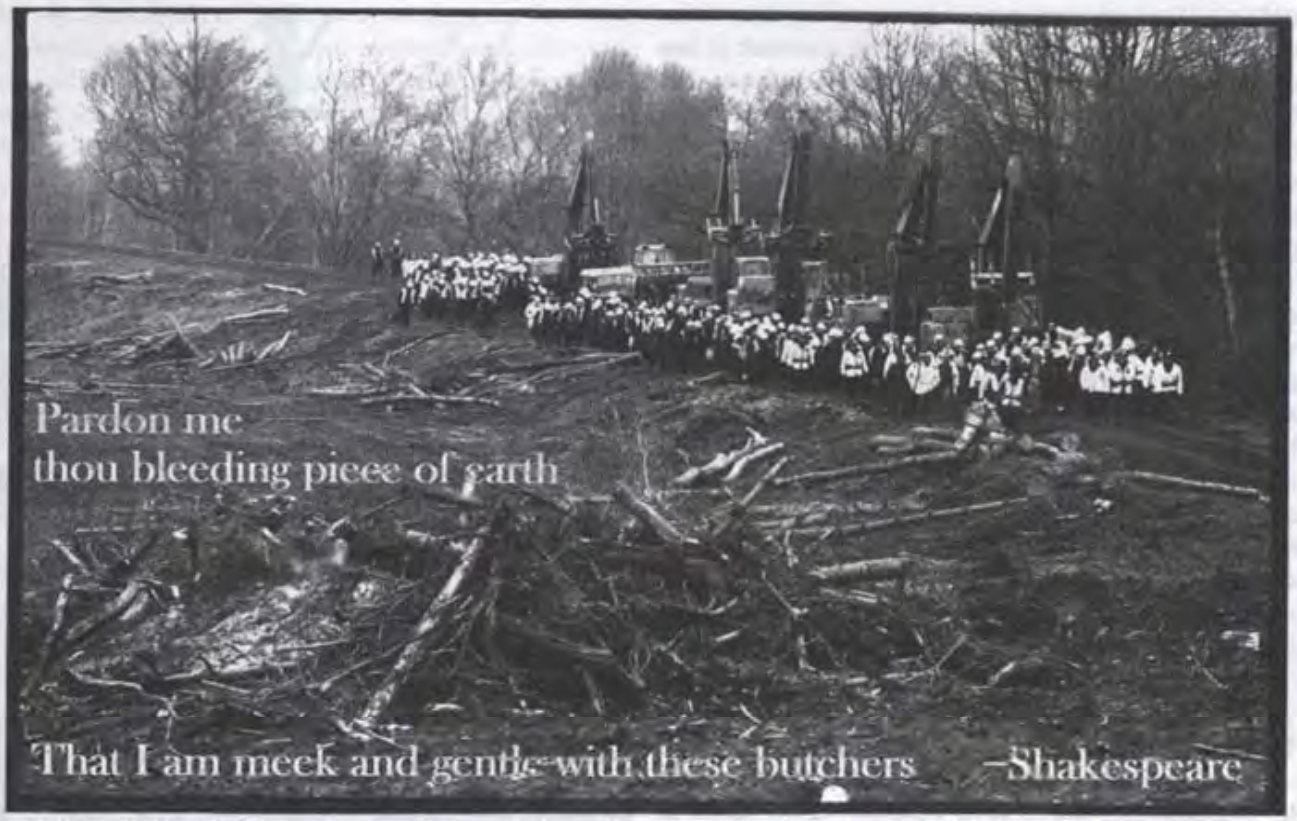
The campaign to prevent clearance of the 9 mile route of the Newbury bypass saw the biggest direct action campaign to date against a road scheme, and so could be seen as the most successful so far. However despite all the hype, and expectations bestowed upon it, (often not from activists themselves, but the media), it failed to stop the site being cleared (it is of course debatable if this was ever possible or expected). The campaign has also showed limitations in the road protest movement- both tactical and strategic that need to be addressed if we are to build on the many successes that the campaign achieved.

I wish to make it clear that I intend this piece as a constructive critique of the campaign from someone that was involved throughout the clearance work. It is not a cynical winge from someone that never even went down there. My involvement at Newbury has given me a greater encouragement to continue direct action, when I had been considering giving it up for an easier, hassle-free life. However there are problems in the movement that I feel have always been there, but as they have not previously been dealt with, have grown more apparent as it has grown bigger.

We didn't involve enough people in Direct Action

My main problem with Newbury was its apparent inability to gain mass involvment in direct action. A poignant example of this was the mass rally in February '96 where a coalition of various groups including Friends of the Earth, Third Battle and Road Alert! drew over 6,000 people to walk the route and show their opposition to the scheme.

The rally was a good thing that brought a lot of people to the area that would not have otherwise come. But it was very sad that despite being heavily plugged only about a thirtieth of the rally stayed the night for the next day's action. In the end around 200 people trashed the Tarmac office in Newbury. At least two computers found themselves flying out of the 2nd floor windows



and FoE National, the main organisers of the rally, publicly condemned the action. It was slightly ironic that those who were bussed in for the rally had been attracted down by the media coverage of the daily actions, but did not stay to participate in any. Any future involvement would have been limited to joining their local Friends of the Earth group or sending some money.

There is a damaging division between 'activists' and 'supporters'

This illustrates what I feel to be a major fault in the campaign. There was a division of labour which seriously impaired the effectiveness of the campaign. Lines tended to be drawn between fit young activists who would perform direct action, and older, more respectable campaigners, who would offer moral and financial support, but not get involved in direct action. There are of course notable exceptions- those people from the camps who spent long hours in the office doing tedious jobs, and Newbury residents who would try to disrupt the convoys of security coaches going through Newbury- but these too often were the exception rather than the rule. The fault lies on both sides of this divide.

I became increasingly annoyed with meeting people who, when they discovered I was involved at Newbury, would start conversations along the lines of "Oh well done- you're a hero. I wish I could get involved, but I can't cos I'm not able". Hearing this would make me feel that I was the cannon fodder for other peoples' environmental consciences, and apart from feeding one's own ego, there is little use for attitudes like that. Everyone is able to do direct action, (as the disabled direct action network has shown), and it is vital to get that message across. If everyone at that rally had pledged one day off work to take action, had that been organised into a rota of 200 people available to stop work each day, the state would have found it extremely difficult to finish the clearance contract on time- if ever!! We need to change this disempowering attitude that many of the so-called 'respectable' supporters have. One of the most moving and apt things I heard on the rally, was when one protestor came on stage after a man had given him his war medals as a sign of respect. He said something to the effect that the protestors were not special people or heroes- all they were was very tired, and in need of help.

The acceptance of a division of roles seems sadly all too apparent amongst the direct action campigners as well, who are supposedly anti-hierarchical and anti-elitist. There was a definite 'hierarchy of the harness' [The 'Cabal of the Carabiner'?]. If you were not fit and able to climb trees, then you were relegated to ground support - too often an implicit euphemism for merely

supplying those in the tree tops with moral and financial support. This attitude must be countered becuase it put off a lot of people from getting involved.

I would never advocate stopping all forms of tree protests. I think it was an extremely effective tactic for delaying the clearance work, as highly specialised professional climbers had to be recruited to evict protestors at rates of between 700-900 a day. This resulted in eviction costs soaring, and the politicisation of much of the climbing community. However it is one tactic among many, we should never neglect the others which can be just as effective. Ground lock-ons often delayed the bailiffs for a very long time, and if the convoy was prevented from reaching the site, then an eviction could not even happen. I often felt very disempowered while standing outside an eviction cordon. When there were not serious attempts to break through it would sometimes just turn into a spectacle that we were observers at, and not active participants.

Everything should stop for Newbury?

There was also this idea that everything should stop for Newbury. To give an example there were twice weekly minibuses conveying people between Brighton & Newbury. Someone rang up the Justice? office having a go at them them for giving a lift to people that wanted to go to the Valentine's Day Reclaim the Streets in Brighton. Justice? had 'taken away 30 climbers who could have been at Newbury'. Newbury was an important battle, but one of many in a diverse war.

Our image alienates

On a wider level, I became increasingly worried that the cultural vanguardism of the campaign was alienating people from getting involved. If we are to break free from the media stereotype of us as hippy dropouts, then we should not live up to it. We must not pander to their puerile attempts to shift the agenda from why the planet is being trashed to lifestyle bollocks. If we are going to even talk to them, then we must come across as intelligent, informed, and have a message that people can relate to. Being portrayed as a bunch of spaced out hippies can be incredibly alienating to most people; and if we are going to get mass involvement we need to be as all embracing as possible, (needless to say without compromising our ideals or actions).

You're not part of our scene, you're not part of our movement?

An arrogant elitist attitude was often directed towards people who for one reason or another did not stay on the camps. While I have a lot of respect for people that want to live in trees threatened with destruction, a lot of people do not have the time or the inclination to live full-time on camp. These people are put off by the feeling that if they are not full-time activists, then they are not as 'hardcore'. Although the DIY culture has grown in the last few years it has become more and more of a clique because there seems to be a certain style which one must conform to. If some people do not aspire to a certain lifestyle, we should respect that. I accept that we need radical change in every aspect of our lives in order to be able to save the planet, but I sometimes wonder how radical living on a camp actually is. I often felt that I was having more of an effect trying to gather mass support in my home town rather than living full-time on a camp, detached from the mass of society in a lifestyle that most would find too alienating.

Personal problems get in the way of campaigning

[Editor's note: The following two paragraphs put across ideas that members of the idiotorial collective heavily disagreed with. Rather than not include the piece, or edit it so that it 'conformed', we decided to print it with a reply at the end. We hope this aids discussion and debate.]

Another problem is how to deal with some peoples' personal problems that are brought to direct action protetst. Whether you call them dime-bars, energy vampires, lunch-outs, or whatever, it is undeniable that personal problems can often seriously hinder the effectiveness of a campaign.The free-living, utopian lifestyle of protest camps attracts all sorts of people (and rightly so), but sometimes for the wrong reasons.There can be a conflict between the view that everyone should be free to live their own individual life, and the right for a community to exist free of disruption. This conflict should not exist: a road protest camp is not a community centre to deal with people's problems- it is neither desirable or feasible.

Living on a protest camp can be highly stressful and demanding, and is not a suitable environment for helping people with drug, alcohol, or psychological problems. I heard of at least a dozen people sectioned as a result of the protests (at least 3 people involved with Newbury have also died as a result of



alchohol or drugs), and these people obviously need help. However we as protestors are not in a position to be able to help (both because we do not have the energy or qualifications to do so), and I feel it is slightly arrogant to assume that we do. We should leave the job to those who are able, so that we can concentrate on the real reasons for being there. I do not deny the need for setting up proper care networks, as it is often the oppressive nature of modern society that can unbalance people, but this should be separate from the day to day life of the direct action protests.If peoples' own personal problems are causing serious disruption to campaigns, then they should be asked to leave and go somewhere that is more suited to their needs.[2]



Theft on the campaign was also a serious problem. There is undoubtedly room for communality of certain resources such as food, but this should not extend to personal posessions, which all too often went walkies. Having your harness nicked can put your life at risk, but even some of these were disappearing. There was even the case at Kennet where a group of climbers came down to help, and one of their sleeping bags went missing from the mothership (it turned up later after some persuasive talk). There is a simple solution to dealing with thieves- anyone caught nicking people's stuff should be kicked off camp straight away, and others warned about it.

I sometimes felt that there was a lack of any in-depth thought in people's reasonings for their actions. Emotive feeelings towards the planet are very strong, and it is understandable that anyone living on a site that they were attached to would wish to defend it to the limits of their abilities and beyond. However, realisation that the struggle against ecological destruction goes beyond emotive reactions is essential, otherwise, for many, the battle will end when the last tree is felled.

Actions must continue after the trees come down

A brief look at two of the biggest anti-roads campaigns so far will show how important this is. The biggest demos at Twyford happened after the area had already been trashed, and the land defended at the M11 could hardly be described as ecologically rich, but it was still fought for. It is sad to see that actions have been drastically reduced at Newbury, and that there are no longer nearly as many people disrupting work now that the trees have gone - although it is encouraging that there are still activists camping in the area.

We still need to ensure that the struggle against the bypass continues until the road is built and beyond. Only targeting clearance allows the companies to plan ahead and concentrate their force on our weakest point. The security budget is mainly oriented towards pushing clearance work through. When they are on the offensive against us they have hundreds of security. Yet a year or even a few months later you can go back to a site and find hardly any. The actions of 10 early morning surprise crane climbers can be more costly than an action with 100 people, in which they know you're coming and have accounted for it. We are enabling a situation where they don't have to guard the most expensive part of a roadbuilding project- the roadbuilding itself!

We need to go on the offensive

A company simply cannot effectively guard a site 9 miles long 24 hours a day for three years when they don't know when you're coming or what you're going to do. How many times during the clearance did we sit back at 'our' camp listening to the CB and not knowing where they would turn up? This stretched our resources, numbers and sanity. When the trees fall and the cranes go up the roles are reversed. With surprise on our side- they're weak and we are strong.

If you want to break a chain you find the weak links. The state and the main contractors will probably never back down, but subcontractors are a different kettle of fish. With the exception of chainsaw men, cherry picker firms and the climbers, small subcontractors don't take part in a clearance contract. During the construc-



tion a myriad of different small firms are moved in - who will move straight back out again at any sign of serious trouble. Doing actions against subcontractors really fucks a contract up. This was proved effectively at Newbury by the campaign against the coach companies that ferried the fluorescent-jacketed army. Select actions in Reading and elsewhere at coach company terminals quickly convinced a few companies to back out. After that the threat worked just as well. For a while security had to hire minibuses from Kent [!]

Simply targeting clearance and practically ignoring construction is becoming a campaign pattern- we need to break it.

We must broaden our horizons

Overall, we need to develop a greater awareness of our actions if we are to be successful in further struggles. Newbury was very good at waking up a lot of people to what ecological destruction is going on in this country. The sheer scale of the campaign surprised a lot of people, including the authorities. Nevertheless the route was eventually cleared, and the protests accomodated.

The state has learnt how to deal with tree protests (they showed a marked improvement in tactics over the months of clearance work), and while I think it is still vital to physically defend areas under threat, we need to evolve our tactics so that we are continually one step ahead of them. The actions in support of the Liverpool dockers are a good example of how we can connect up to other people, and there should be similar links made in other areas. Lots of diverse groups were brought together by Newbury (anarchists, climbers, archaeologists, and FoE members), and we should maintain and strengthen these links if we are ever going to start to gain the mass involvement we need to defend our earth.

Notes

1) A very sucessful direct action rota was organised at the M11, under the name of Operation Roadblock . See 'News from the Autonomous Zones' p21, DoD 4

2)That is not to say that involvement in this kind of lifestyle cannnot be beneficial to people with minor problems. They can find an outlet for their frustration and alienation from society, which they might not otherwise have found. The energy they were previously using in various anti-social activities can be redirected into trashing earth rapists. For some, the close-knit community can bring people together who would otherwise never have met.

If we can't sort out each other, how are we meant to sort out the world?

Despite disagreeing with its conclusions I am glad that the above article mentioned the 'personal' problems that plague us on campaigns, as well as talking about strategy. Hopefully it will start off a useful debate. I agree that there is a serious conflict on camps between on the one hand, peoples' 'personal problems', and on the other the smooth running of the campaign and the wellbeing of other activists. Such problems are one of the reasons why I decided at one point to totally abandon camp-based campaigns, and to concentrate on other things.

I have been woken by someone preaching the Old Testament outside my bender *every morning for a week* at Solsbury Hill; woken up by someone wielding a stave at my head in the dead of night at the M11 [maybe they just didn't like you?], had to help prevent two onsite suicide attempts at Twyford, been puked on, pissed on, had all my eviction stash eaten by a 'nomadic druid' the day before the eviction; these are just the more interesting events. Not to mention the daily cold drudgery of having your campaign enthusiasm (never mind your will to live) sucked away by assorted 'energy vampires' and 'lunchouts'. It's a big problem, but I think the author generalises too much and that his solution would only exacerbate the situation. Other points also need to be made.

There are four distinct groups of people the above article lumps together. Care in the community types, drug abusers (as opposed to simply users), people suffering mentally as a result of campaigning, and those acting like parasites. Quite often some or all four combine in one person, but to generalise is to write off too many people.

The article gives the idea that there is a clean division between 'sorted campaigners' on the one side and 'lunch outs, 'dime bars' and 'energy vampires' on the other. People with serious mental problemas are rarely 'useful' on campaigns. But the reality is that many of our best activists drink too much, take too many drugs, go through bouts of severe depression and waver on the edge of insanity - I know I do!

Though he does mention that 'the close knit community can bring people together', the author's underlying assumption is that the role of camps is primarily to resist the destruction - "Ask not what the camp can do for you, but what you can do for the camp." He seems to suggest that we should leave our emotional baggage at home and if we begin to crack up, leave the campaign - effectively, we are discarded when we are no

longer 'productive'. But I would argue that the primary aim of campaigns is to rebuild communities and create a movement that can really transcend industrial capitalism as a whole. The rather minor effect we have on industry is less important than the way in which our campaigns affect us and our movement. In a socially fragmented world, the mad arena of campaigning is,



frighteningly, one of the few opportunities we have for "group therapy' and individual and collective evolution.

If 'Group therapy' sounds too much to you like Alcoholics Anonymous, think again. The real ecological and anarchist communities on this planet are tribes. Tribes deal with their problems collectively, they talk about them.

The article above says in effect that rather than work on healing each other together, we should sort out our problems individually. That we should keep our personal and political lives separate. Even worse it proposes that people 'with problems' should seek help from 'professionals' - presumbly psychiatrists and drug counsellors. While there are many good people in these professions, most of those sectioned at Newbury could point out that there are many others who'll just fuck you up more. Also, the article overlooks the question of how you gain immediate access to such services if you are poor. Why are there so many 'care in the community' individuals on road camps in the first place?

People drink, take too many drugs and sink into delusion for a huge variety of reasons. For instance I know quite a few 'brew crew' who have, when given responsiblity, straightened themselves out. Nobody ever told them that they could be more than they were so they never became anything else. Alcohol & drugs can really badly screw us up. For instance taking acid in a beautiful valley may be wonderful, but taking it surrounded by destruction isn't a good idea. If we can support each other then people will not need to turn to chemical crutches which may further destabilise them.

In relation to those from care in the community I'm in two minds. While they can be very destructive, they can also be a good member of the communty. It depends on the individual. Though protests are not a stable place, what other 'community' is going to care for them? In most cases they are harmless, just strange. It's less a case of getting rid of them and more of getting a greater proportion of relatively sane people.

Another reason for greater collectivity is that some people will just always take the piss. If all else fails I agree that the community needs to expel those that endanger it.

Being radicals means literally looking at the root of the problem. Why does our 'community' bring in such a large amount of alcoholics, drug abusers (rather than simply users), lunch outs, freaks and the blatantly insane?

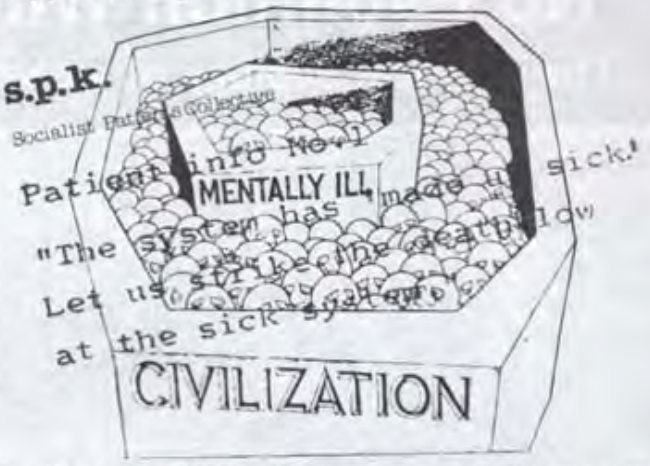
Firstly, it's a worrying fact that there are substantially more men on camps than women, and the gap is growing. In my experience camps with more women have usually been better able to grasp personal and group problems.

Secondly, our pathetic excuses for outreach, getting new people involved, means that most of our 'recruitment' comes from the British 'alternative' subculture. The subculture is basically a culture of the dysfunctional. Being dysfuctional in a society where function is so destructive and warped is probably a sane move. Hey - we're all misfits - hurrah! However, many in the subculture have been pushed out of 'straight' society becuse they find it difficult to act socially at all. From 'community in care' types to people who just find it difficult relating. While helping each other out, the long term solution is recruting from a wider spectrum. Of course this will bring in people with normative types of insanity. But maybe this would be easier to rationally deal with, though less amusing, than two pissed people fighting each other because they both believe they're King Arthur.

We are more likely to be crushed by our own inabilty to live with each other than by state violence. In our constant rush to action we usually forget to build on our greatest strength- each other. Revolution is Therapy.

Head State Support Group

Direct Action is not without it's casualties, at a rough estimate over 15 people were sectioned under the Mental Health Act during and after Newbury, perhaps many more. As someone who was both at Newbury and got sectioned, I am trying now to set up some sort of support providing both letter-writing and legal advice.



If you were sectioned or know someone who was/is, I'd very much like to hear from you. It can be a nightmare for all concerned, but stay strong and all clouds pass over. In the meantime, don't go too manic when you're off protesting and remember to chill out and take breaks.

Much love, Jim

Write to: 'Witches Green', 54 Mill Road, North Lancing, W. Sussex, BN15 0PZ. jim@radicalfluff.demon.co.uk



The following article is from Contract Journal of 17/10/96. It's interesting to see how worried roadbuilders have become about protesters with computers...

Contractors' War on Eco-hackers

Contractors are investing heavily to protect sensitive and confidential information from militant environmentalists hacking into company IT systems, it emerged this week. Balfour Beatty, Costain, Mowlem and Alfred McAlpine all recognise the threat from a small group of hardline anti-roads activists, some of whom possess advanced computer skills. The firms have taken steps to make illegal entry as difficult as possible.

Colin Darch, group IT manager with Balfour Beatty,. told CJ : "It is a perennial problem. We have ongoing plans against attacks by urban terrorists who want to disrupt us or use information against us."

Computerisation is evolving rapidly as is the move away from mainframe systems to personal computers. Networking is "a bolthole we are trying to shore up" said Darch. He added : "You have to work hard to make your system impenetrable". Despite the downturn in civil engineering, the number of protest groups continues to increase. Costain's IT director, Marion Carney, said protesters could pose a threat to both physical security and company networks. "It's not just our confidential information they are after," said Carney. "they just want to cause a nuisance. We've made it difficult to access information and we can monitor unwelcome attempts on our system. It's fairly standard among other contractors."

Mowlem's information cannot be electronically attacked by external hackers because it does not have a wide-area network system. Alfred McAlpine has done a lot to improve protection, the new arrangements having made its IT system more secure.

Of all construction firms, Amec is the most bullish about its position. Asked what threat hackers pose, group IT manager Keith Rustage said; "I don't perceive it to be any danger". But a Computacenter survey of 140 of the world's top hackers, published this week, suggests that Amec's optimism could be misplaced. The verdict in the survey was that: 75% believe company safeguards are lax. 60% believe opportunities to access systems are increasing 55% believe the internet provides more opportunity to access private systems.

No Evolution Without Revolution

The political ecology of wolves, beavers, sheep and deer



'The green touchpaper has been lit, and the regeneration of the Great Wood is beginning. It is the most heady concept in conservation—the end of the beginning. The siege is over, the first determined sorties can begin. They are no longer fighting to Save the Trees: the new target is to have the wood stretch out and spread once again. If this project continues to work, we can no longer see conservation as a resistance movement. It is now about re-conquest." ('Forest on the March', Simon Barnes, Guardian 25/9/93.)

The Highlands of Scotland are now at the crossroads—the urgency of the present situation cannot be overemphasized. What happens now will determine whether the region faces an irreversible spiral of ecological decline, or a transformed future in which both biological and cultural diversity can flourish once more.

The great Scottish naturalist Frank Fraser Darling wrote ruefully of the "melancholy history"[1] of Scotland's forests. In his 'West Highland Survey' of the late 1940s, he observed that "the Highlands and Islands are largely a devastated terrain, and ... any policy which ignores this fact cannot hope to achieve a rehabilitation".[2] In 1997, it is even more impossible to ignore the stark truth of these words. The once mighty Great Wood of Caledon is now down to a tiny fraction of its former range, an atrocity which lies at the heart of Scotland's environmental crisis. Only the return of the forest—and the myriad biological functions that it sustains—will set right the abuse of centuries, and allow the long journey back to ecological health to begin. Only the trees can restore a fertility ravaged by centuries of soil erosion on Scotland's denuded terrain.

And yet, the dramatic potential for such a renaissance is held back; under an intense grazing onslaught from the Highlands' army of sheep and deer the forest simply cannot regenerate, and thus has steadily dwindled for the last 250 years. Behind these animals and their lethal impact on the forest—and on the Highlands as a whole—lurks the intransigence and profiteering of



those social groups with a vested interest in the 'extractive economy' that the sheep and deer represent. Again, it is 'now or never'—the remnant trees have at most a scant few decades of seed-bearing life left to them—thus "we are probably the last generation with an opportunity to arrest and reverse this sad history of forest decline and loss."[3]

Who are these 'social groups' behind Scotland's misery? What are the patterns of land ownership and use that have led us to this predicament? Social health and cultural diversity are inseparable from ecological health—and if something is rotten in the state of human society, the corruption will leave its mark on the ecological fabric also. We must identify the social factors, or ills, at work if we are to remedy the ecological crisis.

According to Fraser Darling, it is "the English [who] have been the greatest agents of destruction in Scottish forests."[4] This intrusion of an alien force into Scottish affairs accelerated environmental destruction to unprecedented levels.

First, the remaining forests were stripped for charcoal and timber, and then the glens turned over to an increasingly profitable system of sheep production—meanwhile, as in Ireland, the native people starved on the margins. (As an aside, it is worth noting that the wolf "was responsible [indirectly] for a good deal of the later history of the destruction of the forests. Clearance of the forest by burning was doubtless the easiest way of restricting the wolf's range".[5])

This process culminated in the infamous Highland Clearances, with the people finally and fully dispossessed by the new landlords and their sheep, and driven into wage labour in the newly industrialised cities, or onto boats bound for the 'New World' (where they would help to dispossess others in turn). A tremendous haemorraging of natural and social wealth was underway—through the export of nutrients (in the form of sheep and timber), and of people, who took the accumulated wisdom of an ancient, more sustainable culture with them. Both the land and knowledge of how best to live on it, were under attack.

Then, when the bottom dropped out of the sheep market, tragedy turned to farce—sporting estates—the ultimate colonial indulgence, a status symbol and bizarre playground for the elite (and ONLY the elite)—began to predominate. By 1912, "an incredible 20% of Scotland's land area was given over more or less entirely to the hunting of red deer by a small fraction of the populace."[6] Hot on the heels of the sheep, these deer began to deliver the death blow to the Scottish forests.

While one could never claim that the indigenous Highland culture was perfect—for example, it too had presided over deforestation, and helped the eradication of such species as the wolf and beaver—its community-based subsistence economy differed from the colonial English model in one crucial respect.

In a nutshell, it is that the original 'social ecology' of the Highlands was, for all its feudal failings, what is now described as a 'commons' regime. "Traditionally, clan lands were not the private property of the chief but were invested in him on behalf of the clan. Membership of the clan ... gave clan members rights of use of land and water"[7]—from this tradition comes the Gaelic proverb that "everyone is entitled to a deer from the mountain, a tree from the wood and a fish from the river".[8] It was the English that brought the dynamic of enclosure to bear on this regime, having recently pioneered it upon their own people. After the defeat of the clans at Culloden in 1745, the imposition of enclosure meant "not only the removal of land from subsistence communities, but a profound step toward viewing the land and its people as tradable, exploitable commodities."[9] ("Labour too became a tradable commodity",[9] as those Highlanders exiled to Glasgow and elsewhere found to their cost.) By contrast, the commons regime had a deep-rooted sense of place—so deep, in fact, that "a farmer would often be referred to by the name of the farm rather than the family name."[10] Such an affiliation with, and reliance on, a place is in marked contrast to the 'cut and run' practice of enclosure—it is a crucial built-in safeguard against the temptation to 'externalise' the social and environmental consequences of your actions—to pass the costs on to someone else. The local people can afford no such luxury—they must remain 'in place' when the company has gone. This is why commons regimes can endure indefinitely, if left undisturbed.

For the Highlands, enclosure was a truly fundamental break with the past, as the "criterion for the best use of land ceased to be the number of people it could support, and became the amount of profit it could make".[11] This radical shift in social priorities—from a land ethic[12] to a land grab—is the overwhelming cause of the Highlands' subsequent malaise.

Of course, the changes described above are by no means unique to Scotland, as enclosure's dynamic now blights societies all around the world. The real colonisation is perhaps not that of one nation or ethnic group by another (although the virus is often transmitted this way), but of a community by the market, which ruptures the culture and the locale as it passes through. In a sense, the nationalities of the encloser and the



enclosed are utterly immaterial—'whoever you're enclosed by the market wins'. The clan chiefs were some of the most enthusiastic expropriators of their Highland kin—either to save their own skins (under the 1747 'Heritable Jurisdictions Act', they had a 'choice' of assimilating into the 'English model' or be dispossessed themselves), or in order to cut a well-heeled figure in English society by 'cashing in' their clan folk. More recently, in the Third World, the initial promise of the national liberation movements is being betrayed—as the new homegrown elites are reunited with the old global powers, in a transnational 'community of interest' against their own people.[13] The painful lesson is that 'it doesn't take a white skin to sell you out'.

Enclosure disempowers communities, deforming their capacity for self-governance, their beautiful but fragile social ecologies, and empowers narrow elites and the inhuman market imperatives that they stand for. Hence in the Highlands today, which boasts "the most concentrated pattern of private ownership in Europe ",[14] an incredible 608 individuals own 50% of the land[15]—bastards like John Kluge (Mar Lodge), Schellenberg (Eigg), Lord Dulverton (Glen Feshie), ad nauseam. Somewhere between one half and two-thirds of Highland estate owners can be classified as absentee landlords, spending less than four months a year on their estates.[16] Even though the only real claim such people have to membership of the local community is their title deeds, because "the majority of people who work directly on the land or in the rural environment are [their tenants] ... it can be said that land-use practice, the pattern of settlement, indeed much of the rural economy as a whole is in the control of this small group of landowners".[17] Therefore, it is this 'small group', this power external to the community, that must carry "a great part of the responsibility for the declines that have taken place in human populations, in agricultural productivity and in ecological balance.".[17]

Such are the iniquities of enclosed life; this is why the dam of power must be broken, and control diffused back to the communities, the locales, and to each and every one of us.

One of the problems with Deep Ecology, in its crudest form, is a staggering political naivety. It evokes a specifically human 'community of interest', one that preys on other species by virtue solely of some sort of 'anthropocentric closed shop'. It seems to suggests that horrors such as clearcutting or intensive meat production spring not from a warped economy, but from a moral vacuum on the part of humanity as a species—a failure to encompass other creatures in our 'circle of sympathy'. To put an end to such horrors, all we need do is simply extend the benefits of the 'anthropocentric franchise' to other creatures.

As leading American EF!er Mike Roselle puts it: "What deep ecology espouses is ecological egalitarianism. It's really a practical and logical extension of the civil rights movement! Are we really better than a wolf or a dolphin or a microorganism in the soil? Under the present-day legal system they have virtually no rights whatsoever, just like blacks and American Indians not so long ago ... if you felt it was important for people to struggle for their rights in the civil rights movement, then you'll also want to do that for other organisms."[18]

This presumes that the bitter conflicts within human society are now a thing of the past; either because demands have been properly met (eg. through the dispensation of 'rights')—thus permitting us to look outside our own species for unresolved injustices— or because any remaining conflicts must now be put on ice while we address the overriding issue of 'our' biospheric misdemeanours. It ignores the 'social deficit': the continuing powerlessness of most humans, the fact that the lives of many are gutted just as effectively as any natural habitat, but most importantly, that the crisis we all face now was created not by the conscious efforts of the many, but at the behest of the few.

Instead, I would argue that humanity is still riven by conflicts. At the Earth Summit in 1992, grassroots groups rejected the establishment vision of "a world where all humanity is united by a common interest in survival ... in which conflicts of race, class, gender and culture are characterised as of secondary importance to humanity's supposedly common goal."[19] The 'common interest' of humanity is an illusion, and will remain so until ordinary people can talk of the world as truly 'belonging' to them. Only then might the end of the crisis be in sight.

Deep ecology wishes to see all species treated more like humans. While it is true that humans generally treat animals far worse than their own kind (although as was pointed out during the 1984/5 famine, the average American pet was better fed than the average Ethiopian), ultimately we are all viewed as animals ('chattel') by humanity's elite. For them, the most pertinent question is which 'object' yields them the most value at a particular time. Considerations of profitability can outweigh any concern for human rights—for example, during the Clearances, landowners made a clear choice between people and sheep. On the Isle of Rhum, "300 people were cleared ... in 1826. The proprietor, MacLean of Coll, spent five pounds and fourteen shillings on each adult's passage to Canada.

Vacated and let as a single sheep farm, it brought in an annual rent of £800, compared with just £300 previously."[20] More generally, Highlanders took to describing sheep as "the laird's 'four footed clansmen' ".[21]

For all species, the only choice allowed is one of servitude or extermination (sometimes both!). In a sense, we have more in common with other species than with the members of our own elites—we share the same subordinate position. Catherine McPhee of South Uist drew an explicit parallel in her account of the Clearances: "I have seen the big strong men, the champions of the countryside, the stalwarts of the world, being bound on Loch Boisdale quay and cast into the ship as would be done to a batch of horses or cattle in the boat, the bailiffs and the ground officers and the constables and the policemen gathered behind them in pursuit of them."[22]

Right now, there is a very real opportunity to return animals such as the wolf and beaver to their rightful place in the Highland ecosystem—the old dream is closer to being realised than it has been for decades, if not centuries.

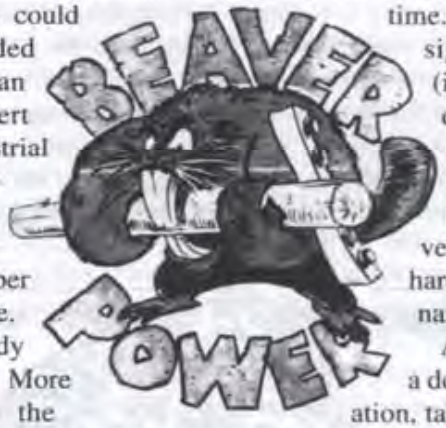
Article 22 of the EU Habitats Directive compels the British government to seriously consider reintroducing species that are threatened in Europe and extinct in the UK. While the existence of such a law in itself is neither here nor there, it has provided the impetus for Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to launch a feasibility study into the potential for beaver reintroduction. This should be completed by the end of 1997, after which public consultation will take place. However, even though wolves are undoubtedly covered by Article 22, a similar study for them is out of the question—it appears that SNH is wary of getting its hands burnt by dealing with a far more controversial creature than the innocuous, herbivorous beaver. But all is not lost—with no action forthcoming from SNH, the newly-formed Highland Wolf Fund is attempting to raise the £40,000 required for such a study; its ultimate goal is to see a population of 2-400 wolves re-established in the Highlands.

As suggested earlier, it is the forest that holds the key to any hope for a vibrant future. It is the fulcrum of ecological and social wealth in the Highlands. Only when it is no longer at the mercy of the landlord economy and its sheep and deer, will the Highlands be able to flourish once more. But is there a place for the wolf and the beaver in this great project?



Many people—even those with a genuine interest in ecological restoration -favour the 'gradualist' approach. Aubrey Manning of the Scottish Wildlife Trust feels that any wolf reintroduction now would be premature, because "the Highlands are nowhere near ready for a top predator. A century of sustained work lies ahead to restore the habitat to a fair part of its former productivity. Plants, not animals, have to come first."[23] He also believes, with some justification, that it will take time to dispel the age-old 'bogeyman' associations of the wolf. Even Alan Watson of the wonderful Trees for Life says that "as it is the forest which provides the habitat for other species to live in, and which is the support system for so much of the rest of life, it is with the return of natural forest that restoration ecology must begin."[24]

While one can understand the thinking behind such arguments, in actual fact wolves could survive even in today's degraded Highlands—tree cover is not an essential prerequisite. As Robert Moss of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology points out, "there are no biological reasons why the wolf ... could not be introduced immediately"[25]—there is certainly a "super abundance of wild prey"[26] available. Likewise, suitable habitat already exists for the beaver as well.[27] More importantly, one can question the assumptions that underpin such views: restoration and reintroduction need not be seen as two distinct, sequential processes, but, potentially, as mutually reinforcing parts of the same process. The forest obviously nurtures those species that live within it, but the traffic is not all one way—its inhabitants can also nurture and regulate the forest. It is a reciprocal relationship. Hence wolves and beavers can help to create the conditions for their own existence—unlike the use of sheep or deer, they can enhance the forest rather than diminishing it.



For example, beavers "are a keystone species ... [playing] a pivotal role in maintaining and regulating aquatic ecosystems".[28] They could add significantly to the revitalisation of riparian (waterside) areas, which have so far often been overlooked by the Highland reforestation projects.

This becomes an even more exciting prospect when you consider the new model which is currently emerging in conservation. Rather than struggling to secure bio-diversity with the intensive management of beleagured small reserves, it aims to give 'natural processes'—eg. disturbance from windblow, fire or grazers—free rein once more. This opens the way for a dynamic landscape to develop, in which natural succession is "constantly being re-started and vegetation change [is] progressing in various different directions depending on the pressures acting upon it".[29] In this landscape of constant flux, a multiplicity of habitat configurations and their associated species are able to thrive, proliferate and interact.

Beaver behaviour triggers just such a 'natural process'—through tree-felling and dam building, beavers unleash "Successionary changes [which] ... involve a complex pattern of wet or seasonally flooded meadow, open water, marsh, bog and flooded forest formation".[30] This is a 'dynamic landscape', and one in which (in marked contrast to the present grazing by sheep and deer), soil fertility actually increases over time. Beavers also regulate water flows and significantly improve water quality (important, given the dire impact of soil erosion on river systems and watersheds generally.) It is hardly surprising therefore that beavers "directly [increase] faunal diversity by their very presence"[31]—otters, water voles, hares, trout and salmon all benefit, to name but a few.

All in all, beavers could be a force for a deepening of Caledonian forest regeneration, taking it in unpredictable directions and allowing a richer mosaic of habitat to develop.

Finally, in a nice piece of poetic symmetry, (and perhaps a hint of the potential for co-evolution to come), it has been suggested that in Mesolithic Britain, "beavers had at least as great an effect on the landscape as humans. Mesolithic human settlements near water, such as that at Thatcham, Berkshire [the site 'spared' by the western route of the Newbury Bypass!], may have taken advantage of areas already cleared by beavers, which have previously been misinterpreted as the result of human activity."[32]

Indeed, "there are at least two sites where humans had re-used timber or brushwood cut by beavers for their own purposes: the Mesolithic settlement at Star Carr [Yorkshire] had a shoreline platform incorporating beaver-cut timber ... and the Baker platform in the Somerset levels ... also incorporated beaver-cut brushwood".[33] In these examples, human societies were quite literally founded on the efforts of beavers. This synergy between human and beaver suggests that we too can be added to the list of species that profit from their presence.

The role of wolves is perhaps more straightforward. They could help to control that which holds forest recovery back: grazing pressure from the artificially inflated deer population. On a grander level, their return could herald a resumption of the saga of evolution for the deer of the Highlands: "Wolves were the most important predator of ungulates [hoofed animals] across the northern hemisphere and a primary factor in ungulate evolution".[34] Toffs with guns, and their lackeys, have allegedly tried to step into the shoes—or rather, paws—of wolves in this respect, with the result that Highland deer "are amongst the smallest, feeblest specimens in Europe".[35] According to Martin Mathers of WWF Scotland, "In Latvia ... the presence of wolves is one of the reasons why the red deer are almost one and a half times as big as their Scottish counterparts".[36]

But there is a catch. Because deer numbers are SO high—having "doubled in the past 25 years to almost 300,000 animals"[37]—and the situation in the forest so urgent, it is unlikely that wolf predation alone would make a sufficiently large dent in the problem. While there are disagreements as to exactly what wolves' impact might be, one estimate is that the 200 wolves that the Highlands could comfortably support "might ... kill 4,800 deer annually ... [which] represents [only] 1.6% of the present Red deer population".[38]

It is therefore with great reluctance that I say culling might be unavoidable—and that the role of wolves might be to regulate deer numbers after a cull. I invite a debate on this, and any suggestions as to how to achieve the desired effect—the reduction in numbers that is so desperately needed—without culling.

However, the problem has been created and maintained by us (or rather, the landlords)—it is the 'natural' symptom of a social sickness—and perhaps at this late stage only we are capable of resolving it.

Some might argue that it is not so much a 'technical' solution such as culling that is in order but a direct attack on the 'social sickness'—dismantling the great land holdings that exercise such a tyranny over space (physical AND cultural) and its potential.

One thing is for sure—the ultimate cruelty is to allow the present contrived situation to continue. The deer are now grazing even themselves out of existence, dragging other species down with them and wrecking any chance for the renewal of the Highlands in the process. Without predators, "red deer have poor mechanisms of population control and numbers become out of balance with their habitat ... they can quickly increase and then damage their habitat, and it is often starvation that reduces them in the end."[39] The annual death toll from winter starvation often runs into the thousands.

Some wolf advocates seem to forget that 'Conservation is 99% politics'—in the case of wolf reintroduction, "the barriers are sociological, not ecological".[40] They seem to lack a readiness to confront such 'sociological barriers', and a political sensibility which can illuminate the limitless potential for 'doing things differently'. Instead of envisaging a righting of the social ecology, there is an unspoken assumption that Scotland's social framework can remain largely unchanged, ('unamendable in all essentials'), and that



"Doing things differently"—a forest economy for the Highlands?



wolves can simply be inserted—'shrunk to fit'—into this framework that has brought Scotland to its knees.

Hence respected biologist Derek Yalden's proposal to establish an experimental wolf population on the Isle of Rhum, now a wholly-owned nature reserve and 'living laboratory'. Wolves must be segregated onto Rhum because of the threat they pose to a perceived 'human interest' on the mainland. Pandering to this interest, as Yalden's proposal does, could mean sacrificing Rhum's environmental interest, and even the study's supposed 'raison d'etre', the wolves themselves. Rhum is home to 130,000 ground-nesting Manx Shearwaters, which, together with colonies on Skomer and Skokholm, make up nearly 70% of the entire European population.[41] "Manx" Shearwaters are now almost unheard of on the Isle of Man after rats decimated a huge colony there in the late 18th century—wolves would have a similarly catastrophic impact on Rhum. Yalden seems to have an equally cavalier attitude towards the likely fate of the wolves: "computer simulations suggest ... that wolves would wipe out the deer [on Rhum] and then die out. I do not believe this myself but there is only one way to find out—try it."[42]

Such reintroduction proposals are jeopardised by their failure to acknowledge the social dimension—the possibility, let alone the desirability, of real, comprehensive social change. The old 'Jobs versus the Environment' debate epitomises this failure. While the phrase itself is an accurate description of the situation—wage labour's alienated economy IS incompatible with life—many environmentalists choose to interpret it differently. Rather than challenging the assumption that 'jobs' are the one true expression of the 'human interest', they earnestly affirm that yes, there ARE jobs 'in the environment', and if only the policy-makers would take their blueprints for a sustainable economy on board, we could reconcile the irreconcilable (cf. "Working Future—Jobs and the Environment", Tim Jenkins & Duncan McLaren, Friends of the Earth November 1995.) Hence it seems that reintroduction of wolves, or the refor estation of the Highlands, can often only be justified if there are jobs—or some other orthodox economic benefit—to be had, not because they replenish nature's 'capital'. Wolves have been hailed as a source of eco-tourist revenue; apparently they must 'pay their way'—but why should ANYTHING (humanity included) have to pay its way? Look at the evidence: whether from other cultures (eg.the indigenous groups beloved of the green movement), or in the millions of everyday transactions in our own society in which money has no place, or the voluntary labour upon which the big green organisations themselves absolutely depend, or just plain common sense. All of these tell us that people have no inescapable need of money and jobs if they are to provide for themselves—just the land and each other.

It must however be acknowledged that not all of the "sociological barriers" to wolf reintroduction originate in the entrenched interests of the large landowners. Hard-pressed small farmers are understandably apprehensive about the likely impact of wolves upon their livestock—since sheep "contribute to the livelihood of 55% of farmers in the central Highlands ... [and] 75% in the Islands and the far North and West."[43] Perhaps because of this reliance upon sheep, "The Scottish Crofter's Union will oppose any official proposal [to reintroduce wolves to the Scottish mainland] vigorously".[44] It is essential to avoid a repetition of experiences in Sweden and the US, where the hostility of local people towards wolves has culminated in a murderous 'direct action' campaign against them. In Sweden in the 1980s, this resulted in the near eradication of the first population of wolves to breed outside the Arctic Circle in almost a century.[45] While there are no easy answers here, what can be done to address the legitimate concerns of the small sheep farmers?

To begin with, there is some dispute as to the likelihood of wolves attacking livestock in the first place. According to Roger Panaman of the Highland Wolf Fund, they "have been observed in North America to walk right through herds of cattle without taking notice of them and go for wild prey instead. Biologists have tried to explain this: presumably the parents pass on their hunting ways to their young and if the parents hunt wild prey their young learn this habit."[46]

Livestock predation is insignificant in America, but is far more severe in Italy, Spain and Portugal, the only countries in Western Europe that still harbour wolf populations. However, (with the possible exception of Spain), this may well be because "nearly all large wild herbivores were killed off last century when forests were cleared for agriculture",[47] thereby forcing the wolves into the sheep pens. Obviously there is no such shortage of wild prey in the Highlands.

According to some sources, "Predators generally have no effect on livestock industries",[48] although others—eg. Aubrey Manning[49] and wolf opponent Michael MacNally[50]—strongly disagree, so the true picture remains unclear.

To return to the wider context in which today's sheep farming takes place, sheep played a very minor part in the original culture of the Highlands. Their widespread use today is largely a colonial innovation—in a sense, like crofts, they are crumbs from the colonialist table. Dependence on them is an adaptation to the ravaged



landscape that is the legacy of deforestation—a landscape that has become 'fit for nothing but sheep'.

The Highland economy must be weaned off such a dependence. The real threat to hill farmers comes not from wolves, but from ecological instability—the sad truth is that today's deforested, exposed and overgrazed landscape is less and less able to support even sheep. Hill farming, as practised now, is a relatively unproductive, highly inefficient and increasingly tenuous land use. "Each sheep needs about two hectares of land on which to graze",[51] and half of the estimated two million upland lambs lost each year die from exposure—which helps to explain why the "Lambing percentage in many areas is now as low as 50%".[52]

More recent figures suggest an even higher toll, with "up to four million lambs [dying] annually, mainly because of poor husbandry".[53] This cycle must be broken—and compared to this, any danger from wolf predation pales into insignificance.

Sheep need not be purged from the Highlands—Bernard Planterose, in the hugely inspiring "Rural Manifesto for the Highlands", hints at ways in which 'less might be more', and sheep farming restored to a more secure footing. Confining the sheep to smaller pastures instead of the vast ranges utilised today, more intensive management, integrating farming into an 'agro-forestry' system—all could allow the sheep to take advantage of the milder micro-climate and increased soil fertility of a forest, meaning fewer deaths from exposure and higher productivity, on a fraction of the land area.[54] The bulk of the land is thus freed up for other purposes. The more robust and diverse community engendered by the 'wood economy' Planterose envisages would be a far cry from the unviable, subsidy-dependent sheep economy of today. It would also be able to absorb any 'wolf damage' far more easily and painlessly. Perhaps therefore the hysteria that greets talk of wolves can be seen partly as blaming an animal for what is really a social shortfall—another example of the syndrome of 'predator paranoia'[55]

However, there is one hitch. Even if the forest bounces back with great vigour once grazing pressure has been relieved, the benefits—eg. increased security—of the wood economy may take some time to truly make themselves felt. How would wolves fit in with hill farming in this transitional period?

Many questions remain unresolved, but the broad direction is clear—the necessity of a 'new settlement with nature', and of empowered human beings no longer alienated from themselves, one another and the land. The goal is not to resurrect some distorted, rose-tinted version of the pre-colonial past—but rather to take what is best from that tradition, whilst recognising that the sort of 'social ecology' we aspire to has no exact precedent.

The Highlands are indeed at the Crossroads, as are we all. Whether to march blindly on to the 'beginning of the end', throttled by landlord and sheep and deer, or to choose a less familiar course: into the country of the wolf and the beaver and the young Scots pine, of autonomous communities re-embedded in a resurgent nature—'the end of the beginning'—taking back our planet.

The stirrings of such new life can already be found. Frank Fraser Darling conjured up a lyrical vision of "a forest country, a regenerating sylvan continuum which will be an abiding wealth".[56] Bernard Planterose has added loving practical substance to this vision, with the concept of a "forest matrix: an all-embracing web or network of forests, woods and shelterbelts within which lie sheltered areas of agriculture and horticulture. A forest of intricate design utilising natural regeneration, shelterwood and small coupe felling, multi-layered forest farming, novel and ancient forest and agro-forestry systems".[57] Vandana Shiva's experiences in India anticipate the close intermingling of social forms and natural processes which would be required—in a "community forestry [which] is not a technology; it is a process of social change that requires the continuous participation of whole communities in planning and problem solving".[58] She adds a cautionary note: "such a process of cooperative behavioural change, never easy to bring about anyway, is especially unlikely where grossly unequal land tenure and marketing systems ensure that a powerful minority will capture nearly all the benefits of any economic gains."[58]

The spirit behind such thinking is already being translated into action—albeit in an as yet embryonic form—in a variety of exemplary projects. Some examples: in the work of Trees for Life, and the countless other reforestation efforts springing up all over Scotland. On the isle of Eigg, in the inexplicable (but hilarious) 'spontaneous combustion' of landlord Keith Schellenberg's Rolls Royce, and the community's determined struggle to buy the island for themselves. In the sinking of the half-million pound yacht of Sheikh Maktoum (ruler of Dubai and owner of 60,000 acres in Wester Ross), after he bulldozed much needed housing in 1993. (Unfortunately, two people are doing time for this—their case seems to be little known—more information would be appreciated, and solidarity invaluable.) Finally, there is the successful buy-out by the West Assynt Crofter's Trust in 1993—they are now communally governed, and planning ecological restoration. Many believe that this will come to be seen as THE turning point in the history of the Highlands. Let us hope so, and let us make it so.

Contacts:

1. Reforesting Scotland -21a Coates Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 7AF. Tel: 0131-226-2496. E-mail: reforscot @ gn.apc.org. World Wide Web: http://www.scotweb.co.uk/environment/reforscot. (Probably the best organisation tackling the twin issues of environmental degradation and land ownership.)
2. Trees For Life -The Park, Findhorn Bay, Forres IV36 0TZ. Tel: 01309-691292. E-mail: treesforlife @ gn.apc.org. WWW: http://www.gaia.org/trees for life. (Have a hand in the regeneration of the forest by taking part in one of their work weeks in Glen Affric!)
3. Highland Wolf Fund -8(B) Corrour Road, Aviemore, Inverness-shire PH22 1SS. Tel/fax: 01479—811373. (Raising £40,000 for a wolf Environmental Impact Study—Cheques/POs payable to Carnivore Wildlife Trust.)
4. Isle Of Eigg Trust -Maggie Fyffe, Trust Secretary, Cruagach, Isle Of Eigg PH42 4RL. (After a succession of hopeless landlords, are trying to buy Eigg for the people who live on it—send a donation! Cheques payable to The Isle of Eigg Trust.)
5. Scottish Natural Heritage -Research and Advisory Services Directorate, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh EH6 5NP. (Carrying out beaver feasibility study—contact them for further information, and to ask why they're not doing the same for the wolf, as required by the Habitats Directive.)
6. Pressenman Woods: To the best of my knowledge, this is the first direct action camp to be set up in defence of one of the remaining fragments of the Caledonian forest—and is therefore a really exciting development. Most of this article has been about restoration—preservation is at least as important. For more information, ring: 0131 228 2193 or 01368 850630.

Stop Press 1: Bad News

The Highland Wolf Fund has folded. The centre piece of the project was to have been a Wolf Centre in Invernessshire, to raise money for the project and to break down the barriers of prejudice surrounding wolves. Unfortunately, the HWF was unable to obtain land for the Centre—it fell foul of bad publicity, and of Scotland's landownership problem: less than 200 people own 95% of Invernessshire. If any readers have any



Alan McRae, Chair of the Assynt Crofters' Trust, celebrates the sale of the North Lochinver Estate to 100 of its tenant crofters in December 1992. "This is an historic blow which we have struck for people on the land right throughout the Highlands and Islands" he said.



ideas on how to resucitate the project, sources of funding, or if you happen to 'own' any of the remaining 5%, get in touch with the HWF at: 35 Church St, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 2BA. (Tel: 01865-373241).

Good News!

Amazingly, the Eigg residents have finally won their long battle to buy the island! Hopefully this will mean a bright future for them, and a further nail in the coffin of the large landowners. We wish them luck.

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The Joys of Travel

Industrial tourism—more distance, less difference

"Journeys, those magic caskets full of dreamlike promises, will never again yield up their treasures untarnished...the first thing we see as we travel around the world is our own filth, thrown into the face of mankind" - Claude Levi-Strauss (1974)

It cannot be denied that tourism and travel issues are at the heart of a huge amount of environmental destruction, and that increased travel and communications have caused a drastic reduction in cultural diversity . However, it must be noted that the human species possesses strong nomadic tendencies, and for this reason it has dispersed itself across the entire planet . Indeed, such tendencies have at one time or another been essential to survival; it is therefore perhaps improper to condemn "travel" or "tourism" outright; rather we must examine what these two words have come to mean, whilst also trying to define what we mean by "sustainable travel" (bearing in mind that such phrases are very much abused by those who stand to gain from the current socio-economic model)

As campaigners, we must look to a situation where "Progress" won't necessitate yet another runway, motorway, or other mal-development mobility scheme. To do this, we need to understand what processes make us want to travel .

In the words of one activist : "To me, outside the normal network of paths I follow to work, live and sleep, I want to travel further in order to see, understand and learn about something different which I could not fully encounter at home. This process enables me to relate what I have experienced at home with what goes on outside those boundaries, so that I may return with new insights and with the hindsight of seeing home from far away; from a broader perspective or context."

If we accept that it is in our very nature to roam, it may well be that people have a need to travel...to go on what might be called a "pilgrimage" to places other than their home at least a few times in their life. But this must be done in a way that does not advance monoculture . Wherever we are travelling, it is the way we travel and the relationships that are formed with the people we meet along the way which will determine whether the net disturbance we cause is positive or negative. It should at best leave the people we have visited with a sense of pride, satisfaction and empathy; that someone came and visited from afar, lived alongside them, sang and spoke in their language and helped them in the fields; someone who thought that their way of life was different but equal to their own .

It is easier to feel empathy when one is humble, and empathy leads to a feeling of fraternity and human interconnectedness which is both empowering and enriching. Western culture has not, however, endowed us with such a sense of humility; rather, many seem to be under the misapprehension that this culture is somehow superior to any others they may encounter . Most would dislike being branded as racists, yet this cultural fascism is perhaps the strongest possible manifestation of this phenomenon . Its implications are extremely dangerous; the highly damaging Western way of life is being promoted across the planet by those keen to exploit new markets . Other peoples are being coerced into adopting an increasingly centralised economic and social hierarchy which ill-fits their basic needs, in which power is transferred from communities to the State or to Multinationals. People are becoming less and less able to determine their destinies. Perhaps we in the West would do better to question what is happening here at home, and ask who is controlling our individual destinies, rather than promoting a system elsewhere which has consistently failed people and the environment . We need to start learning fundamental truths about what constitutes a good quality of life from other cultures .

By travelling more slowly and deeply we can actually learn something from these cultures and taste the fabric of societies that live in different ways, without causing damage to them . The people we meet may be living in different surroundings, growing different crops and speaking different languages, but this can be a way of seeing and believing that the world is as large and beautiful as we might imagine it to be. Indeed it is all part of diversity; we are, after all, living organisms, and, as a species, our adaptation through culture has enabled us to live in almost every geographic region, in the past in ways which were most appropriate for meeting our basic needs in harmony with nature .

To enable us to visualise "sustainable" methods of travel we must ask ourselves why we want to travel so



"Look fierce and don't smile for the camera." Those were the instructions given by this French television crew to Dzu Bushmen living in the Tsodilo Hills. Today few Bushmen, if any, live as simple hunter-gatherers in the manner of their ancestors. Paid to shed their western clothes–and to pretend to stalk the crew's helicopter–they are being used to perpetuate a commercial fantasy. True diversity perishes when made into a commodity. Tourism is the embalming fluid of culture.

far and fast in the first place . People often seem to say "I have to fly"; this "fly" can include speeding down motorways to work or holiday destinations, as well as catching a plane . The fact that we now seem to need to travel further in order to satisfy our wanderlust is one of the greatest indicators of the developing global monoculture. To understand why this is the case, we have to see distance as something you put between home and a place which is different enough to satisfy your yearning to travel . In this respect it is interesting to notice how much further you will have to travel in 1997 to reach such a distance than in 1897. Cobbet, at the beginning of the industrial revolution, describes in his travellings a Britain wonderfully rich in rural diversity, and with far more people living on the land. However, much of the diversity of human, and other life, has been systematically destroyed by a phenomenon we, in the Western countries, call "Progress" . As this process has accelerated, places that were once far away and very different are brought closer; they can be reached more quickly and become more and more similar. "Progress" is creating a highly unstable, unsatisfying monoculture of human activity, inappropriately adapted for local environments and lacking in the diversity we need to experience in order to enrich our consciousness. Those of us who can afford it have to travel thousands of miles to experience what we used to have only a hundred miles away. Cornwall's language and culture was finally wiped out just a hundred years ago. We should be helping the people who are trying to piece it together again, not supporting the global travel industry as it commodifies the few truly distinct cultures and unspoilt destinations that are left.

Unspoilt destinations and distinctive cultures are the finite resource of the tourist industry . Independent travellers and 'adventurers' (who often look down upon the common tourist) to some extent act as the spearhead; they are the trailblazers who "open up" places for the package hordes that follow—eg. Goa, South-east Asia, Morroco, and even the Majorca of 30 years ago. Yet these people are constantly fleeing the hordes; trying to keep one step ahead, seeking out the



ever dwindling number of "unspoilt", "authentic" cultures, where the cycle will begin once more. Given that a whole swathe of the tourism industry known as 'destination development' is devoted to bringing new locations "online", there is a danger of even those who travel well serving as unpaid scouts for these cultural stripminers .

If people aren't prepared to put some time into a journey, then that journey may not be worth making . If people don't have such time, that is a fault of the current work-ethic, not be a justification for the patterns of consumption and travel in the present day. It is the "work society" which creates the current need to travel; to go from 50 weeks of frenetic activity to 2 weeks of enforced "leisure", inactivity and sun-worshipping. This 'segregation of pleasure' is a deeply unhealthy practice. Perhaps it is impossible to have a true holiday in a society where individual lives are circumscribed by work. It is ironic that studies show that the average holiday, far from providing relaxation, is one of the most stressful experiences people have (it's always stressful when you MUST have fun: there won't be a chance for another year).

Sustainable travel, devoid of commercialism, takes time. It really is, perhaps, pilgrimage. Certainly it is spiritually rewarding; or at least much more so than jet-setting around with no time to see anything in depth. With the above in mind the alternatives to ever-increasing road, rail and air travel become easier to imagine . In India, for example, pilgrimage is carried out by thousands of people over thousands of miles each year...sustainably. People set aside time to leave their communities; a sort of sabbatical, and make their own way lightly, often on foot, staying for a while in communities along the way to share experiences. This also acts as a fine way to convey news of events and changes. But how to reach a place like India sustainably? The mind boggles with opportunities, adventures and possibilities if only we can give each other more time to travel.

One of the things that most troubles the people of the West is the notion of a fulfilling life. What is a fulfilling life? Here are a couple of personal accounts .

"I feel liberated now that I have got rid of my car. OK, I get wet in the rain when cycling past all the cars, and there is a feeling of vulnerability to lorries, but when I get home and have a nice cup of tea I feel more fulfilled than I used to when I travelled by car. However, the car was very comfortable, was very warm and dry and had nice music. On balance, and after some thought, I feel more healthy, more invigorated, more awake, more alive and happier now that I have given that machine up. To me, comfort is nice, but on its own, without some discomfort, how can you enjoy it fully? Real progress for me would enable a balance of discomfort and comfort during each day; some exercise followed by some rest; some challenge followed by achievement; some getting cold and wet followed by getting nice and warm and cosy."

"In Ladakh a young villager described himself to me as being a part of the village; the village called Shara-mo, a small village just south of the larger village of Shara, both lying in a winding valley leading down to the Indus river. He identified himself in a most wonderful way: both as belonging to the people of the village and wider community, and to the place; to the fields and houses which he had helped to build, and to the wider landscape in which the village nestled; the meltwater streams and high pastures where nature could be observed as the seasons and years went by. I then tried my best to describe myself to him; from three cities in the UK, er... four schools, always moving around you see, presently a student of biology..nature...though I have only ever spent one week observing it on a field course, don't know where I'll be next year, no close long-term friends because it's so hard to keep in touch and so expensive to visit them. I'd like to ask who leads the most fulfilling life? Who does the World Bank define as Poor'"

It seems that if we can learn anything from traditional ancient cultures, we can learn about fulfilment in life with simple things; relationships, places, songs, daily tasks, nature. If we can learn the value of other cultures as case studies in sustainability; in providing basic needs simply with appropriate technology, then perhaps we can see how to redefine progress to fit our culture and particular locality in the most appropriate way. There is never going to be one lifestyle which is sustainable for the whole world; each region will have its own variations on the theme.

Perhaps if we all spent more time and effort trying to make the place we live in more pleasant and habitable rather than clamouring for more material wealth we wouldn't feel the need to "get away from it all" in the first place . If we need a holiday (as defined by the tourist industry) then there is something wrong with our life. (John Davies, Tarmac's Press Officer, seemed to confirm this when he said, with uncharacteristic

honesty: "I want to make lots of money so I can have material possessions and go on holiday to nice places of the world—before they are destroyed by people like us, I suppose." [!]) It is much harder to accept this and do something about it rather than just think it is normal . Drastic changes are needed, not only to allow other people to have a chance for future happiness living in harmony with nature, but also to free ourselves from the daily grind of boring pointless work and constant pressure to do things we don't want to do.

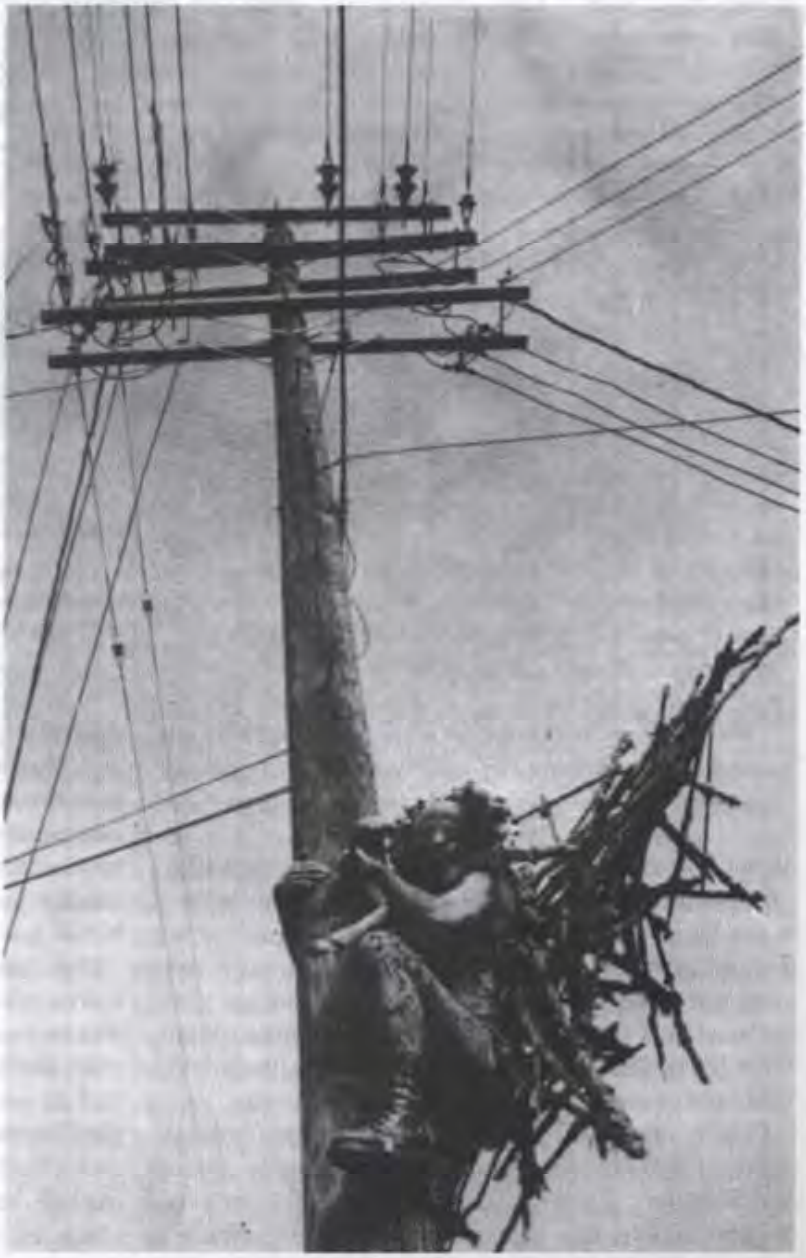
Supporters of the status quo suggest that we have no right to interfere with the supposed "freedom" to travel and consume. Many such people even claim that their tourism benefits the communities they visit . This may be due,at least in part, to a latent sense of guilt : they know, albeit rather subconsciously, that they are part of a damaging phenomenon and feel the need to justify their overconsumption; to shift the blame away from them as an individual . They often like to think they still have a social and environmental conscience, but fail to translate this except in the most superficial manner to their own patterns of living .

People caught up in the "work society" are so weighed down by restrictions and obligations in the bulk of their lives that when it comes to their little slice of freedom on holiday, there can be no constraints. Nothing must stand in their way, everything must be laid on. Whilst this is an understandable reaction to having the fetters temporarily removed, it expresses itself as an unwillingness to confront the awkward issue of their social and environmental responsibility in the dream destination. It would mar their temporary utopia—it would be 'too much like hard work'. But their slice of freedom comes at the expense of others; the freedom of the local people who wait on holiday makers hand and foot, enabling their indolence. Maybe they'll need a holiday themselves soon....

In these people's eyes, until we find a solution that doesn't inconvenience anyone in the rich world who is living above the poverty line, we must continue turning the world into a monocultural desert dotted with tree farms, superquarries, theme parks, toxic waste, oil slicks and megalopolitan prison camps from which we can escape every now and then .

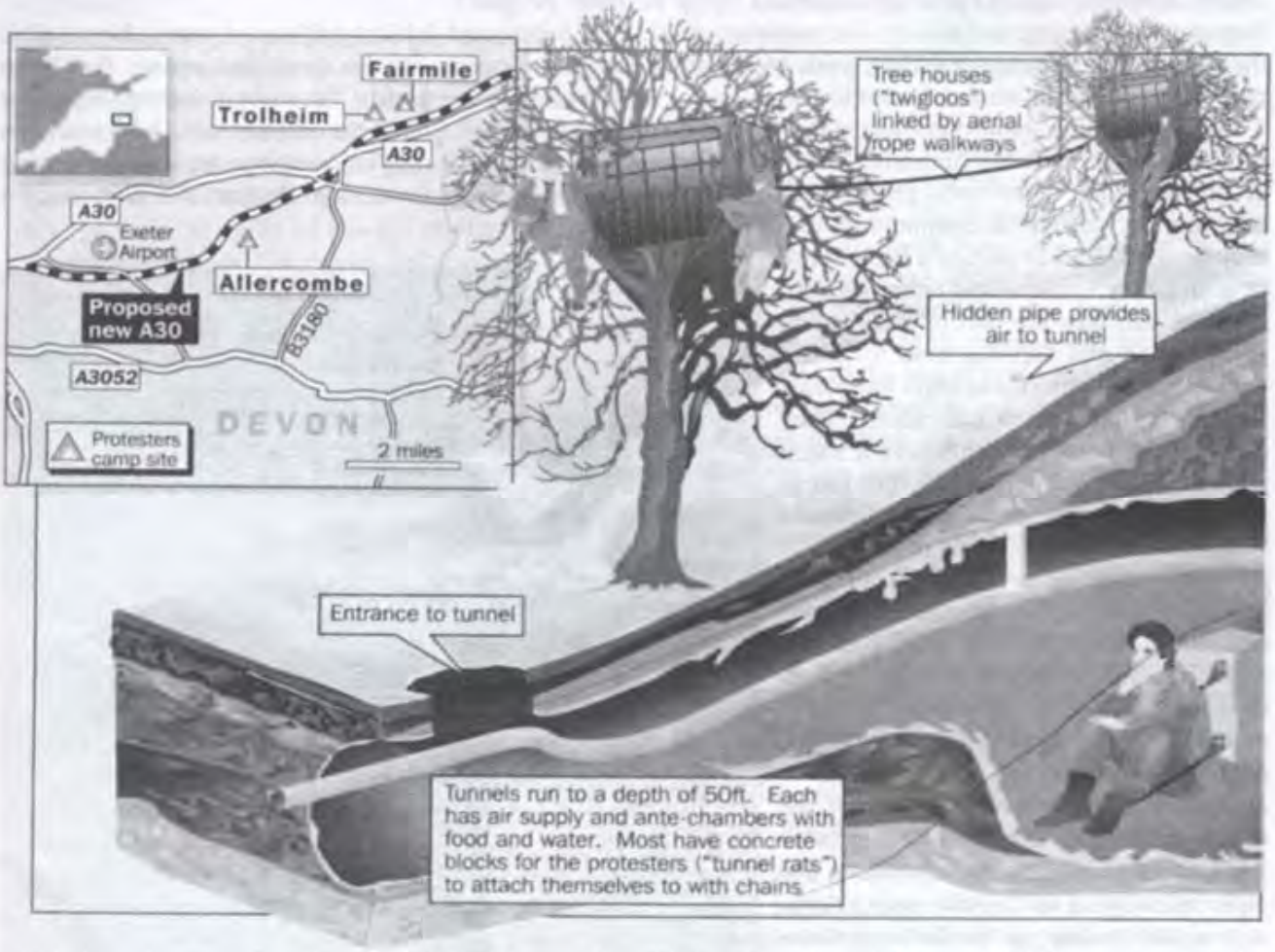
This article is not suggesting there should not be progress, but progress towards what? Progress towards cramming even more things into our lives for the sake of consuming and experiencing things, or towards building a considerate society where human activity is not to the detriment of the wider natural world or to other peoples?

A happy and fulfilling life must surely be possible without causing all the death and misery that is so prevalent in the world . The most disgusting argument for "progress" is that the billions who we enslave in order to fuel our mad consumption are somehow going to be worse off if we stop. Perhaps this is more of a threat than a fact.



Farewell Fairmile

Road raging in the South West



This interview was done in a park in Brighton, after bribing the East Devon EF! activist with a can of lager.

Living the Struggle

What was the run up to the Fairmile eviction like?

For a long time, up to the eviction of Fairmile, there was a huge amount of disillusionment, both at Fairmile and around the country in the movement at large. A lot of us thought that in many ways the eviction was going to be a flop. This was down to two reasons. Firstly what happened at the Allercombe and Trollheim evictions and secondly internal politics at Fairmile.

Contrary to the media representation of the Trollheim eviction nobody from Trollheim had actually gone to the Newbury Reunion Rally, [one of the first and biggest actions this year- see the Newbury article in this issue], so it probably wouldn't have got much bigger. Nonetheless it was quick. Everybody thought it would last longer than a day. Allercombe was caught completely off guard because they came in immediately after Christmas. That was quite demoralising. As a result none of us had expected Fairmile to be quite as big as it was in the end.

The second reason for disillusionment was that Fairmile had been around for a very, very long time, and had in many ways brought into question a lot of what we do. It was the longest community we've had, and at no point did anybody ever think that it was going to be that long. But it meant that, over that two-and-a-half year long period, we had the opportunity to explore community living in a community of resistance.



At some of the camps, people grew crops on the land they were defending, which then fed them. That's a really strong sense of connection, isn't it.

Definitely. Those gardens weren't as big as they might have been. The problem with gardening is that you need to think in terms of one year, two years; you can't build a garden for tomorrow. It was an amazing thing. I wasn't involved with it, but I got the buzz. Herbs from the garden were put in the meal we were eating at the end of the day; it meant that it wasn't just a protest camp, it was a community, functioning as an experiment, an exploration of alternatives.

As I was saying before the second reason for disillusionment was internal problems. Fairmile developed a definite elite, mainly those people that were there most of the time, more than I've seen at any other camp. When there were loads of visitors, you would see less Fairmile residents about. Most of the residents went up to their treehouses, or down to the tunnels, which is insane. It meant that the people who were there talking to those who had just turned up were the people who had less of a connection with Fairmile, who perhaps had only turned up themselves three days before. So whatever was needed to be said wasn't getting across.

There was an attitude at Fairmile. There was a certain way that things were done. It alienated a hell of a lot of people who would have been part of that campaign. More people were turned away from Fairmile than became a part of it. Many of those people ended up at Allercombe or Trollheim. They were the ones that got fucked off with Fairmile, went to check out the other places, and felt happier there. As far as I know, no one left Allercombe or Trollheim to move to Fairmile, except after those camps were evicted.

Many of the issues brought up were related to peoples' reasons for being at Fairmile in the first place. At a meeting during the autumn, it was suggested that, when the eviction kicked off, we should all leave. We'd be showing that we were still in control of the situation, and the camp would then be seen as a statement, a symbolic act, rather than another set-piece confrontation with the state that we've been through many times, loved and hyped up by the media.

The meetings for that lasted for about three days, each about four or five hours long. I didn't go to all of them, but it was a massive process of discussion and dialogue. And even though the suggestion was one that I myself found insulting, I acknowledge that the actual process of discussion brought a lot of issues to the fore.

For instance it brought into question whether what we were engaged in was a symbolic protest, or an attempt to cost large amounts of money to the road builders. A lot of people thought that the symbolic relevance of what they were doing was more important than the actual act of fucking up the roads machine.

It does sound as if there was a lot more discussion than at Twyford, M11, M65 and so on. For all that we talk about being a tribe and so on, we rarely open up to each other.

I totally agree. At the meetings everyone was listened to. What they were saying ranged a lot further than whether we should leave; it was about their perceptions of why they were there and what they were doing. As such, it can only be seen as a positive thing. People got a lot out of those meetings.

A lot of questions were asked. How far would we take our resistance? Tunnels are a step on from what we were doing in the trees. The danger of death is there up in the trees—we've all taken fucking massive life-threatening risks—but in a tunnel, if it collapses you're dead. Simple as that. Have we got a bit of a martyrdom complex?

Were we doing tunnels primarily to prove to ourselves that what we are doing is right? If not it was definitely true in relation to the digging of the Fairmile trench, which was months and months of blood, sweat and tears. It was something that, at the eviction, only served to keep us out, and didn't prevent the state forces from coming in at all. It looked good; ...fort mentality...but it was quite a major waste of energy carried out by people who felt they had to do it because they felt they had to do something. There was an atmosphere of guilt-tripping, which I actually think meant that less stuff got done. Certain people did things and then attacked the majority of the camp for not doing them, whereas on sites in the past, people walked on to site and worked on their own projects. This was very disempowering. It was less D I Y and more Do It Now.

The discussions also brought to light whether we wanted to make a symbolic stance which all the group were happy with, or whether we were prepared to make compromises that could potentially turn it into a mass/larger struggle. The KLF sound system prompted a lot of discussion. We could have kicked off a massive festival, bringing a lot of people in that wouldn't otherwise have been there, but people agreed that this could damage the land, and we morally couldn't do that. This was opposed to the point of view that we should fuck up the road-building programme at all costs. We had one of the largest sound systems in the country parked up on a road-protest site, and never really used it to its full potential.



However its wasn't all black and white. There were people who came into both categories. Some thought that we should walk out of Fairmile because it was a defensive struggle. They argued that when the state came we should pile onto somewhere else, maybe shutting down the present A30.

Fairmile had, for two-and-a-half years, been on red alert. If it had been envisaged as a two-and-a-half year project from the very beginning, then it would have been a very, very different place from the place it was.

The Long awaited A30 evictions

Can you describe what happened during the eviction? What kind of forces were put up against the people in the tunnels, the trees, and what strategies did you have?

The start of the eviction was a skillful move on their part. Coming in at 9.30 on a Thursday evening was a fucking clever tactic. Not to the extent that it was played up in the media, but hippies by and large at that time on a Thursday evening are in the pub. Though in fact the majority of people at Fairmile were in Fairmile, and weren't in the pub, what is significant and quite odd was that a lot of the people who were in the pub were the long-term Fairmile residents.

The state used tactics they'd developed at Newbury—of sending in a snatch squad. Trevor Coleman, the Under-Sheriff, described them as "a core of hand-picked men". They were sent in prior to the main eviction force, and crept across the fields behind the site, stormed in out of the blue, grabbing all the people they could on the ground. Then the main eviction force came in. But despite that, as is always their weakness—and it is something we really have to work at capitalising on—they were crap at throwing up perimeter cordons rapidly. Once they've got them up, they're in control, but anybody at Newbury must have seen the chaos that often ensued when they were trying to move several hundred blokes who obviously didn't really want to be there, around into an orderly line.

During that period most of the people who were in the pub actually broke through the cordon and got into the site, and got up the trees, so in fact the state's advantage was nullified. Then what happened, which was odd, was that they didn't do anything for the first night. That's something I've never seen before. It gave us time to get our act together. It gave us breathing space, because although the eviction was obviously kicking off, we weren't dealing with things happening that second, we were able to get our heads around the fact that we were about to enter into protracted eviction.

The tree eviction was mild. Very little happened. There weren't many people in the trees. There was still a reliance on walkways, which I think was a tactical mistake. We'd learned that the only way we can resist climbers is en masse, by congregrating on individual trees and individual places, because a climber coming vertically up a tree cannot go through four people. But Fairmile was still conducted as a spread-out eviction, where one person was on one tree, one person on the next tree, and they pick each person off one-by-one. Whereas if all those four people had been on the same tree, the time delay would have been longer.

At Stanworth [see DoD 5] there were quite a lot of 'tree defence gangs', weren't there?

Yes, at Stanworth for the first few days we just spread ourselves thinly. Then on the Wednesday we ganged up on four trees. Whereas they'd mowed through most of the valley in the days prior to that, we stopped them dead for an entire day on four trees. That was a tactic that we learnt then as a movement, and that we should have carried on. Although people talk about violence and non-violence, it doesn't really need to enter into the equation; it's just a physical fact that four people on top of you, above you, are fucking difficult for a climber to remove.

One guy was locked on to one of the lock-on barrels in the trees, the climbers came up and were drilling him out, they then got down for their lunch break. He got out of the lock-on and removed and cut all the climbing ropes that they'd left up there. He then scaled up to the top of the tree. The climbers then, a bit pissed off, started the operation again. They chased him all the way to the top of the tree, failed to get him down because of the resistance he was offering. Then got down again. At which point he climbed back down to the lock-on he'd been in before, and locked himself on. So they'd wasted about three hours chasing somebody who, three hours later, was in exactly the same position he'd been in before. I thought that was something that is worth remembering. Lock-ons don't necessarily mean you have to be stationary all the time. He had an opportunity to move, so he did, and he capitalised on it.

What was significant about the tunnel eviction was that they were incredibly gentle. They were going so softly, so slowly, so over—cautious, it took them a day-and-a-half to shore-up to the first door; which is a difference of about six feet. I think in the future we have to be aware that if we're going to use tunnels as a tactic, the state is not going to be anything near as nice. It's also worth remembering that most of the people in the tunnel were either tricked out, or after giving them



the run-around for a long period of time, gave themselves up: there was no full-on resistance in the tunnels. That's not a comment on the people in the tunnels—it would have been pretty suicidal—but it's something that's likely to happen in the future.

One of the best things that's happened on campaigns in the last year, really during Newbury, was that the eviction climbers were really heavily targeted by people in the climbing community. British climbing magazines were quite openly talking about these people, who'd been quite well respected in the community beforehand, as being scabs, and there was an article in a leading climbing magazine, calling for a united front between ecologists and climbers, a la 'The Monkey Wrench Gang', which was a novel about a group of highly trained wilderness types who go out and start smashing things up in quite a serious way.

Climbers working on evictions were banned from climbing walls. On at least two occasions physically chased off crags when out on a climbing holiday. An amazing level of politicisation for a scene that, since the mid-80's, has become for many a yuppie accessory lifestyle. It was one of the major reasons why evictions take as long as they do, because so many climbers were put off from going anywhere near that money. Is that likely to happen to the pot-holers?

Yes—the pot-holers learnt from that. All the pot-holers had balaclavas on throughout the entire period, Even while they were doing TV interviews. They were live on the Ten-o-clock News wearing a balaclava, which was quite weird. They obviously were shit scared that we'd find out who they are. I suspect that in the pot-holing community, as in the climbing community, there is an a respect for the earth and a connection with the issues that we're fighting for. We need to build links with the pot holing community.

There have been fewer people at evictions recently, Fairmile in particular. One of the reasons for that that I know, is that people tend to think, "once the compound is up, we can't get in".

Fairmile proved that was wrong: twelve people managed to get in on the first night. There were repeated attempts during the eviction to get in, including quite innovative ones. Fishing wire, invisible from the ground was strung from inside the compound to trees outside. People tried to haul a line but were stopped. Lots more creativity and thought is needed.

I think that overall the eviction went better than planned. It was almost certainly the fluffiest eviction. Partly because of the state's gently-gently policy. They didn't steam in like at Trollheim, which the media almost totally ignored. That was a much more violent eviction. There, they cut all the usual corners they cut when it comes to safety. The tunnels at Trollheim were evicted far more rapidly than the tunnels at Fairmile, because they just dug people out. They told people that somebody was injured down there, which meant that some unlocked. They pressure-pointed people with Maglites. At Fairmile it took them two days to get through the first door; at Trollheim they just winched the door off.This was partly because of the nature of the fort, it meant that the media was kept out, and nobody could see what the fuck was going on inside.

Do you think then, the kind of barricades you would put up if you were, say, street fighting are not automatically applicable to these situations?

The barricades have both positive and negative effects, both practically and on peoples' perceptions within them. They created a real feeling of being in a temporary autonomous zone. When you entered Fort Trollheim, you entered a fort. As far as I know, before the eviction the state wouldn't set foot in Trollheim. As at Fairmile, if the police turned up looking for a runaway or whatever, they could just be fucked off. The drawbridge would be pulled up. Someone would come down and talk to the police: they were there on that side and we were there on our side.

There were classic moments, like when the bailiffs came to put up the eviction notices. Trollheim had this huge "gunge bucket"; after locking the door and barricading themselves in—they poured it onto the bailiff—half a tonne of sewage. Trollheim was a free area, quite clearly marked—you cross that line and you left British state control. If there hadn't been such a definite line, there would have been more of a seeping in of capitalist thought.

But the negative side of it is that it puts people into a defensive mentality. Defending that spot becomes the sole purpose of being there. Of the actions that happened outside the area of the site in the time I was there, only one involved a significant number of people from the site. All the pro-active actions outside were done and even organised by people who'd come from outside. They came down for eviction mornings, and with nothing to do, went off and did an action somewhere. That's really quite sad. There was one action I remember, where nobody from the site was on it, which is a shame really, because this was the A30 campaign, and activists from all over the country were coming down and doing their actions for them. That

defensive mentality is harmful to the movement, and something we need to move on from. It focuses you into a single space and not onto the wider struggle. On the other hand it's an amazing feeling, I felt it, a feeling of connectedness, the place has meaning, has some sense of realness, you're defending something, some actual physical thing, rather than some abstract thought, and that's good.

The Spectacularisation of Fairmile

I think it's worth nothing that, more than any other eviction, Fairmile became a media spectacle, and that was partly our own creation. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing; I'm not a person who believes in not talking to the press at all; I just believe that we've got to try and remain in control, and know when to pull out. We've gained a lot of good publicity, and have, hopefully, changed some consciousness in people. There were national press articles that copied sections of our press releases verbatim.

Part of what we do is try and make an issue which is otherwise boring sexy, make politics real. That's what has happened, exemplified by the M11, where we began to realise and harness the fact that our resistance to the roads was graphic, was real, and that people could relate to its immediacy. The tunnels were the end of that process—the ultimate insane thing to do.

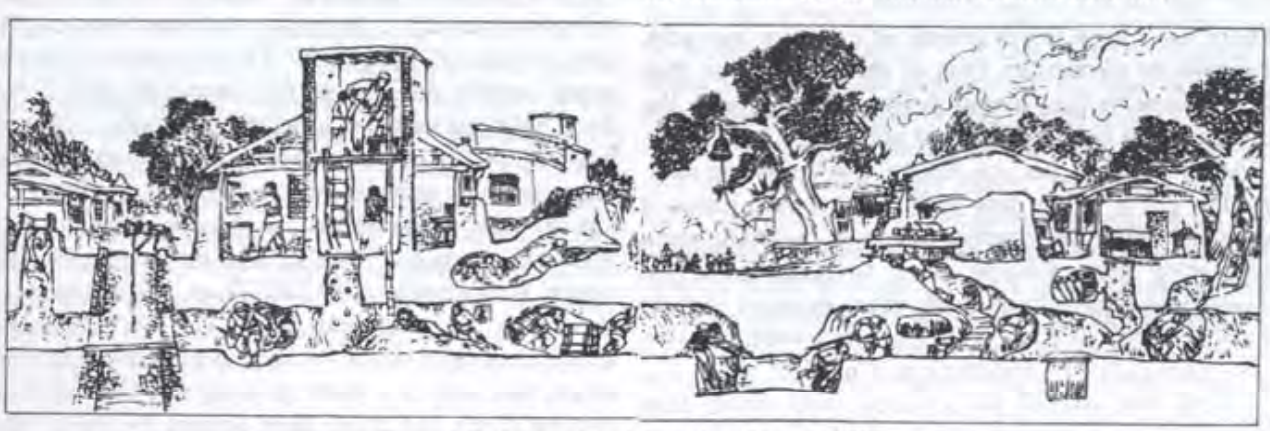
On the day we were going to to issue our demands, the Under-Sheriff cut off our intercom communication with the tunnel, which the press had been filming and using directly; "And now we go to the people down in the tunnels". We put out these demands and they just cut off all the communications! In the end it was probably better than if they hadn't!

The demands were 1) All the Design Build Finance Operate (state organised private road building) documentation should be made open to public scrutiny; and 2) All road-building should cease until they'd been reviewed. At a critical time when media interest was slacking off, putting the tunnelers in danger, the demands got us loads of media interest. You looked at the demands and just thought, "Well that's pretty fucking reasonable. They're just asking for a few bits of paper to be made available to the public." But the reality was that the DBFO is a cover-up by the state and making those documents public is something that the state wouldn't be able to do.

We asked for them because we knew that they wouldn't be able to give them to us, or if they did, then it would open up a can of worms for the roadbuilding industry. We knew from day one that they were never going to meet the demands. We'd deliberately balanced them so that they appeared reasonable but in no way were actually meetable by the state. We didn't ask for a plane to Cuba, but then nor did we give them something that they could do, like "Don't arrest us" or something like that.

We were able to say that the demands were us opening the negotiations, and the state's response was to cut our communication lines. We managed to present ourselves as the reasonable ones and the state as being the nutters. We were the ones asking for negotiation, and they were the ones in balaclavas!

It was at this point that the media attempted (quite successfully) to turn our struggle to defend life into a personality story. They wanted to know the backgrounds of all the people down the tunnels, and all we'd tell them was their names and age. There was quite a diverse range of ages there—everything from early 40s (John) down to sixteen (Animal). Which was why we decided to say the ages, because we thought it would shatter that media-generated impression that it was just young activists that were doing these things. In the end they created a situation where millions knew what colour socks Swampy wore down the tunnels, but not the name of the site the tunnels were in.



Tunnel Defence Maoist-style. Circa 1950.



Supporting Prisoners

Most people don't realise how many of us go to prison on quite a regular basis. It's not news. A large proportion of activists in our movement have now been to prison quite often, for varying small sentences, some for up to three or four months (some longer), and it's just never noticed.

In the end, four people were remanded to prison, and two of them then went on hunger strike, resulting in quite extensive publicity after the eviction. The only problem was that the asylum seekers were on hunger strike at the same time, and there obviously was a serious difference in scale between us and the asylum seekers. There was a feeling on our part that we didn't want to detract from their struggle and their hunger strike, which was a lot more immediate, because they were people that would be killed if they were sent back to their country.

Usually when people go to prison they get a few letters, a few books and that's about it. But there were a few pickets outside prison weren't there?

The picket started off as a candlelit vigil, and progressed into a fire show every evening outside the prison. Loads of really creative stuff happened there, smashing the doors, people attempting to scale the side of the prison building, windows getting broken. Our fireshow was not just for the activists inside but for all the prisoners.

We were outside the prison wall, and all throughout the night they were shouting out for us to make more noise. People were scaling the trees opposite the prison, so they could be seen directly by the people inside. The imprisoned activists, said that after the one night when it really went absolutely mad out there, they suddenly had a level of solidarity and understanding from the other prisoners that hadn't existed before. John, who was on remand, described the prisoners almost lining up to shake his hand. It gave him a lot of strength, because he'd been on a wing where he couldn't actually hear or see what was going on, but all the prisoners on the other wing had, and had been shouting and shining their lighters in the window because the lights were turned off, just so that we could see that they were there.

It made a lot of connections between us and prisoners, many of whom share some of our values, but feel alienated due to the media-generated perception of us as a bunch of hippies. Prisoners are going to react to and respect a group that looks after their own inside. Prison pickets are something that should be repeated in future. It also meant that all the people driving past, and anyone watching the news, was aware that there were people inside. The windows of the prison getting broken from the outside was front-page news in the local paper. It highlighted why they were inside: they'd been found guilty because the state had ordered them to stay out of a twelve-mile long, one-mile wide section of Devon, and they'd ignored the exclusion zone. I think a lot of people can connect with the insanity of being told that you can't walk on a particular bit of land, for a crime you may or may not have committed.

Support for those arrested has been one of our weaknesses across the country.

The system that we'd set up is one that could be used elsewhere; there was one person who coordinated just prison support, and nothing else. She had her own phone on a different number, nothing to do with the main office. That phone number was given out on arrest cards. She built up a liason with custody officers, managing to get round the usual problem where they don't talk to you because you're not someone's relative. She was able to coordinate sorting out bail addresses, getting vehicles to people when they were coming out, getting food, baccy etc.

Prison support is good for those doing the support as well as for those supported. It allowed people with jobs and so on that weren't able to be on the site to still be a part of things. It gave local people a role that was far less conciliatory to the state than 'legal observering'. Legal observers were trying to create this false illusion that they were in some way impartial, when it was blatantly obvious that they were local supporters. But prison support was a bit more overt in bringing these people into a part of our struggle. Every time one of these people went to the nick to pick someone up, they'd hear that person's first-hand story of why they'd been nicked and what they'd done to warrant that arrest. And that's obviously a good educational process for the person doing the prison support.

For once I think we can say we looked after people inside well.

Fairmile Retaken

In the first week of June, security at the A30 got a shock. All the previous week campaigners had been covertly digging tunnels by night inside the compound on the old Fairmile site. On Monday morning embarrased guards wandered over the hill, having heard a story on Radio 1, to find a full on camp with a tripod, small tunnel system, benders & lock-ons.

For further information contact East Devon EF!



Mutant Red Herrings?

Why labelling of genetically modified food is pointless

Genetic Engineering is one of the most terrifying technological developments of the 20th century. We are now tampering with nature on the very smallest, molecular level, and we have no clear idea of what the consequences might be. The subject is not an easy one for the uninitiated to get to grips with, and the jargon associated with it seems almost designed to alienate people. However, it is vital that we make the effort to understand the full risks involved in this technology, in order to realise the urgent need for direct action to stop it.

A long time ago, manufacturers were forced by law to add vitamins and minerals to products that had been impoverished by the processing they were subjected to (for example, margerine and cornflakes). In spite of the fact that the addition of a few artificial vitamins is no substitute for good fresh food, these products are now presented as 'fortified with vitamins and minerals' as if it was an improvement.

There are no limits to the dishonesty of the food adulteration industry (see the Monsanto story below), and given time the obstacle of mandatory labelling of gmo's will be similarly overcome.

It seems that the main (perhaps the only) thrust of the current campaign about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) is about if and how they should be labelled. There was a time, not so long ago, when the debate was over whether or not *any* such organisms should be released into the environment at all.

Whilst this debate was still going on, the biotech corporations took illegal direct action and started field trials without even the permission of their regulatory poodles—the government bodies set up (ostensibly) to consider the dangers involved and make decisions on our behalf.

The evidence presented below shows that GMOs have crossed and will continue to cross with non-gm crops and their wild relatives. This will make it impossible to have any foods that are free of the modified genes, and any of the other dangerous bits and pieces that have been inserted into the organisms.

Other evidence shows that the vectors used to insert the new DNA are themselves dangerous. This means that the whole process must be stopped until such time as the scientists themselves (free of the constraints imposed on them by greedy self-interested corporations) can prove conclusively that they have reached the level of expertise and knowledge that would guarantee safety.

The tactics we are using at present are based on the assumption that the law is sufficient to protect us, yet an increasing number of dangerous mutated organisms are being released every month all over the world. On the rare occasions that biotech corporations do actually encounter legal difficulties they cheat, lie and bribe their way around them, and use force to get their products into the marketplace. Where they meet physical opposition (for example, from Greenpeace–one of the very few organisations actually campaigning for a ban), they use the violence of the state to overcome it.

What appears below is not speculation to be argued about politely with the representatives of corporations, but things that have actually happened.

GMOs cannot be kept apart from their wild and cultivated relatives

Transfer of Gene to Non-Gmo Crops

Field tests with genetically engineered potatoes have demonstrated both the high frequency and wide range of gene flow. When normal potato plants were planted at distances of up to 1100 metres from modified potatoes, and the seeds of the normal potatoes were collected afterwards, 72% of the plants in the immediate neighbourhood of the transgenic (gmo) potatoes contained the transferred gene. At greater distances an almost constant 35% of seeds contained the transgene.[1]

Scientists at the Scottish Crop Research Institute have shown that much more pollen escapes from large fields of genetically engineered oilseed rape than was predicted from earlier experiments on smaller plots. They found that escaping pollen fertilised plants up to 2.5 kilometres away.[2]

Transfer Via Human Systems

Crop seeds travel hundreds of kilometres between seed merchant, farmer and processing factory, therefore spillage in transport is inevitable, and could be more worrying than the threat of pollen spread.[3]

Transfer of Foreign Gene to Micro-Organism

It was reported in 1994 that gene transfer can occur from plants to micro-organisms. Genetically engineered oilseed rape, black mustard, thorn-apple and sweet peas all containing an antibiotic-resistance gene were grown together with the fungus Aspergillus niger or their leaves were added to the soil. The fungus was shown to have incorporated the antibiotic-resistance gene in all of these co-culture experiments.[4] It is worth noting that microorganisms can transfer genes through several mechanisms to other unrelated micro-organisms.

Unexpected Effects

A common harmless variety of a bacterium Klebsiella planticola, which inhabits the root-zone of plants, had been genetically engineered to transform plant residues like leaves into ethanol for use as a fuel. The genetically engineered bacteria not only survived and competed successfully with their parent strain in different soil types, it proved unexpectedly to inhibit growth or kill off grass in the different soil types tested. In sandy soil, most of the grasses died from alcohol poisoning. In all soil types the population of beneficial soil fungi decreased. These fungi are crucial for plant health and growth as they help plants to take up nutrients and to resist common diseases. In clay soil, the genetically engineered bacteria also caused an increase in the number of root-feeding worms, with consequent damage to plants.[5]

The bacterium Pseudomonas putida was genetically engineered to degrade the herbicide 2,4-D. The engineered bacteria broke down the herbicide but degraded it to a substance that was highly toxic to fungi. These fungi - essential for soil fertility and in protecting plants against diseases - were therefore destroyed.[6]

The toxin-producing gene of the bacterium Bacillus thurigiensis is commonly engineered into crops to provide them with a built-in insecticide. However, the toxin produced is known to resist degradation by binding itself to small soil particles whilst continuing its toxic activity. The long term impact of this toxin on soil organisms and soil fertility is unknown.[7] In spite of this, industry scientists assumed that the release of genetically engineered biological pesticides was safe, believing that naturally occurring biological pesticides were not capable of long-term survival in the wild. Dutch studies now reveal that the popular biological pesticide Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) does not die within a few days, but can remain active a year or more. Bt spores were found to thrive in both dead and living insects. "There are no previous examples of the spores reproducing in living organisms," Dutch researchers marveled.[8]

Dangers Inherent in the Process Itself

The Use of Cauliflower Mosaic Virus

"Essentially, all of the crops released after genetic engineering use Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CaMV) genes as switches to turn on the foreign genes that have been introduced into the crops, to make them patentable and ready for market. CaMV is a pararetrovirus related to Hepatitis B virus in humans. CaMV is used even though experiments show that virus genes in crop plants recombine with invading viruses to make new strong virus strains. The danger from CaMV is that it will create newer stronger plant viruses. It isn't out of the question that CaMV will recombine with Hepatitis B to make a virus that lives in both plants and animals. Such a natural transmission is seriously discussed for the scary virus, Ebola. When CaMV is used on crops it is present in every cell, thus the number of gene copies in the crop far outnumbers the genes in the environment as virus. There is a fundamental genetic law in recombination that says "too many genes mixed together are bound to produce bad news".[9]





In addition to the dangerous nature of the mutant 'foods', there have been numerous instances which show that the regulatory bodies are either too uninformed or too corrupted by corporate influence to make sensible decisions. Even if the authorities were acting on our behalf, the corporations ignore the law and go ahead with their unmandated agenda regardless.

As Bill Mollison said; "the time for evidence is over, there is only time for action", or in the more eloquent words of Kant: "It is often necessary to take a decision on the basis of knowledge sufficient for action, but insufficient to satisfy the intellect." In this case we may even have the latter.

If we campaign wholeheartedly for a ban we are on solid scientific ground. We can appeal directly to people to help, and show them why it is important. The campaign for labelling is making the issue of a life-threatening technology appear to be merely an issue of civil rights. This is not an issue that can be resolved through the mechanisms of the market, or 'consumer choice' - and food is only one of the many applications of biotechnology, most of which have so far been overlooked. This is playing right into the hands of the biotech corporations. We need a debate about how to stop them, not about how to allow them to carry on. No-one has the right to choose something that threatens the lives of others; that endangers the current life of this planet.

These new organisms must be stopped. The democratic process is being subverted by powerful corporations who are taking direct action with no mandate. How should we react? There is a fundamental right to self-defence in law, even to the extreme point of killing someone. I am not talking about killing people, merely using force to stop them. This is a perfectly reasonable proposition as all other methods have demonstrably failed, and our 'security' forces have failed to act. The biotech corporations have bypassed the normal channels, so they have only themselves to blame if the people rise up and destroy them. It is too late to reform them, they must be eliminated.

The efforts of our best thinkers, which are currently being squandered by the likes of monsanto plc [Anagram: "Conman's plot"!] on trivial self-serving projects must be channelled into finding real solutions to the horrendous problems we face. The biotech corporations are waging a war against life and against human freedom. We must overcome our fear and defend ourselves using tactics appropriate to the situation which we now find ourselves in. As Tolstoy once said: "You may not be interested in war, but war is very interested in you."

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8. Earth Island Journal, Dec 1996.
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Anti-genetics Actions

Crop Circle Chaos and vegetable vandalism

Since the first in the field planting in 1990 of genetically modified organisms, Germany has seen many actions against the 'freisetzung', or open air planting of gmo's. There are so far over 40 sites where gmo's have been planted in the open air, and crops include potatoes, maize, petunias and a species of tree. Groups from all around the country—mainly 'normal people' from 'normal backgrounds' have taken action against the multinationals.

Almost in every case the g.m.o's have been planted in areas far from roads—to protect the fields from an angry public perhaps? But this has not stopped the growing movement against gene technology in both its theory and practice. This article will concentrate on actions against the latter—its practice; and in Germany that has meant the squatting of fields due for planting of gmo's, the destruction of crops and the disruption of the sowing of gmo seeds. This has finally happened after four years of campaigning in—according to the government—the 'legitimate form of protest' ie the most ineffective. Many of the fields themselves have now been squatted, "wagenburgen", protest camps made up usually of a small number of wagons—normally used by road workers, have been set up and continually occupied by small groups of dedicated campaigners.

The idea of squatting the fields is simple—get there before the seeds are sown in Spring and stay there untill it is too late in the year for planting.

Every year for the last three years, fields made ready for the planting of gmo's have been squatted or occupied. This has led to much controversy (at least from right wing newspapers). At the same time it has recieved widespread support from local villagers who supply the camps with food and any other materials that they can—valuable support, as these camps are often located far away from any such services. Locals also provide backup support by informing the press and other groups of the latest news from each of the camps.

At the same time, many fields of gmo's have been severely damaged—at least 12 fields were destroyed in 1996 alone. These have included fields of monsanto owned maize, and gmo potatoes. These actions have now led to the situation that at least three fields planted with gmo seeds are now under permanent police protection—simply because of the threat of occupation or destruction. At the same time at least three fields were not sown last year through the actions of local people against them, these were in Grapsow, Stetten and Bansleben—all were due to be planted with Monsanto owned herbicide resistant Sugar beet.



Windy Nights and Crop Circles: Actions in '96.

Last year was definitely the most active year so far in the short but active campaign against gmo's in Germany. Wippingen, South Germany was the site of protests against the planting of AgrEvo's beloved Maize—this company has been badly hit by squatted fields and its now infamous crop of Maize has faced many alleged cases of crop destruction. AgrEvo were taken to the local courts in an attempt by locals to stop the planting. The company unfortunately won their case and planting began in May. This did not stop protestors from halting the planting and only two thirds of the field could be sown. Possibly even more interesting was the strange affect on the local climate that the planting of gmo's has had in many parts of Germany—



effects that could only be described as 'destructive wind patterns'. This must surely be linked to the planting of gmo's as the wind patterns have only occured amongst gmo crops—other crops nearby have in evey case been left undamaged—even vehicles and wagons parked on squatted fields were also left undamaged. Police are investigating claims that these strange phenomena are linked to crop circles. Wippingen was one such site where the planting of maize seemed to be responsible for such strong weather patterns that almost 70% of the crop was destroyed within one month of planting!

A local initiative in Gehrden, Niedersachsen also fought against the planting of AgrEvo's Maize and also Sugar beet. They organised a gene-technic free market and info and discussion events. Johanisdorf was another squatted site and the local initiative tried to prevent again the planting of AgrEvo's beloved Maize and Rape. The camp known as the "camp of resistance" produced a flyer declaring, "Welcome to the way of the future, we will try creative and artistic forms of resistance...create your own ideas, Juggling, Theatre, Funactions of all kinds...everyone is welcome to bring their ideas."

Such interesting calls to action were unfortunately not listened to by all, one visitor was certain that "Protesting makes no sense!"—it certainly makes more sense than releasing potentially dangerous organisms into fields—especially when then cause crop circles and 'strange winds!' Hohlstedt was the site of many actions, including rallies and TV and Radio discussions. This field was owned by Monsanto and was squatted before the sowing of seeds. Monsanto eventually gave up trying to plant the field after pieces of metal were spread over it, (according to Monsanto) "making the work on the field too dangerous."

That was then and this is Now—"The squats of 97"

Buggingen: This field has been occupied since Easter. It has already seen many previous actions and was last year the site of much crop destruction. In April there was a rally in support of the campaign against attempts by the firm Van der Have's plans to grow gmo Maize. In Schmarrie the fields are also squatted and they have managed to prevent (so far) the sowing of seeds—unfortunately those that were already planted are now under police guard—as in Uffenheim. One field is squatted here as well, but areas of crops that have already been sown with seeds are now under police protection—Visitors are especially welcome! The use of police protection to guard crops has of course come from the fact that the fields are in danger of being either squatted or that they might even destroy themselves—through these 'strange winds'. A third site (not occupied) is also under police guard and can be found in Schoenfeld. Meaning 'beautiful field', this site has seen many varied protests and it was last year's wide scale crop destruction that has led to the police protection.

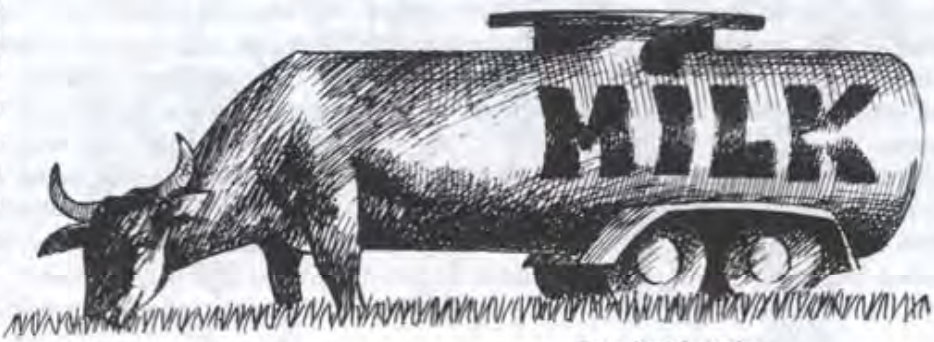
The continued occupation of sites and the increase in type and frequency of anti-genetechnology actions, combined with a number of succesful campaigns, will ensure that this movement—although small at the moment—will become one of the major points of protest again this summer. All of the sites welcome visitors and of course are in need of food and 'site' materials. Anyone who wants to visit the sites can contact them directly (phone numbers are below), or through the projektwerkstatt in Berlin, who can tell you how to get there. Up to date information is available through the GenEthisches Netzerk also in Berlin.

Cycle tour of Gene tech fields. On the 17th of July a cycle tour linking up many of the sites in north Germany is planned, it will link up Hamburg with Berlin and as many of the gentech-fields along the way as possible (for details contact the GeN—see below). Fin. Umprowe.

Contacts :—

Fin: Umweltprojektwerkstatt, Yorkstrasse 59.HH. 10965. Berlin. Germany.
Gen-Ethisches Netzwerk, Schoeneweiderstr 3. 12055.Berlin. Germany.

Squatted gene-tech fields.
Buggingen. 00++ 171/4137937.(field mobile.)
Schmarrie. 00++ 543/5928 (Contact, Horst Hillen)
Uffenhelm. 00++ 9848/490 (Conact, Clemens)
Woelfersheim 00++ 171/8392515 (field mobile.)



Igor Kopelnitsky.

Howzat!

Mutant Potatoes all out in first UK field action

In what was Britain's first action on a GM-Test site, the Super Heroes Against Genetix First XI donned their outfits yet again in their ongoing tour against the combined Pro-Genetix team. The game was played out on a potato test field site just outside Cambridge on Sunday (8th June 1997). Due to the nature of a somewhat muddy and sticky-wicket—potatoes replaced the traditional red ball. Fielders had a difficult time of it—most of the batting resulted in the 'balls' being smashed to pieces or else being lost amongst upturned soil.The entire crop of the test site was destroyed.

The successful action is seen as the first in a whole string of actions against such sites in Britain—whilst similar actions have been ongoing in Europe for some time this is the first such action in Britain and marks a further development in the campaign against GM produce.

A spokesperson for the Super Heroes—Captain Chromosone—said: "The Test Match proved a huge success if somewhat one-sided—we fielded a team of some thirty Super Heroes whilst the Cambridge team didn't even show up. It simply isn't cricket."

When contacted about the action Norman Killiam (Development Director at PBI Cambridge) was initially stumped by the scoreline: "This comes as a complete surprise to me—I don't see how this is possible." On checking the site on Monday morning, Mr Killiam predictably denied that the destroyed potatoes had been Genetically Manipulated but said instead that the potatoes had been "normal". The use of the word "normal" of course begs the question do PBI themselves consider GM-potatoes to be abnormal?

Splice Grrrl commented after the match that: "Genetic engineering adds completely new components to our diet and nobody knows fully how this will affect our health in the short and long term. Engineered grains and vegetables can trigger allergic reactions and cause toxic poisoning. Crops and weeds resistant to weed-killers will increase the use of toxic chemicals, the residues of which will accumulate in our food.

But more specifically these potatoes contain an antibiotic resistance gene. It is because of the antibiotic resistance which Ciba Geigy's (now Novatis) Bt Maize contains, that no country in the EU supports the importation or growing of the Bt maize and some are actively opposing it (Austria, Luxembourg, Italy and France). It is ridiculous that these crops are being planted in test sites all round the country when there is still so much concern about their safety."

Gene Diva meanwhile said of test sites: "Growing genetically manipulated crops releases genetic pollution into the wild. The genetically manipulated plants could cross breed with wild relatives, and so pass on some of their new characteristics. Once this has happened, it will be impossible to control or stop. That is why we felt we had to take action against these dangerous test-sites now—before they have had a chance to establish themselves in our food-chain."

For further information concerning the dangers of genetic engineering contact:

Earth First! (Manchester): 0161 224 4846 Greenpeace UK: 0171 865 8100 Test Tube Harvest Campaign at WEN: 87 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BE or For the latest updates in the world of Genetics get on the mailing list for the new Genetic Engineering Network Newsletter by emailing rts@gn.apc.org (if you aren't one of the chosen ones with all the computer shit, don't worry, it isn't all it's cracked up to be.)





Sweet Death

Monsanto poisons the world for profit

Nutrasweet (aspartame) is an artificial sweetener added to over 9,000 products worldwide. It is manufactured by Monsanto (now famous for its mutant soya) and contains a product of genetic engineering. Originally classified by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a neurotoxin (nerve agent), this chemical was developed as a chemical warfare weapon.

Monsanto, like all corporations, need to be able to patent something before they market it. Sugar is no good as anyone can produce it. Aspartame happened to taste sweet, and was already patented.

None of the regulatory bodies ever performed any research on aspartame, they simply rubberstamped a political approval of aspartame by the FDA. All FDA team leaders reviewing the pre-approval studies put them in the category of "abysmal" and many suggested they were fradulent. (An interesting point to note on this subject is that Industrial Biotest Laboratories - the American company that did 11 out of the 19 chronic toxicology studies on Monsanto's glyphosphate (i.e. Roundup) - was denounced by the American Environmental Protection Agency in 1983 for "serious deficiencies and improprieties". These included "countless deaths of rats and mice that were not reported", "fabricated data tables" and "routine falsification of data".

Perhaps the nicest example of their efforts comes in a quote from an EPA report: "It is also somewhat difficult not to doubt the scientific integrity of a study when the IBT stated that it took specimens from the uteri of male rabbits for examination" In spite of all this, Roundup is in widespread use worldwide and fully approved by the FDA.)

Dr. Virginia Weldon, VP for Public Policy at Monsanto Chemical is a "top candidate" to become Commissioner of the FDA, reported the St. Louis Post Dispatch Tuesday, May 20 1997. FDA approved Monsanto's NutraSweet, Equal and the bovine growth hormone Posilac, which are under mounting international medical and consumer criticism as toxic substances. NutraSweet and Equal are Monsanto brands of the neurotoxin aspartame. The original developer of NutraSweet was Searle which was acquired by Monsanto in 1985.

"If Weldon gets the appointment Monsanto will have its former Vice President empowered to bless dozens of new Monsanto bioengineered chemicals and sweeteners. NutraSweet 2000 is slated for approval in 1998 according to the Chemical & Engineering News (21/4/97). "These job swaps by FDA officials are a well oiled revolving door that doesn't even squeak, it just stinks", says Betty Martini, founder of Mission Possible. "Think of the FDA as Monsanto's Washington branch office."

Monsanto researcher Margaret Miller who worked on the bovine growth hormone (rBST), transferred to FDA and got the job of reviewing her own research. Miller increased the antibiotic protocol for milk to permit an increase of 10,000 percent. Cows treated with rBST require more antibiotics because of rampant udder infections. Monsanto attorney Michael Taylor was hired to an FDA post where he could oversee the approval process. Martini calls these events "The Monsanto march on Washington."

***In 1977 Justice Department attorneys Sam Skinner and William Conlon were assigned to prosecute Searle for submitting fraudulent tests on NutraSweet. They switched sides to join the defense lawyers and the case died when the statute of limitations expired. On 2/7/86 the Wall Street Journal reported the probe of these two ex-U.S. Prosecutors by Senate investigators.

***Former FDA Commissioner Arthur Hull Hayes who approved NutraSweet and ignored the contrary recommendations of his own Task Force became a consultant to Searle's public relations firm, Burston Marsteller. Hayes was being investigated for accepting gratuities when he quit.

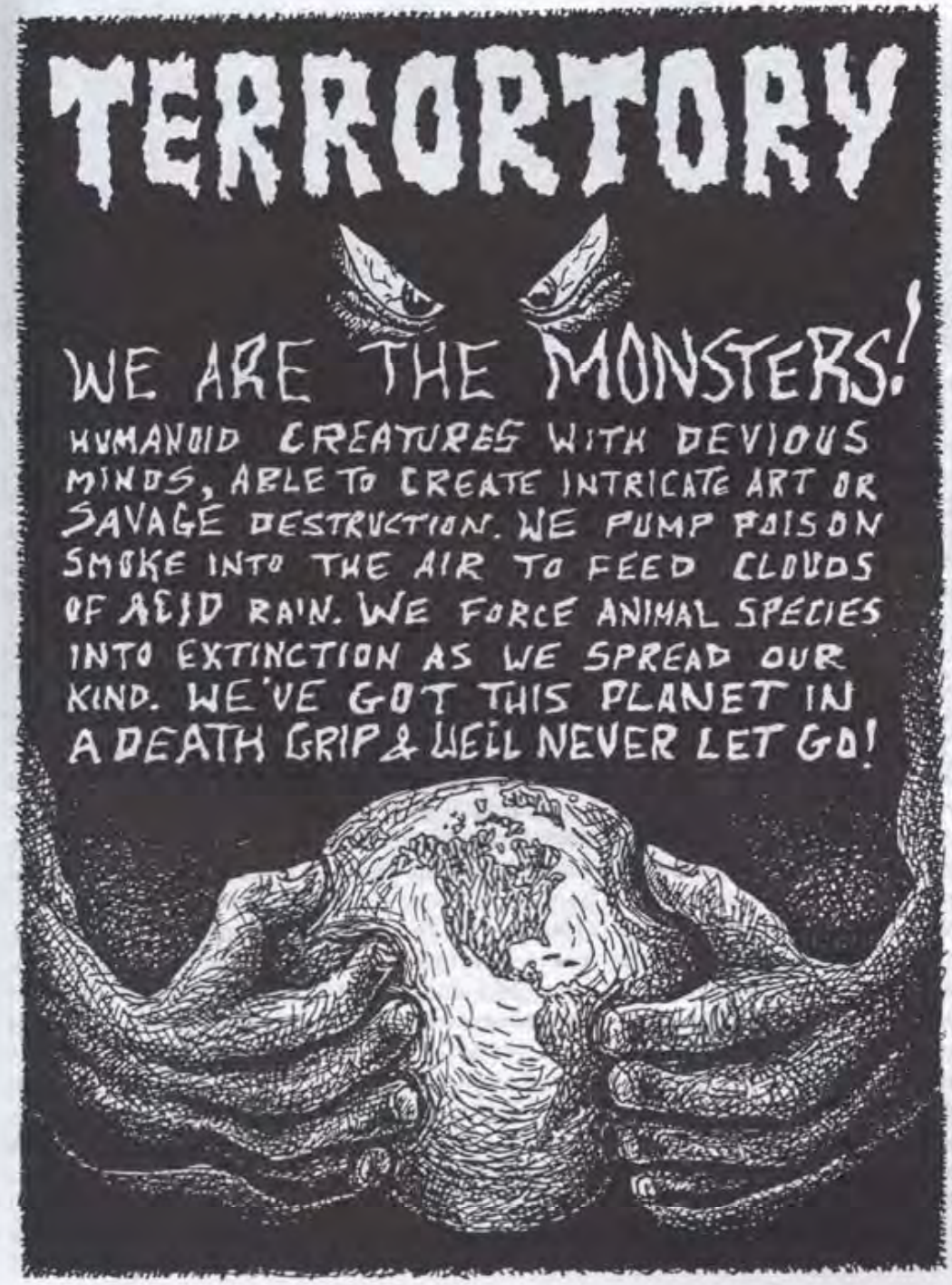
David Kessler, the FDA Commissioner who recently retired when questioned for padding his expense account, gave blanket approval to NutraSweet even though it has an allowable daily intake, without public notification in June. He has protected Monsanto by ignoring the FDA register of 10,000 complaints and their published list of 92 reactions to aspartame, from coma and blindness to seizures and death.

Kessler consistently protected Monsanto by refusing to require chemical breakdown tests of the drug. An 11 year old, Jennifer Cohen, outclassed the highly paid

FDA scientists in an experiment for a school science project *1. She stored cans of Diet Coke in a refrigerator for 10 weeks. They broke down and released formaldehyde and diketopiperazine, a brain tumor agent. According to the Food Chemical News the FDA said they knew it all along.

Mission Possible has demanded FDA recall of aspartame on the basis that a pivotal study of aspartame, SC 18862, produced grand mal seizures in 6 of 7 infant monkeys. One died. Mrs. Martini says: "I fail to see how grand mal seizures prove safety! The FDA report of symptoms list 4 different types of seizures in the public." Acting FDA Commissioner Michael Friedman has ignored the demand.

James Turner, Washington based attorney, explained on 60 Minutes that the original studies on aspartame never proved safety and were not replicated. The late FDA toxicologist, Dr. Adrian Gross, told Congress that aspartame violated the Delaney Amendment because it triggered brain tumors, astrocytomas (first stage of the deadly glioblastoma now said to be rampant in the population). The Bressler Report exposed mammary, uterine and ovarian tumors. Rats listed as dead appeared alive later in the report!



Dr. Virginia Weldon is a pediatrician, and Pediatric Professor, Dr. Louis Elsas testified before Congress in 1987 that aspartame is a neurotoxin and teratogen (triggers birth defects!). If she becomes the new FDA Commissioner will history repeat itself? "It's the same song in the same saloon with new nudes," says Martini. "Their corruption is exposed for all to see. Play it again, Sam!"

Contact: Betty Martini, Mission Possible 5950-H State Bridge Rd. Suite 215 Duluth, GA 30155 USA, for even more information, or if you would like to help stop Aspartame.

Victory at Offham!

What... you mean we won?



A strange thing happened to us in April—we set up camp to defend a piece of land and won. Winning rather surprised us, we'd been kind of looking forward to a nice summer in the sun!

Offham Valley lies near Lewes in the eastern portion of the South Downs. A small and beautiful valley, it consists of a mix of species rich downland, woodland and scrub. Largely untouched because of its steepness it is an oasis of life surrounded by a desert of ploughed fields. It is designated a SSSI, one of the highest 'protections' available in Britain.

The land 'owner', Farmer Harmer, has been paid £40 per hectare by the Ministry of Agriculture to leave the land alone. Getting £40 a year to do nothing might seem to you like a good scam; but Harmer reckoned he could do better. He submitted an application to plough up the land to plant fibre flax, for which he would get £591.16 a hectare. As if this wasn't bad enough, he would he being paid as a result of the Common Agricultural Policy to plant a crop of which there is already a glut. On such agriculturally marginal land the crop would have been low and he'd probably have ploughed it straight back into the ground. Of course, he wouldn't have minded, he would have already cashed the subsidy.

Brighton Friends of the Earth had organised a direct action rota and had been keeping an eye on Harmer. The first day he ploughed about a third of the valley. But he was stopped by a small group (including members of the local Labour Party!) who went 'tractor diving'. Harmer hadn't expected any resistance, even some of his beloved tractor's windows were broken.



Early the next morning seven of us from South Downs EF! appeared, and, with trees Harmer had handily cut down for us, barricaded the track entering the valley. FoE held a well attended press conference overlooking the destruction and suddenly the campaign was big news. (In the light of subsequent events, it is interesting to note that a leading Sussex conservationist stated that day that he thought there was 'zero chance' of saving what remained.)

That afternoon 'Adder Camp' was set up and the land officially squatted. The deadline for seeding the crop was approaching; despite the camp being staffed at night by only 3–4 people, we hoped that the eviction process would continue until after the deadline—given a farmer's relatively limited funds.

Some staff at national FoE became quite worried that the campaign would go beyond their control, maybe ruining their precious media image. Much to the annoyance of some local members, who were instrumental in the campaign and one of whom was living on the camp, Brighton FoE 'received orders' that it could not describe Offham as a FoE campaign. In the end this turned out for the better.

Our group has long had the policy of not labelling campaigns. Despite numerous TV interviews no-one ever mentioned they were from EF!, describing themselves instead as 'local people'. This gave the illusion that the camp was a spontaneous action taken by Lewes residents. As a result, large numbers of Lewes people did come up and get involved, who might have been alienated if the campaign had been labelled as FOE or EF!—or worse still, a camp of 'eco-warriors'. The fact that no-one on the hill looked much like the media stereotype of 'an ecowarrior' probably helped. In fact most of the interviews were done by two women who put across more of an image of second world war 'land girls' than crusties. By originally giving an illusion of local involvement, local involvement became more of a reality. Every day more and more local people came up.

Farmer Harmer was nowhere to be seen—he was, according to one copper, 'sitting pulling his hair out at the prospect of a Newbury on his farm'. The tractor had cross-ploughed lots of the downland, but a substantial amount had only had the turf turned over. We set about the long task of 'unploughing'—burying our hands in the earth and turning the turf. Working so closely with it, we noticed for the first time how species rich and intricate the downland flora really was. This was an amazing experience, foot by arduous foot we saw what had been desolation green over. As Barry Lopez puts it:

'I know of no restorative of heart, body, and soul more effective against hopelessness than the restoration of the Earth. Like childbirth, like the giving and receiving of gifts, like the passion and gesture of the various forms of human love, it is holy.' [1]

Meanwhile in the artificial world it was the run up to the election. Tony Blair came to Brighton and was asked if he was against the destruction of the Offham SSSI. He replied, (and I paraphrase), "I've always been against the destruction at Offham. I don't know what the fuck it is— but vote for me!". His statement was faxed to the local Tory MP's, the Environment Minister and his shadows. Suddenly politicians were falling over each other to be the most committed to 'defending Offham'. One local Tory MP, who helped draft the Criminal Justice Act—the legislation under which one activist was cautioned at Offham—pronounced, 'I support the Un-ploughers'.

In a last minute attempt to help out the beleaguered local Tories' re-election chances, and to further his own career, the Environment Minister put a Protection Order on Offham—one of only six in the last 5 years. This forbade Harmer from doing any more work. In a vain publicity stunt, Harmer even came up and turned some turf—until the cameras went away.

We had won. A 'Picnic and Turf Turning' event was held three days later on the Sunday, to celebrate the victory. It was an amazing sight. Lewes people of all ages wound their way through the barricades and up on to the down. It was a sunny day and children were everywhere. All day the turf was turned back. At one point around 250 people with spades, forks or just their hands were lined up across the hill—helping it heal. Everyone really felt it was their victory, and it was.

Taking on farmers is a lot easier than taking on road building. Though the land being defended was much smaller than a road site, the success at Offham has had a knock on effect. Once one farmer successfully scams something, others copy. Brighton FoE were expecting a whole' pile of applications by other farmers, ready to dig up downland. Yet, at the time of writing, no others have been submitted.

Even the local National Farmers Union branch was pressuring Harmer to back down. They were worried that "this might be the Twyford Down of Agriculture"—eg. the opening salvo on a 'new front'. Maybe it will be.

At the '96 EF! gathering there was much discussion about getting together a 'farmageddon' campaign. While campaigns against infrastructure growth like Manchester & Newbury are essential, they give the illusion that ecological destruction mainly happens in

the realm of 'mega-developments'. In fact the way we grow our food is the main cause of devastation in this country.

'In 1940, the German Luftwaffe made an aerial survey of much of Britain, especially the east and the south. 'These magnificent photographs', wrote Oliver Rackham in 1986, 'record every tree, hedge, bush, pingo and pond in several counties'. They show that 'except for town expansion, almost every hedge, wood, heath, fen etc. on the Ordnance Survey map of 1870 is still there on the air photographs of 1940. The seventy eventful years between, and even World War two itself, were less destructive than any five years since'. The commonest cause of this post-war orgy of vandalism, Rackham concludes, 'has been destruction by modern agriculture; the second, destruction by modern forestry.'[2]

In fact, 'since 1945 the UK has lost 30% of its rough grazing land, 65% of song thrushes, 90% of meadows, 50% of lowland woodlands, heaths and fens and 140,000 miles of hedgerow.'[3]

Maybe a coming together of 'The Land is Ours' and anti-genetics campaigns could be the catalyst for this 'new front'.

We spent nine gorgeous days at Offham. We saw adders two or three times a day, and once even a deer! Living there and defending the land re-inspired us. If you ever walk the South Downs Way (which crosses Offham), and you come across a beautifully vibrant valley just north of Lewes, kiss the earth and shout to the four winds—"Direct Action Works!".

What You can do to Help Offham

The Conservation Order is a temporary reprieve. It is only in force until October. Harmer still hasn't pledged not to plough the valley again. Write to him at: Farmer Harmer, Offham, nr. Lewes, East Sussex, and warn him that if he tries again you'll be there to stop him. Don't use your real name.

References

1 Taken from the brilliant book 'Helping Nature Heal: An Introduction to Environmental Restoration', Berkeley, 1991. See also 'Tree Spirit and Earth Repair', Do or Die 5.

2 Oliver Rackham quoted in 'Low Impact Development: Planning & People in a Sustainable Countryside', Simon Fairlie, 1996, p13.

3 Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Unplough the Downs!

and help restore the chalk grassland

What happens when a field is ploughed



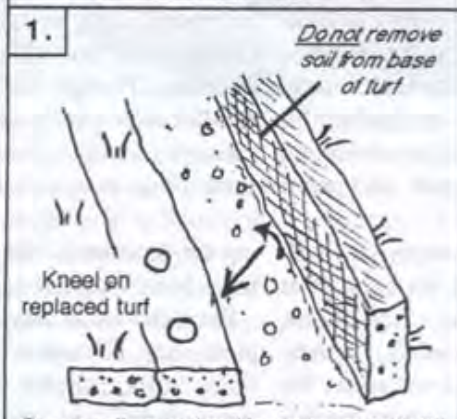
Ploughing shifts underlying soil - this is why it is necessary to scoop soil back before replacing the turf

TOP TIPS

1. Work from grassed-over side;
2. Work sideways along the line of the turf;
3. Bury flints and large chalk stones;
4. Wear gloves (not essential);
5. Wear long sleeved top - turf can have small thistles in it;
6. Put on plenty of sun cream;
7. Have plenty of food and water;
8. Take your time - enjoy yourself;

Respect the grassland!

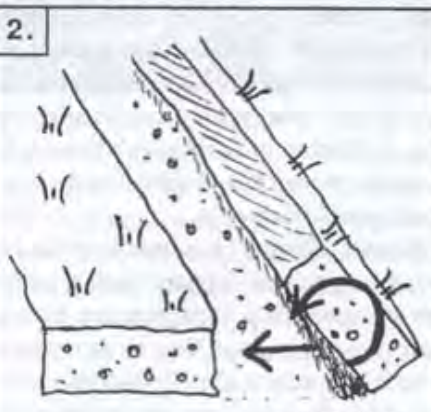
1.



Scoop soil up and pull towards you to build up turf you are kneeling on

If you find small pieces of turf, keep them to fill in the gaps.

2.



Roll back turf and pull towards you - make fit as snug as possible

3. Brush off soil and loose stones from the grass and hey, you have unploughed a field! Repeat steps 1 - 3...

The Luddites' War on Industry

A story of machine smashing and spies

This article started off as a review but soon turned into some sort of synopsis arising from the reading of two books, both written by radical ecologists.

'Rebels Against the Future' by KirkPatrick Sale, published in 1995. This is the most recent in depth book on the subject and it's written in an exciting, but well sourced way. Like the best novels you can't wait to turn the pages.

John Zerzan's two essays, 'Who Killed Ned Ludd?' and 'Industrialisation and Domestication' are dryer but his analysis is sharp. They were first published in book form in 1988.



'Chant no more your old rhymes about bold Robin Hood, His feats I but little admire, I will sing the achievements of General Ludd, Now the Hero of Nottinghamshire'

In fifteen months at the beginning of the second decade of the last century a movement of craft workers and their supporters declared war on the then emerging industrial society.

The movement spread across the Northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire , Cheshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. It smashed thousands of machines, looted markets, burned down factories and spread hope of a way out of the bleak future being offered the majority of the British people. It was a movement that, in the words of the late radical historian E.P. Thompson; 'in sheer insurrectionary fury has rarely been more widespread in English History,".

It is important to understand the birth of Industrialism. If we are to successfully dismantle the present system, it is essential to know how - and why- it was constructed.

The Birth of the New Society & the Destruction of the Old

The elites that built up Industry had been growing in power, and the ideas and technologies that allowed them to grow had been festering for centuries. Its conception may have been long before, but its birth was a sudden calamity that accelerated change in society at an unprecedented rate. The Industrial Revolution, from roughly 1780 to 1830, mutated everything. It altered the way the majority of people lived, first in Britain and now all over the world. Just as societies are being shaped all over the globe into one monoculture; so the life systems of the planet are also changing unrecognisably. The results of the society that was born in those 50 years will rebound through millions of years of evolutionary change. Norman Myers, a leading biodiversity scientist, has said:

"The impending upheaval in evolution's course could rank as one of the greatest biological revolutions of paleontological time. In scale and significance, it could match the development of aerobic respiration, the emergence of flowering plants and the arrival of limbed animals. " [1]

Change beyond imagination.

But change has to burst forward somewhere, and it burst forward here in Britain.



Lancashire, say 1780:

"The workshop of the weaver was a rural cottage, from which when he tired of sedentary labour he could sally forth into his little garden, and with the spade or the hoe tend its culinary productions. The cotton wool which was to form his weft was picked clean by the fingers of his younger children, and the yarn was carded and spun by the older girls assisted by his wife, and the yarn was woven by himself assisted by his sons....."[2]

A family often had no single employer but hired its looms, supplied with the raw materials by businessmen who then marketed the finished products. Workers had a large amount of control over their own labour. They produced only enough to keep themselves comfortable and if the fancy took them they might not work for days. Even after the enclosures took away large amounts of common land they subsisted for a great percentage on what they grew in their gardens. Basically they shaped their work around their lives, rather than their lives around their work. These were a strong people.

Lancashire, say 1814:

"There are hundreds of factories in Manchester which are five or six stories high. At one side of each factory there is a great chimney which belches forth black smoke and indicates the presence of the powerful steam engines. The smoke from the chimneys forms a great cloud that can be seen for miles around the town. The houses have become black on account of the smoke. The river upon which Manchester stands is so tainted with colouring matter that the water resembles the contents of a dye-vat....To save wages mule Jennies have actually been built so that no less than 600 spindles can be operated by one adult and two children....In the large spinning mills machines of different kinds stand in rows like regiments in an army." [3]

Insurrections and riots were so common throughout the preceding centuries that the English poor have been characterised as one of the greatest mobs of all time. The spectre of revolution in France and America left the English rich with the realisation that they were walking on a knife edge: or more accurately that of a guillotine.

Enclosure had given the new ruling class greater control over the land but crafts people still constituted a major counter current to the prevailing order. They had to be domesticated.

Factories were not built simply because of technological innovations, but more as a project of social control to limit the power of the 'poor'. To break their spirit.

In 1770, a writer envisioned a new plan for making the poor productive: The House of Terror, in which the inhabitants would be obliged to work for 14 hours a day and controlled by keeping them on a starvation diet. His idea was not that far ahead of its time; a generation later, the House of Terror was simply called a factory. Andrew Ure, one of the greatest proponents of Industry, wrote in 1835;

The Lancashire Mills and the Devastation of the Colonies

Even at this early stage in the Industrial Society, capitalists defended their interests internationally. The British mills started processing a crop which up until then was a luxury imported from the Orient: Cotton. The creation of plantations meant the eviction of millions of small farmers all over the globe. A process of enclosure already carried out in Britain.

Just as the British factory owners had deliberately gone out to destroy the Lancashire outworkers, 'In India, the British set about the deliberate destruction of the indigenous industry.... The British owned East India Company was able to exert coercive control over India's handloom weavers, who rapidly lost their independence as producers and in many instances became waged workers employed on terms and conditions over which they had no control.....When the East India Company's monopoly was abolished in 1813, Indian weaving was too debilitated to resist the flooding of the market with inferior products from the Lancashire mills...[This process was carried out all over the world and]...within the space of less than a hundred years, the Lancashire cotton industry had consigned to extinction countless native textile [production systems] whose techniques and designs had evolved over centuries ....

In the early 20th Century, Gandhi organised a boycott of British made cloth and championed the spinning wheel as a means of reviving the local economy. In public meetings he " would ask the people to take off their foreign clothing and put it on a heap. When all the hats, coats, shirts, trousers, underwear, socks and shoes had been heaped up high, Gandhi set a match to them"....The spinning wheel remains upon the Indian flag as a reminder of the traditional industries and markets that were consumed by the cotton industry.' -from 'Whose Common Future?', The Ecologist, p28. Available from Dead Trees Distribution.

"If science was put to the service of capital, the recalcitrant worker's docility would be assured".

Factories meant regimented and unprecedented work hours, horrific pollution, dangerous working conditions, unsanitary living space with virulent diseases, early death, a starvation diet and a total lack of freedom. Nobody entered the factory system willingly. Men, war widows, young women and very often children, lived in a system one Yorkshire man described in 1830 as: *"a state of slavery more horrid than ... that hellish system - Colonial Slavery".*[4] These workers, who one doctor surveying Manchester in 1831 described as *"a degenerate race - human beings stunted, enfeebled, and depraved"*[4], were the refugees of a destroyed society.

Just as small farmers had been pushed off their land by enclosure, so the crafts people were purposefully pushed from relative autonomy to a situation of dependence. Whole regions, thousands of communities were broken up and reorganised to suit the wishes of the factory owners. Much of the populace were thrown aside to starve, or forced to become wage slaves in factories literally modelled after prisons.Cities and misery multiplied.

Petitions were handed to parliament, meetings and rallies were held but nothing came of it. With nobody to turn to but themselves, the weavers took direct action.

The Birth of Luddism

"The night of November 4th, a Monday, was cloudy but still not winter-cold. In the little village of Bulwell, some four miles north of Nottingham, a small band gathered somewhere in the darkness and ... blackened their faces or pulled up scarves across their faces, counted off in military style, hoisted their various weapons- hammers, axes, pistols, "swords, firelocks, and other offensive weapons" (as one report had it)- and marched in more or less soldierly fashion to their destination. Outside the house that was most likely the home of a master weaver named Hollingsworth they posted a guard to make sure no neighbours interfered with their work, suddenly forced their way inside through shutters or doors, and destroyed half a dozen frames.... Reassembling at some designated spot, the little band responded in turn to a list of numbers called out, and when each man had accounted for himself a pistol was fired and they disbanded, heading home.

A week later, this time on a Sunday night, the workers attacked again: same procedure, same target, only this time Hollingsworth was ready. In preparation for a renewed attack, he had sent some of his frames to



Nottingham for storage and had arranged for seven or eight of his workers and neighbours to stand watch with muskets over the seven frames remaining.When the attackers approached the house they demanded that Hollingsworth let them in or surrender his frames, and when he refused a shot rang out and a fusillade of eighteen or twenty shots was exchanged.

One young man, a weaver from the nearby village named John Westley was shot - while "tearing down the window shutters to obtain entrance by force" ... before he died he "had just time to exclaim 'Proceed, my brave fellows, I die with a willing heart!'. His comrades bore the body to the edge of a nearby wood and then returned "with a fury irresistible by the force opposed to them" and broke down the door while the family and the guards escaped by the back door.

They then smashed the frames and apparently some of the furniture, and set fire to the house, which was a gutted ruin within an hour; the men dispersed into the night, never identified, never caught.

That same night just a few miles away in Kimberly, another group of men raided a shop and destroyed ten or twelve frames...

On Tuesday a cart carrying eight or nine looms to safety from the Maltby and Brewwet firm in Sutton, fifteen miles north of Nottingham, was stopped ... and men with their faces blackened smashed its cargo with

heavy hammers, bent the metal parts to uselessness, and made a bonfire of the wooden pieces in the middle of the street.

That evening a thousand men descended on Sutton from nearby villages, assembling at a milestone on the main road to the north, and marched on the town with their axes and pikes and hammers; about three hundred of them were said to be armed with muskets and pistols. The number of machines they broke is given as somewhere between thirty-seven and seventy, said to be "the frames of the principal weavers" of the town, one of whom, named Betts, whose shop was completely destroyed, was reported to have died soon after, "deranged."[5]

Luddism had begun.



An Outrageous Spirit of Tumult & Riot

With weavers' taverns acting as rallying points, news spread from village to village. Inspired by the success of the first actions, communities all over the North started to act. At least a hundred frames were attacked in the last week of November, another hundred and fifty or more in December.

"There is an outrageous spirit of tumult and riot," the magistrates of Nottingham told the public in November 1811. *"Houses are broken into by armed men, many stocking frames are destroyed, the lives of opposers are threatened, arms are seized, haystacks are fired, and private property destroyed."*[6]

The spirit of rebellion rapidly spread across the Northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Posters were pinned up on the doors of offending workshops, warning them to concede to the demands of 'Ned Ludd's Army' or suffer the consequences. For many businessman the threat worked as well as the act.

Most luddite literature makes reference to 'General Ludd' but there was no such leader. Instead it was a reference to a (conceivably true) folktale of the time. The story goes that a Nottingham lad at the end of the previous century had been enraged with his loom and had set his hammer to it.

Machine destruction had been a tactic of the weavers and their kind since at least midway through the previous century. What was different about the Luddites was exactly the opposite of how many imagine them. Read many accounts, especially those written by supporters of the trade unions, and the Luddites come across as mindless and disorganised, who if born a few centuries later would probably be kicking in bus shelters. True, Luddism was not the act of pre-organised political groups. However it was often much more powerful; a defensive reaction of communities under threat.

The blackfaced figures marching over fields towards the hated factory had probably known each other since they were kids. They had played at similar 'games' (maybe 'hunting the French') as gangs of children. They had been brought up with stories of struggle, in which the actors were as often as not their parents, grandparents or 'im down the pub'.

Though actions in nearby villages would often be done at the same time to stretch the soldiers, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any serious co-ordination across the counties. But such co-ordination was probably unnecessary and dangerous.

Many Luddite attacks included women (although unsurprisingly this was not the norm). On the 24th April 1812, a very successful attack was carried out on a mill outside Bolton only an hour or so after the soldiers sent to protect it had left.

'About fifty assembled near the mill...[descending on it]*... they smashed through the gates and started to break windows in the mill, led by two young women, Mary Molyneux, 19, and her sister Lydia, 15, who were seen, according to court papers, "with Muck Hooks and coal Picks in their hands breaking the windows of the building"... shouting "Now Lads" to encourage the men on. With the windows broken, men took straw from the stables and set a series of fires inside: "The whole of the Building," wrote the Annual Register correspondent, "with its valuable machinery, cambrics, &c, were entirely destroyed. "*[8]

The spirit of revolt spread well beyond the confines of the textile workers. Riots broke out in many towns and food was redistributed. The whole of the north-west was verging on insurrection.



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As rebels, revolutionaries and romantics we are citizens of a future society we have yet to give birth to. Feeling out of place in this society, alienation is very painful. Much like realising that we are descended from apes, in fact are apes, gives us a feeling of innate connection with the rest of life. Walking the streets of Manchester or Leeds, knowing that you walk the same streets as machine-destroying, free-food distributing, prison-breaking crowds, gives one a feeling of being rooted.

Machine haters walk again in the Luddite Triangle, in fact some of our movement's most dramatic moments have been there. The successful campaign in the early 90's to stop peat extraction on Thorne Moors just outside Leeds, came to a close when saboteurs destroyed 100,000 worth of machinery. Two weeks later the company (Fisons) sold up. The Lancashire M65 campaign (see DoD 5) was a turning point in tree-based campaigns, and before the A30 Fairmile eviction was the longest eviction in British history.

Early this year the Director of Manchester Airport and newly elected Labour MP Graham 'Two Sheds' Stringer spluttered that the anti-airport activists were 'just Luddites'. The one thousand hectares of land that he wants to destroy lies in Cheshire - one of the bastions of the original 'luddite mobs'. As small groups, 'with scarves to cover their faces', 'march out from strong communities', to 'pull down fences and destroy machinery', Stringer would do well to remember what happened the last time someone poured scorn on the Luddites who roamed Cheshire, (see bottom box).

As we dance with the ghosts of our political ancestors our struggle for life and our struggle to live illuminates a future world.

"Down with all kings but King Ludd!"

References and footnotes

1 Norman Myers, *'A Winnowing For Tomorrow's World'*, the Guardian, London, 24.4.92.
2 Quoted in *'Rebels Against the Future'*, by Kirkpatrick Sale, London 1995, p 25
3 Ibid
4 Ibid
5 Ibid, p71
6 Ibid p79
7 Ibid p97
8 Ibid p143
9 London Morning Chronicle, March 2nd 1812
10 Rebels Against the Future,p 149
11 Ibid 161
12 Ibid p151
13 Elements of Refusal, p149
(?) Rebels Against the Future, p132

De-school Your Kids

Its not just adults who need to know their history. I spent my primary school history lessons memorising the names of irrelevant kings and making little presentations about how the police force evolved and how great cops are. It's all of our responsibility to 'de-school' those that'll have to deal with the future our generations have created. If you have a child, relative or friend of say 8-12 get them the following wonderfully named book from your Children's Library: 'The Luddites: Machine Breakers of the Early Nineteenth Century.', Douglas Liversedge, Published by Franklin Watts Ltd, London 1972,

NOT a good day for Goodair

John Goodair had a factory in Stockport, Cheshire, the size of a city block with eight thousand spindles and two hundred looms. On April the 14th 1812 a mob of two to three thousand (in a parish of only fifteen thousand) descended on his mill and mansion after smashing the windows of other industrialists' houses. At noon, led by two men dressed as women who proclaimed they were 'General Ludd's wives', the crowd stormed his mansion. The following is part of a letter written by his wife.

"Everything, I have since learnt, was consumed by the fire, and nothing left but the shell. The mob next proceeded to the factory, where they broke the windows, destroyed the looms, and cut all the work which was in progress; and having finished this mischief, they repeated the three cheers which they gave on seeing the flames first from our dwelling. It is now nine o'clock at night, and I learn the mob are more outrageous than ever..." (?)



The Death of Luddism

To attempt to repeat the actions of the previous months would have been mad. Those luddites still active (a considerable number) changed tactics. Understanding that the rich had quite literally declared war, Ned Ludd's Army began to arm itself. Luddite gangs roamed through the counties gathering, by force, guns from any source they could.

" [John Lloyd a government agent], *told the Home Office that 'bodies of a hundred and upwards ... have entered houses night after night and made seizures of arms'* ... Vice-Lieutenant Wood the same month reported that there had been *'some hundreds of cases' ... leading him to fear it would all end 'in open rebellion against the government of the country ...'* A Parliamentary Committee reported in July *'considerable'* theft of guns and ammunitions in most towns, and in Huddersfield of *'all of the arms' ... 'every article of lead'*, wrote a correspondent from the West Riding, *'such as pumps, water spouts is constantly disappearing to be converted into bullets.'* " [11]

According to one Luddite letter:

"He [General Ludd] *wishes me to state that though his troops here are not at present making any movement that is not for want of force - as the organisation is quite strong in Yorkshire - but that they are at present only devising the best means for the grand attack."* [12]

The turn to openly revolutionary strategy must have put many Luddites off, who instead set their hopes once again on reformism. If a regional insurrection with little communication with the rest of Britain was unlikely to defeat the Manufactures, how much more likely was it that they would kneel before petitions to Parliament?

Although unions were technically illegal under the Combination Acts, courts often held them to be legal. Many voices within the establishment saw the unions as a way to pacify the workers. When you're talking, you're not fighting. The unions themselves (then as now) told the workers to stay away from sabotage, and to negotiate with the factory owners rather than fight the system itself. In Zerzan's words:

"Unionism played the critical role in [Luddism's] ... defeat, through the divisions, confusion, and deflection of energies the unions engineered." [13]

Less than a decade later, in 1825, the unions were officially recognised by the repeal of the Combination Acts - a measure supported by the majority of the British state.

The insurrection never came and Luddism slowly died, not with a grand finale but more with the actors leaving the stage one by one.The final event that can be accurately named Luddite came in June 1817. A state infiltrator named 'Oliver' convinced two hundred people from Pentrich, Derbyshire, to march out and join "a cloud of men" sweeping down from Scotland & Yorkshire on their way to London. Instead they were met by two mounted magistrates and a company of soldiers. Forty six were arrested, three of which were executed, fourteen transported to Australia and nine imprisoned.

Luddism was the last fitful struggle before, like a broken in horse, the English poor lay down, resigned to wage slavery. The meagre struggles that followed rarely aimed at reclaiming peoples' lives from work; but merely getting a better deal for the slaves.

The poor started to identify themselves more and more with the idea of work, abhorrent only 50 years before. Concepts like the 'dignity of labour' and 'laziness is sin' multiplied. As Leopold Roc put it, *"There is always a tendency to rationalise insults when revenge does not take place."* The strange belief spread that technologies created to bolster obedience and elite power were 'neutral' - and could exist in a free world - in fact were the key. The idea that we should organise our lives around work was the very opposite of what the Luddites stood for.

The workers' internalisation of industrial logic would be more disastrous than any army the manufacturers could muster. Even when the 'workers' movement seized power, its aim became to run industrialism itself. Revolutions came and went but to paraphrase the Anti-Election Alliance, 'Whoever you deposed, the industrial system always got in.' Party and trade union leaders easily made the transition to factory managers.

The internalisation of industrial logic by 'liberation' movements would lead to the 'revolutionary collectivisation' of the Soviet peasantry and its associated gulags, and many of the worst moments of the 20th Century. Whole generations were held both in slavery to industry and in awe of it.

The Rebirth of Luddism?

But many of us have begun, in recent years, to see industry for what is. To reject industrial logic and embrace our desires. Both Sale and Zerzan end on a positive note. Sale sees an upsurge in luddite like resistance in direct action/radical ecology, indigenous struggle and in many third world movements. Zerzan says that those who now reject 'the new society' have also rejected the old ideologies of the left.

The 'new society' worships all that is new. Buy new Ariel automatic. Buy new activist - fully body pierced



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As rebels, revolutionaries and romantics we are citizens of a future society we have yet to give birth to. Feeling out of place in this society, alienation is very painful. Much like realising that we are descended from apes, in fact are apes, gives us a feeling of innate connection with the rest of life. Walking the streets of Manchester or Leeds, knowing that you walk the same streets as machine-destroying, free-food distributing, prison-breaking crowds, gives one a feeling of being rooted.

Machine haters walk again in the Luddite Triangle, in fact some of our movement's most dramatic moments have been there. The successful campaign in the early 90's to stop peat extraction on Thorne Moors just outside Leeds, came to a close when saboteurs destroyed 100,000 worth of machinery. Two weeks later the company (Fisons) sold up. The Lancashire M65 campaign (see DoD 5) was a turning point in tree-based campaigns, and before the A30 Fairmile eviction was the longest eviction in British history.

Early this year the Director of Manchester Airport and newly elected Labour MP Graham 'Two Sheds' Stringer spluttered that the anti-airport activists were 'just Luddites'. The one thousand hectares of land that he wants to destroy lies in Cheshire - one of the bastions of the original 'luddite mobs'. As small groups, 'with scarves to cover their faces', 'march out from strong communities', to 'pull down fences and destroy machinery', Stringer would do well to remember what happened the last time someone poured scorn on the Luddites who roamed Cheshire, (see bottom box).

As we dance with the ghosts of our political ancestors our struggle for life and our struggle to live illuminates a future world.

"Down with all kings but King Ludd!"

References and footnotes

1 Norman Myers, *'A Winnowing For Tomorrow's World'*, the Guardian, London, 24.4.92.
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3 Ibid
4 Ibid
5 Ibid, p71
6 Ibid p79
7 Ibid p97
8 Ibid p143
9 London Morning Chronicle, March 2nd 1812
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12 Ibid p151
13 Elements of Refusal, p149
(?) Rebels Against the Future, p132

De-school Your Kids

Its not just adults who need to know their history. I spent my primary school history lessons memorising the names of irrelevant kings and making little presentations about how the police force evolved and how great cops are. It's all of our responsibility to 'de-school' those that'll have to deal with the future our generations have created. If you have a child, relative or friend of say 8-12 get them the following wonderfully named book from your Children's Library: 'The Luddites: Machine Breakers of the Early Nineteenth Century.', Douglas Liversedge, Published by Franklin Watts Ltd, London 1972,

NOT a good day for Goodair

John Goodair had a factory in Stockport, Cheshire, the size of a city block with eight thousand spindles and two hundred looms. On April the 14th 1812 a mob of two to three thousand (in a parish of only fifteen thousand) descended on his mill and mansion after smashing the windows of other industrialists' houses. At noon, led by two men dressed as women who proclaimed they were 'General Ludd's wives', the crowd stormed his mansion. The following is part of a letter written by his wife.

"Everything, I have since learnt, was consumed by the fire, and nothing left but the shell. The mob next proceeded to the factory, where they broke the windows, destroyed the looms, and cut all the work which was in progress; and having finished this mischief, they repeated the three cheers which they gave on seeing the flames first from our dwelling. It is now nine o'clock at night, and I learn the mob are more outrageous than ever..." (?)



Lyminge Forest

The spread of syphilitic suburbia

Lyminge Forest is a large area of mixed woodland located in East Kent on the North Downs. It is home to a vast array of wildlife, including several rare and internationally threatened species. Final approval was recently given for plans by the Rank Organisation to build a holiday town, sorry, "Oasis Village" for 4000 tourists in the West Wood area of the forest. It will consist of 850 chalets, apartments and log cabins, a "tropical waterworld", artificial rubber-lined lake, golf course, shops, and, of course, parking for 3600 cars. Kent already experiences a chronic water shortage and further strain will be placed on resources, to the tune of 1 million litres per day; one percent of total consumption in the entire borough of Shepway. Local rivers are currently running at less than one third of normal flow rates. In a forest which currently sees open public access, footpaths and bridleways will be closed and a barbed wire perimeter fence erected to prevent entry.

Fortunately for those lucky locals, Rank has kindly purchased another area of woodland close by from Lloyd's of London debtor, ex-Lyminge councillor, and friend of local MP Michael Howard, Christopher Ridley Day. This is to serve as the public's "new" wood once they are excluded from the old one. A similar "village" has already been constructed at Whinfell Forest in Penrith, Cumbria, one of the last English refuges for the red squirrel and pine marten.Three more similar camps are planned by Rank should Whinfell and Lyminge prove to be successful.

Ludicrously, Rank actually claims construction will have a positive effect for local wildlife. Loss of the Nightjar (whose favoured nesting area is to be turned into a golf course) is considered inevitable by conservation groups. Although Rank has consistently tried to keep debate low-key and portray this massive plan as a local issue which most of the public favour, activists who have set up camps, tree houses and tunnels at the site are experiencing excellent levels of support from those who live nearby. A possession order has been served, but it is currently unclear whether the Forestry Commission (who are obliged to sell to Rank) is planning to evict or not. This could of course depend to a large extent on the number of campaigners on the site and the quality of defences.

The forces behind such developments are the same as for most other destructive phenomena of course; greed and short-sightedness. Even the most hardened urbanites and city-slickers like to think they can appreciate the beauty of nature, but they have a need to turn this "appreciation" into yet another form of consumption (it's the only way they know). Developers sanitise wild areas for such purposes. Woods need tarmac paths, lighting and signposted "nature trails", steep slopes require the construction of steps and the erection of railings, pretty flowering shrubs bearing no relation to the characteristic local flora must be planted and so on; the site then appears tidier, safer, more like the neatly trimmed town parks and suburban gardens that these people are familiar with. What better form of marketing then, than the concept of the "Eco Holiday Village"? This provides all of the above while leaving visitors with the illusion they want to believe; they have been close to nature. This is rather curious, considering they will have spent their time sitting in sterile pine lodges or enclosed swimming pools. It is also interesting to consider how many will actually wonder what the hell pine lodges and swimming pools are doing in the middle of a forest in the first place.

These are actual comments left last year by backpackers on US Forest Service comment cards:

"Escalators would help on steep uphill sections."

"Trails need to be reconstructed. Please avoid building trails that go uphill."

"Too many bugs, leeches, spiders and spider webs. Please spray the wilderness to rid the area of these pests."

"Please pave the trails so they can be plowed of snow in the winter."

"A McDonald's would be nice at the trailhead."

"Chairlifts need to be in some places so that we can get to wonderful views without having to hike to them."

"The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals."

"Reflectors need to be placed on trees every 50 feet so people can hike at night with flashlights."

"Need more signs to keep area pristine."

"The places where trails do not exist are not well marked."

"Too many rocks in the mountains."



A true 'eco-holiday village'—from 'Henry's Quest'. (see Reviews)

I started on this article before the publication of the 1st Oasis brochure, and I commented then that cynical marketing would show smiling children in crash hats riding mountain bikes through the forest while their parents enjoyed a relaxing drink by the artificial lake.

Unfortunately my cynicism appears to be well founded; guess what I found in the brochure? We observe images of misty glades, sunsets through the trees and deer or badgers cavorting happily in the undergrowth.

But the propaganda begins long before this; it begins from the day plans are submitted. Presentations to everyone from planning officers to the general public emphasise dubious promises of jobs plus even more dubious assurances that the development is "sustainable" and "in harmony with nature", as can be seen with Rank's claims regarding the maintenance of ecological diversity at Lyminge Forest.

Even though conservation groups and those who ought to know might disagree with such claims, councillors are more than happy to just nod their heads in a concerned sort of fashion, then pretty much ignore what these people have to say and proceed regardless. In short, they need to be seen to be concerned about the environmental effects, nothing more. The authorities are all too willing to take a "hear no evil, see no evil" attitude to a developer's proposals, and can usually get away with it thanks to collusion with the local press who very often have an interest in forcing the scheme through.

These are the same sort of people who in the past tore the soul from small and large towns alike, turning diverse town centres into identikit "shopping experiences", while transforming the edges into identikit suburbs with no sense of community or fraternity. The destruction is continuing as they move their sights towards the few areas of unspoilt countryside left; it's time to transform them into just another "leisure experience", time to move on with the process of homogenization. But just as a "Wild West" theme park will teach you very little about life in the real Wild West, an "Eco" theme park will teach you precious little about living in harmony with nature.

Tourism is being largely ignored by the mainstream environmental movement, perhaps because tackling their middle-class memberships over one of their favourite pastimes might be a rather thorny issue. But challenged it must be. The countryside is being relentlessly transformed into a suburb consisting of theme parks, holiday camps, executive housing estates and factory farms.

We need to expose the lies and illusions of the tourist industry and their government and media puppets. The message needs to be hit home hard that people do not have some god-given right to be a tourist, they can only stay in an unfamiliar place if it is genuinely undamaging, both culturally and environmentally.

Biggest Action Camp in UK

For over 6 months camps have been stopping the development. Get down there now, for details contact Flat Oak Society (see Contacts)



Autonomy, Resistance and Mediation

The dynamics of Reclaim the Valleys!



Context

Once upon a time, before the industrial revolution, humanity was thinly scattered across the South Wales Valleys. Then British Capital needed a workforce to extract/refine the mineral resources geological chance placed under this rocky spur of land. The country was raped; the population multiplied by enclosure and immigration.

Obviously, living and working conditions were hellish. Responding to this, traditions of resistance through solidarity grew to defend beleaguered communities.

As with any strand of history, contradictory tendencies existed side by side. At first there were spontaneous actions. In 1831 the first industrial proletarian insurrection on and around Merthyr Tydfil, where for weeks the working class fought the British Army to a standstill with guerrilla warfare. As the wave ebbed, the clamp down kicked in, but the State had taken the hint.

Emergent unions were soon employed to mediate proletarian dissent. Working class power at the point of production and on the street was translated into gradual reform. Effective assimilation as it was, wildcat actions still broke through. Even channelled in this way, the valleys' working class could still shake State & Capital. The Great Strike (1984-5) was mostly a political decision to break the sort of working class power that had brought down the Tory Government in 1971.

The people of the pit villages that had powered labour-intensive drift mining were extraneous to British Capitals needs. The minerals that had brought them there were not. Capital-intensive opencast coal quarrying was escalated across the coalfield, regardless (as ever) of social or ecological cost.

Invited by local anti-opencast campaigners, an eviction site was set up at Selar Farm nature reserve (late May 1995), part of a proposed 880 acre opencast. This invitation of outside activists by local residents denoted an inextricable link between direct activists and the local community.

After the above introductory passages, the focus of this piece will deal with the relations between direct action activists and the people in the valleys around. The issue of separation from locals arises not so much in terms of accent or background, but approaches to anti-opencast tactics.

This piece concerns itself with the expectations of the role in the anti-opencast struggle that locals and site-livers had of each other, how they interacted. Obviously this is written in hindsight, the focus being especially on chronologically early events in the cam-



paign that became Reclaim The Valleys. Most such interaction occurred then, setting the agenda for future relations. To this end, narrative elements will be given, then their implications developed.

With Celtic Energy given the go ahead to opencast, they contracted Alaska to `translocate the SSSI watermeadows. As this presaged felling mature woodland, then clearance for coal extraction, locals acted to try and prevent this.

Honeymoon of Selar

Selar eviction site was established via a chain of communication from local invite to those with the abilities and inclination to establish an eviction site. The objective of stopping, or at least costing time and money while raising the issue was the initial focus of the site. Protesters were a mix of seasoned `veterans' of previous campaigns (esp. Solsbury Hill) and first timers from nearby alternative urban foci (Swansea, Cardiff) from EF!/huntsabbing activist backgrounds. Much suspicion/derision was directed towards the latters' commitment by the `hard-core'.

From the outset, Selar was viewed by the veteran `eco warriors' in a defensive framework. The main aim of activity was defined as fortification for an apocalyptic eviction. Ironically, before much structural defence was in place, a media blizzard descended on Selar. This came in response to 3 activists (from EF! backgrounds) stopping the plant translocating the Watermeadows.

This work stopping action went directly against the `orders' (advice phrased with enough force and seeming knowledge becomes this) of the defensively minded veterans. In terms of direct action it was an easy victory: work stopped for months, in PR terms it yielded a mine of media exposure.

The amount of coverage the site and its inhabitants received stemmed partly from the nature of the Welsh media: always eager to find specifically `Welsh' slants on issues (eg The Western Mail's endless search for celebrities Welsh great aunts), in an attempt to demonstrate status beyond being a mere `regional' media. Obviously, this related to protest against opencast (Welsh as leeks), with the added bonus of media friendly "eco warrior" exotica. Whilst this is old hat now, back then saw the flowering of its novelty value.

The power of TV then proceeded to inform the Welsh people of the "tree village", "eco warriors" etc., at Selar. Amongst those informed were locals directly affected by opencast, vested with interest against it. Many made the journey to check the site out, heading there with media derived spectacular preconceptions of eco protest. This depiction focused almost solely on "eco warriors" as an environmentalist vanguard there to 'save the trees'. Those local residents interviewed were heard expressing admiration for "these brave young people" fighting their battle for them.

Much of the attraction for the coverage lay in the romanticised (twee, dare I say) perception of the mostly youthful activists. They looked, talked and acted the part in an appropriately arcadian and emotive setting. On coming to site, local people found many activists believing the hype, acting out the clich and it's wilful archaisms.

The inhabitants were, of course, shaped by the site's agenda and the expectations of their own role. Given the personnel that set up the site and their experiences, Selar was treated as a transplant of past English road protesting methods. This dynamic stemmed largely from friends that had protested together before. Due to their experience and confidence their words and deeds carried more weight than first-timers and `weekenders, establishing an implicit hierarchy that was hard to challenge due to its informality.

Activists at Selar were allocated set roles. Most important were the tree living elite—harness as a badge of office. Their perceived role being to build tree defences and prepare site for the imminent eviction they would then `front-line'. Protesters not so exalted were cast as `ground support, basically the menial function of fetching, carrying, and tending to the specialists. Divisive as this was, divisions were not that rigid. Subject to a mate's climbing teaching and tat availability, most were encouraged to reach for the trees. Hierarchy, roles and empowerment existed in contradictory proximity.

The internal logic of such a `two-tier society' was extended by site activists to those locals who came to site. Just as `ground support' were to tend to the `front-line'; `local support' were placed in the role of supplying site. The requirements placed on those who came up were food, money, tools etc.

This became two-way traffic—locals arriving with a spectacular picture of a `tribal' subculture, saw this buttressed in practice by `eco warriors' on site. The locals then reciprocating such modes of behaviour. These divisions found fertile soil in the context of everyday life in this society

At Selar tree evictions were perceived as the pre-eminent form of protesting activity. The skills required are specialised, gained by repeated practice, the best training being to live in a tree. Such an interpretation of the tactical lessons of past campaigns can be attributed to there only having been few previous tree evictions.



The effect of this division of labour between full-timers and those (especially locals) unable, due to commitments or physical capabilities, to fully engage in such activity was to sideline them to a passive role. It's worth considering that listening to 'war stories whilst sitting at the bottom of trees being eaten by gnats isn't just boring, but disempowering.

Since then, the physical difficulties of limited numbers disrupting inhumanly large opencast sites, manned by tough working class valley boys in massive plant has been encountered. The campaign is bedevilled by the lack of human sized targets to disrupt by Direct Action (DA), unless nationally mobilised numbers are involved. It's not coincidence that Celtic Enemy's 'human sized' office has been targeted three times to date.

This is in marked contrast to the way road protesters at the blue route in Kent got up at 7am, walked the route, saw work and stopped it. Leaving a handful on diggers they went searching for more.

Unfortunately, anti quarrying campaigns don't have the option for such proactive offensive actions with low numbers.

Offensive Direct Action is not only effective tactically, but radicalises and empowers. Given local enthusiasm and potential, it's a shame there were no 'digger diving' targets to galvanise their activity.

Even defence as a focus for interaction and empowerment was not totally realised. The possibilities of training aids like low practice walkways and treeborne lockons were never fully explored. This is partally understandable, as even 'eco warriors' cannot be on duty 24hrs. Also, many of the committed local protestors were middle aged to elderly. This can perhaps be accounted for by their direct experience of living through the valleys' solidarity, youngsters only experiencing its disintegration.

This way of operating set the pattern for future relations. Even the inspiring efforts at outreach like the 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' open day reinforced the pattern of locals visiting site, bringing food etc., then going. The marked difference between this and other protest sites being the scale of local involvement—compared to other campaigns this was great, especially from liberal, single issue perspective.

Battle of the Watermeadows

Selar settled into "site life as normal". Sentimentally speaking, this was a sunny blissful experience to live through. Then mid July the routine was broken up as Celtic Enemy's contractors Alaska set about finishing the PR job of translocation. Private security wasn't hired, as South Wales police were more than eager (and efficient) at doing the job. This, then, was the crunch time: for both site living protesters and locals to turn their promises into action.

The activist community responded with style. They came in numbers from across Britain, kicked arse and had their arses kicked. Major confrontation on the first day saw police brutality and more than 2 dozen arrests. Significantly, locals were involved in attempting to blockade the lorries laden with translocated watermeadow. Mostly, though, it was full time protesters playing the role of 'cannon fodder'.

'Watermeadows' demonstrated one of eco protests perennial problem in attempting to involve those outside of an unemployed (in capitalist terms) subculture. Clearly its difficult to engage in disrupting work during working hours when committed (jobs, family, etc) at these times. Those locals who stood observing translocation cannot be criticised, as due to the heavy policing, most site dwellers did likewise. Most of the effective action during this week occurred at night (e.g. iron bars spiking the watermeadows). Some locals engaged in such activities.

Watermeadows was a crucible, demonstrating and amplifying tendencies in the campaign at a crisis point, serving as a microcosm for this stage of the anti-opencast protest.

Celtic Enemys head offices had already been cased with invasion in mind, but it took the need to hit back to galvanise offensive action. On the 2nd day, locals loaded their vehicles full of protesters, driving them to CE's offices.

It remains one of the campaign's most spontaneous and effective actions. Despite claims from Wales Today (regional evening news), that protesters "went too far" by going off site and breaking laws, locals ferrying them to the target clearly negated this. Having said this, they still took a back seat role.

It was wholehearted involvement. The abilities and levels of commitment, if anything, suiting the respective parties attributes. By then the parameters of local involvement were mostly delineated as support to an 'eco vanguard', and that was the way it stayed.

In a hotly engaged site meeting on the 2nd night, feathers were ruffled by the statement: "You're going on about the locals turning up, but what are they gonna do? Locals are about tea and chat. We've got to stop these bastards ourselves."

From the standpoint of anarcho theory, this is doubly dammed as elitist militant liberalism. As a practical appraisal of the tactical options, it was accurate; depressing as that maybe. Whatever possibilities exist-

ed for site/local relations at the start, after their consolidation into routine this was the reality the campaign operated under.

Within the ambit of orthodox eco protest, the week of watermeadows was an effective period for anti-opencast protest. The local people, for whom the site had lost novelty value, were re-enthused. In addition, the drama and news worthiness of the actions gained loads of media coverage. Some of those who then started coming up to site due to this proved to be amongst the most involved and longest standing on the campaign.

Watermeadows Aftermath

As ever, the media informed far more people than would have heard by hearsay. In response to Wales Today's attempt to start a media backlash against the campaign by a blatantly biased interview, the campaigns then national level of support was demonstrated by more complaints before or since. These came from all over Wales, not only from victims of opencast. Next day, Wales Today were at Selar apologising; and they've kissed our arses ever since.

As ever, media coverage was a double-edged sword. Combined with this the imperatives of life under Capital provided the double whammy. The nature of work is to reinforce such specialised role playing. The Fordsist assembly line serves as a fitting metaphor: work partitioned into specific repetitive jobs, separated from the process as a whole. Control is enforced, expectations of empowerment lessened.

There were also those valley people affected by opencast who did nothing. This seeming apathy is used by arrogant militant liberals to pour derision on the mass of the populace. This 'apathy' though, isn't an independent datum free of social patterns. At the risk of being too conspiratorial, it's clear that such a situation is created and fostered to perpetrate the present order of things.

Underpinning this is the mechanism of mediation in everyday life, reinforcing alienation and lack of engagement. There are myriads of examples on a society-wide level, but the archetypal example is the political system directly affecting communities threatened by opencast.

The people in these villages are told to give over their fate and that of their children to the judgement of 'technical experts' employed by a county council similarly placed there to channel and diffuse their urges. Bluntly put, their potential collective power is either given or stolen away; little wonder they're 'apathetic'.

Two weeks after Watermeadows a rally of hundreds of people (from the Neath valley and beyond) took place. This and Watermeadows were the high point of site/community interaction at Selar. Afterwards, with the lines of interaction well and truly defined the same tendencies manifested themselves, but on a gradually lesser scale.

The focus of site activities remained domestic/defensive—with the emphasis on just 'living really'. Numbers on site went down. Local involvement similarly decreased. By the winter these were reduced to a handful of die-hards. Relations consisted mostly of borrowing of specialised equipment, like a tractor to build a log cabin.

Watermeadows took its toll on personnel. Most arrested activists found themselves bailed out of Selar, while others went to crew the nearby Brynhenllys site, effectively splitting the campaign's already dwindling numbers.

Already beleaguered by years of campaign some experienced activists found Watermeadows as their



point of burn out. This had the effect of removing many experienced with sustainable outside living.

Some activists attempted to rekindle the old level of relations, but inertia gripped both local support and site livers: an attempt at a teddy bears picnic style event in mid September attracted only a ripple of interest. With the onset of winter harshness on a Welsh hillside, survival took up most energy. As snow settled on the trees, the commitment of the summer was just a memory.

Brynhenllys

Eviction sites often stagnate as their initial energy is expended. While Selar fell into this cycle, Brynhenllys site enjoyed its brief honeymoon of creative energy. As with Selar's early stages, much of this was geared into defensive building, initially on constant eviction alert. With low numbers and effort geared inward to site fortifying, even Brynhenllys most productive phase was somewhat introverted: intensive building leaving little energy for outreach into local communities.

The fundamental consideration of Brynhenllys relation with these ex-pit communities was that they never showed anything like the same level of enthusiasm Cwmgrach and Glyneath initially had for Selar. This is difficult to account for. On one level Selar's support was unprecedented by any eco DA campaign; it would be optimistic to expect the same for relocating just 20 or so miles away.

It could be (and has been argued) that this came down to more opencast workers with connections living nearby; but as with all communities housing the workforce for Capital-intensive opencast, these account for a fraction of the local population. More significant is that in the wake of Selars first Welsh presentation of spectacular roles, novelty value and thus interest had waned in a consumer society.

Some tendencies of migrant `protester culture' also took its toll. While some activists were briefly enthralled by the arse kicking elements of `Watermeadows' and channelled this into site preparation, their energy levels soon dropped. The pressures of eviction site life kicked in. Faced with this, many moved on, often to other such sites. This behaviour pattern of recovery via transience may well have kept them fresh, but also made it difficult for locals visiting site to form friendship bonds with the high turnover of personnel.

From the beginning relations between supportive locals and site dwellers fell into the familiar eco warrior/local support paradigm. As there was never the initial enthusiasm as at Selar, the same potential of a crossover into equal partnership in direct action never seemed as possible.

Support that was gained took patient work, building links with sympathetic individuals. That tried and tested technique, a site openday, was utilised . A working relationship was set up with the existing local public enquiry orientated anti-opencasters. Brynhenllys almost became the DA wing of the Upper Tawe valley preservation committee.





Such relations were not only a mediation of the local people's opposition to coal quarrying, but was channelled through their committees of mediators. Impure as this maybe as abstract theory, it kept the campaign in food, building supplies and boosted site morale. Early Selar's heady expectations of breaking down specialised roles into equal partnership in action were now a dim memory. The campaign functioned as a conventional eviction site in a now familiar vein.

Combined with the factors above, geographically on the logistical fringes of the transient DA `tribe's circuit, Brynhenllys was by Autumn chronically undermanned. Keeping site together drew almost all energy from those remaining, turning activity further inward.

Cut off, with low numbers in an attractive setting, opencast and it's evils seemed a long way away. The few activists used to direct acion, were surrounded by others of different inclinations. Brynhenllys began to display utopian tendencies.

While experiments in sustainable living are necessary to demonstrate alternatives to the present course of human suicide, steps towards this are probably not best done in the path of 500 acre opencast quarries.

Faced with this navel gazing, most locals could hardly be expected to display much interest in an endeavour that seemed, at best, irreverent to their concerns.

Left to themselves, both South Wales sites stagnated. It took an outside agency to jolt them back to life, coming in the form of the old enemy and its eviction of Brynhenllys. Though the anti-opencast campaign was neglected, it came at the end of a summer of growth and potential for the movement, after quiet months lots turned out for the eviction.

Coupled with a mix of experience and raw talent Brynhenllys was an epic 4 1/2 day eviction. The confrontational tactics used were effective: at no other tree eviction have enemy climbers had such a hard time of it. Despite this, everyone was taken down and all trees felled, but then thats evictions.

Superb as the commitment in the trees and buildings was, the focus of this piece concerns itself with local involvement Some of those in the buildings were local and they got nicked with the rest. There were parallels with Watermeadows, as the by now traditional role of `local support was extended at a crunch point. The eviction was prolonged and activists' commitment fuller, as a result of provisions and hospitality extended after the site lost its living structures in 70 mile hour winds and driving rain.

So far, so orthodox. The local kids heading up to hillside at night with fireworks were going less against type than their elders, though this cant all be put down to youthful exuberance. The old divisions of role were sometimes broke down.

Until tiredness set in, and odds on the ground got too heavy, a sizeable mobilisation of locals got stuck in and disrupted work. The second day saw more of them arrested in confrontation on the ground than of `imported activists in the trees. Recollections include a 70 year man comparing rough and tumble with Reliance to his rugby career, while seeming quietly proud of his sons arrest for similarly mixing it.

Perhaps it was being placed next to large scale environmental destruction, and experiencing bailiff and security guard brutality that spurred on old style Valleys' Direct Action. Crucially, in this situation there was no possible agency to mediate for them: they had to do it themselves.

Just as with Watermeadows, the eviction caused a media shitstorm. Due to popular sympathy, TV and the press were unable to be too negative, so again the issue was dramatised for the nation. Granted, the usual elitist clich's were recycled, and duly internalised by consumers. Even nearby the media force was felt: a few days into the eviction, some activists from the trees met local kids in Cwmllynfell square. After a sympathetic conversation, as a parting shot one boy, living half a mile from the eviction, said hed watch the news the next day to catch up on events.

After the eviction the locals were perhaps more ready than ever to engage in Direct Action against the opencast threat. Unfortunately, the Brynhenlys activists were now burnt out and homeless, and those whod come for the eviction had other campaigns they were committed to. Despite briefly breaking out of their mediated roles, local energy fizzled out without a focus.

Selar's Final Days

Many, empowered by the eviction went to Newbury for the next big thing. Not just South Wales, but all regional campaigns suffered from the haemorrhage of personnel, narrowing horizons of possible activity. Selar suffered accordingly. After long months of siege the eviction in late February was an anticlimax.

While many returned, war weary from Berkshire, the numbers were insufficient against heavier opposition than Brynhenllys. Scab climbers out for revenge and desperate to impress before the Newbury eviction phase went into overdrive.

Months of torpor lessened the local mobilisation. Here, as in the trees on site, the State learnt its lesson from October. Media access was barred on the first day, preventing possible reportage of their brutal, almost



murderous tactics. Fearing replays of direct local involvement, approaches to Selar were cordoned; those who tried to break the cordon, pensioners and all, were arrested.

This then was the end of that phase of the anti opencast DA campaign. Some activists remained on Selars 800 acre site, their presence keeping the embers of protest alight until others, rested from the winter, felt able to resume the struggle. This was really self-referential to the activist community. With the loss of the old site, its personnel and mature oaks, the local community began to forget the possibilities of the previous Summer.

Nant Helen On April 1st, new energy focused on taking a site in the path of the proposed Nant Helen `extension opencast. This was a radical departure from the previous tactic of occupying already `doomed land with the decision given for quarrying.

In effect this was an acknowledgement of the true dynamics of opencast protest in South Wales. It tacitly admitted eco protests role as a vociferous `pressure group which dramatised the issues via the media, affecting the mainstream decision making process.

This reflected the true physical odds of a scattering of DA protesters, able to cover only a handful of putative quarries and unable to actually STOP these. Actual/proposed opencast covered a vast chunk of the coalfield. The true struggle to prevent this devastation obviously falls to embattled local communities.

This is how it should be. Unfortunately, local resistance is still bound up in the mediated form of the public enquiry system. From this, on-site energy found most of its expression as an extension of this process.

Though organisational matters received attention, with much discussion of the campaigns internal dynamics; and the usual site work/tree building occurred, for once the focus of activity was off site.

Cutting across the insular tendencies that had developed in the late stages of Brynhenllys and Selar, site dwellers mixed socially with local residents, building up affinity. Numbers of local kids, enthused by the site and its implications, spent a lot of time at Nant Helen. They had a laugh, but more on the training/empowerment front could have been done. The usual open day also occurred though not on the scale of the teddy bear's picnic.

The main drive of activism was towards preventing the forthcoming council decision going in favour of the opencasters. To this end, energy went into door to door leafleting and petitioning; stalls were set up in Ystradgynlais Square. The public meetings (in Abercraf and Ystradgynlais) were attended and contributions made, adding to the case made by anti-opencast locals.

Feeling threatened, CE attempted intimidation by bringing in loads of burly opencast workers. Faced with these mobilisations (for and against the quarry) the County Council bottled it and postponed the decision from mid August to 20th September. Fearful of public disorder police limited supporting numbers to fifty a side.

Against precedent the decision went against CE. This was mostly due to the local communities' mobilisation. Despite being bound within the mediated system, the council felt upsetting the pro-opencast lobby to be the lesser of evils.

On a historical angle, it is the case that any reforms conceded under the rule of Capital have been via mediated agencies to prevent escalated popular unrest.

The presence of numbers of DA activists added to this. Aware of the media hype from previous actions, and combined with this a banner drop at the council offices, away from both coalfield and protesters usual range, the Council cant have relished the prospect of actions against them. Fluffy PR stunt that it was, the implied threat was clear.

Though protesters actions would have been an irritation, more worrying for them were links with lots of pissed off locals, with little faith in the system anyway...

Social forces could have negated it, or the forces of law and order crushed it; but the council must have considered and been unhappy with the prospect of protesters acting as a catalyst taking the community beyond their mediated channels.

Pragmatically, the work around the public enquiry was the most effective tactic to prevent Nant Helens destruction. Direct as the action of work disruption and eviction would have been, they would have only delayed `development.

True, the decision could well be reversed as Celtic Enemy used their right to appeal to the Welsh Office (heard in September 97), and this will [?] lead to permission to quarry, but devastation was stalled for longer and with less effort.

This activism represented a bizarre reversal of the usual protester/local paradigm. Instead of receiving `local support in their DA endeavours, site dwellers provided support for respectable local efforts. A petition was drafted by the Upper Tawe Valley Protection League. Unable to beat the mediated system on their own, unable to draw locals to work outside of its parameters, the direct action campaign worked within it.



Nant Helen stands non evicted. Rather thinly manned, the site is basically hanging around until future decisions are made. The focus of the campaign had shifted away sometime previously.

Reclaim The Valleys

The point for this was marked by Reclaim The Valleys—the campaigns' first week of action. This saw a series of direct actions and the taking of two sites in the path of Selars 880 acre opencast - People consolidating themselves on a manmade island.

Treeless (with no topsoil), this site was never barricaded against eviction, being instead a living space and the launching pad for `RTV 2: The Sequel.

The island had comparatively little involvement with locals, though fresh connections were made with Rhigos (the other side of the valley from Glyneath). RTV 2 continued from the ideas formulated in the the first week of action, whereby it was felt offensive action against opencast were only possible by drawing in activists from the outside the area.

Their chief impact lay in the amount of media coverage generated. After a quiescent period opencast was once again on the national news, once again on the agenda. Of course the same old elitist shit was perpetuated by the mainstream media.

This was partially accurate as, having failed to mobilise threatened communities into direct action, the campaign drew in others from its own subculture. Local contact had become increasingly rare, exasperated by the Islands geographical inaccessibility.

Except for the fits and starts of the weeks of action, this was a mostly tepid stage for the campaign. The inactive mood can be partially accounted for by activists recovering from the trauma of the last few years, while the new blood on site didnt take it on themselves to initiate things.

Though mostly a regressive phase with community relations, the trusted method of a walk/openday was called at the end of RTV 2. The turnout was reasonable including many old faces from the Selar era. The general feeling at the time was that neither party was really that up for it.

This recovery and weeks of action phase was an often interesting, often creative phase in RTV. Here it is skirted over, as developments were mainly internal, falling outside the parameters of discussion. Punchlines

Nant Helens devastation is stalled to this day. The eviction sites delayed Celtic Energys opencasting by months, costing them loads of money. Similarly offensive direct action also cost them, though their most damaging effect on the enemy was probably disruption of routine (and therefore efficiency). Vast in personal terms, the financial toll is a mere niggle in Celtic Energys budget. The workdays lost will be balanced by future profit. The long term damage they sustained is on a PR level.

On a long term level the campaigns results are more in the negative sense of weakening the opencast lobby, than in the positive dimensions of catalysing a viable alternative force.

Though already an issue, opencast has been placed visibly on the agenda. Local communities in physical proximity may have been enthused by DA, but the majority of Valleys people will only have consumed it on TV after Neighbours. Still opencast and its evils have been dramatised.

Unfortunately, resistance remains focused on mediated local committees geared towards the corrupt public inquiry system. While people are more amenable towards DA, it is presented and perceived as a job for specialised eco-warriors. RTV has to date failed to break down specific divisions of labour and failed to catalyse direct mass community resistance.

Failure as this is, it is understandable in the circumstances. The campaign opposed more than opencast, its backers and working class vigilantes. It fought a force more powerful than the state and its foot soldiers. Ultimately what was confronted was the crushing force of everyday life and the mechanisms which propagate it.

This engendered hierarchy within the movement and locals readiness for their wishes to be mediated. There are historical precedents, tying in South Wales history, with autonomous action channelled into trade unionism.

Such a force far outweighs the colourful, sometimes inspiring, actions of a radical subculture. In the light of this, RTV should be judged along side other orthodox eco-direct action campaigns. Limited by milieu, hemmed in by societal imperatives, RTV achieved the results it could.

These were never enough, but given the opposition, its always going to take more than the eco-direct action movement can give. We can provide a strand of autonomy, but only as a thread to be incorporated in a society wide web of resistance.

While not as romantic or glamorous as the spectacular role of swashbuckling eco-warrior, the movement will become viable by real integration with community struggles. We can learn from our successes, but must also correct our mistakes.

For further info and to get involved, contact
Reclaim the Valleys!

Life on the Battle Star

A Personal Account



Across the valley from the Battlestar proudly stood Zion Tree

This interview was gently extracted from a war torn activist three days after the eviction of the last tree at Flywood camp at Manchester Airport. There were still tunnel systems being occupied, and other tree houses have gone up since. This follows one persons experience of one of the most successfully defended tree houses. From the begging to the end of the Battle Star Galactica.

Good evening from Captain Battlestar, who is totally nameless and will put on a silly accent throughout this interview.

The Campaign Builds

Could you give us the background to the campaign?

The second runway had been on the cards for 25 years. After the public enquiry finished in 94 EF! types joined up with activists from the Green Party & FoE forming the RunWay Coalition. We had meetings but it didn't start to escalate until '96.

In May '96 we all walked the route of the runway. 20 of us went up to where Flywood would be a year later, and took photos of what turned out to be my tree. We went down through the willows and everything was so wild we had to slash a path through the undergrowth and into the meadow. We just thought Wow, it was totally awesome. We realised the main way to get people involved was to get them to experience the place. More & more walks were done with more and more people.

One night in late '96 I got a phone call saying that the decision whether or not to build it would be announced the next day. We thought shit we haven't got anything ready, no tree houses rigged up. Their security were already patrolling the sites looking for protesters. So a couple of us decided to go for it. We tatted some tarps and some ply wood and joists and planned a night mission to move in. We had rekied the site in disguise as dog walkers with barber jackets and found the most strategic point. That then became Flywood. At 7pm on Saturday the advance party of 5 climbers ran across the road carrying polyprop and climbing gear and disappeared off into the woods. An hour later the tat van turned up and managed to crash through the gates, unload and get 30 people on site, all without being



spotted. We managed to set up a ground camp with a tree house 70 foot up all between 7 p.m. to 7 am.

The next morning, sitting in the bow of my tree watching the birds play, I saw a police car pass without even noticing us. We had thought they were on the hall- so we took the camp the night before runway walk. At midday 100 people turned up. The first thing the police knew about our camp was on the 3 o'clock news. Lots turned up and the camp came together really fast after that.

The A30 camp was being evicted 2 days before we moved in so while they were going down we were going up. It was a really nice feeling. They could not stop us. A few weeks later the A30 refugees turned up on mass. It all came together so beautifully. Within a week we had another camp set up - Zion Tree a 100 year old beech. We got many locals from North West moving their, many of them giving up their jobs.

Could you paint a picture of what type of ecology and landscape is being destroyed?

Most of the site was in the beautiful Bolin Valley. The woodland was called Hux Bank Wood which stretched from Zion Tree to Fly Wood down to River Rats. The whole valley was a grade A site of biological importance, just one down from a S.S.S.I. There are hundreds and hundreds of mature trees. The river meandering through the valley is to be encased in a massive concrete tube and, along with the rest of the valley, buried under rubble from a Derbyshire quarry. The whole thing is 4 million cubic metres- as large as the cutting at Twyford. The runway is around 300 hundred metres wide. All the woodland in that valley is to be completely annihilated, it is the removal of an entire landscape.

How many people from the surrounding communities were actively involved?

Virtually everybody there was from the N.West, apart from the usual rent-a-mob, which was the beauty of it. We got a few from Wigan and surrounding towns. It's not so much that there were so many locals involved but that they were new to protesting. They were defending their own land.

There was an established campaign in Mobely next door, a little town that will be right at the end of the proposed runway. One vet said after the decision was made he would start knitting a balaclava. During the eviction they organised that every Saturday they'd hold a vigil by the main gates. On the Saturday that the Battlestar came down there were 400 of them. One of the women from Mobley came up in the first week saying she was just a housewife but what could she do. After telling her there was no such thing she was given a wish list which she took around the village. She collected tat every day in her vehicle and the villagers made up sealed eviction stashes with games and drinks and things. It was really amazing - they were thoroughly behind us.

We heard that 'defencing' often ended up quite full on?

The security started putting up fences between the camps with razor wire. You could lose your finger on it. We started resisting, they started arresting us. Soon the security started conniving with the police to help beat us so we pixied at night generally just snipping it and taking it back to camp for building material. Cliff Richard camp was mainly constructed out of the fence.

One night a large group went out to the fence and started to tear it down. Some people who were heading off down the valley looking for a lost child bumped into the police who were arriving to deal with the fence trashers. One copper got out of the car, pulled out his truncheon and just started attacking people, with no warning, laying into people with his baton; the result being broken knuckles from trying to block the blows, broken ribs, missing teeth, battered heads. The people acted in self defence. The police Land rover ended up getting some of its lights and windows smashed in. As a result the police withdrew, the security withdrew and the fences were left unguarded, 100 metres was removed that night, flattened and destroyed.

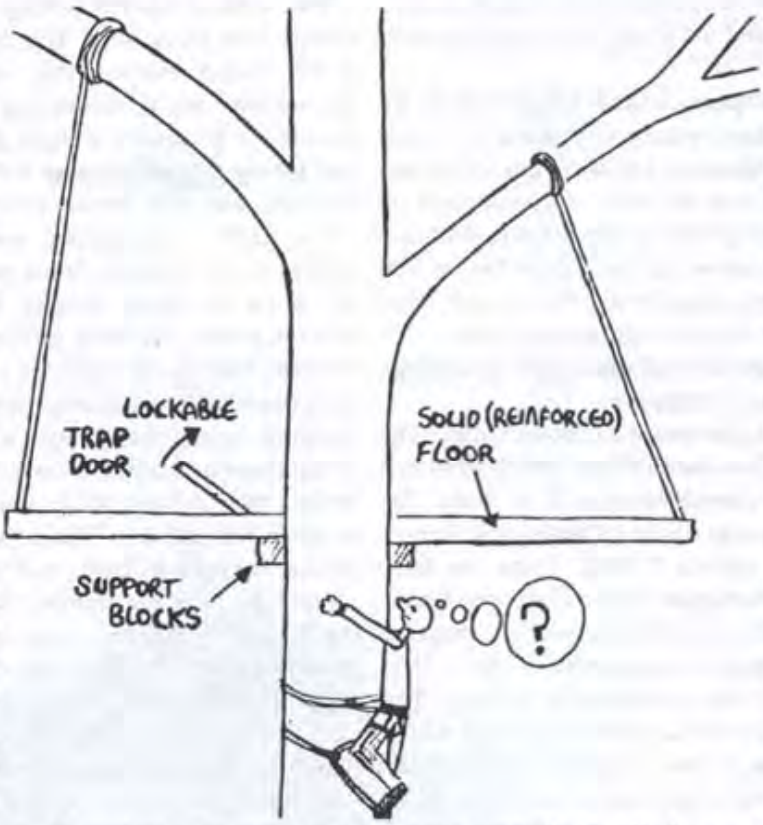
On another night police starting laying into people and arrests were made for 'violent disorder', 'riot' which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years, and 'using a dangerous dog as a weapon'. One person that was rescued from the police had broken ribs. He was jumped on by cops waving their batons on the way to hospital. Inside the hospital they surrounding him saying "do you want some", then they quick cuffed & dragged him off. Some are on remand now but as usual the police's statements are cocking up so they should be out soon.

Tell us about the tree house you lived in- BattleStar Galactica. What tactics did you use to actually keep your tree house pig-proof.

The logical process was: (A) get rid of the cherry picker. That was done with a system of tunnels strategically surrounding the trees making the ground unstable for heavy machinery on one side, and with a steep bank on the other side ,that was too high for the Cherry Pickers.(B) make it climber-proof - this was quite difficult, because the little bastards climb everywhere! However if you have a tree house wall which is six feet or more and the edge of it is covered in barbed wire, and grease, and razor fence, and there's someone there,

who's not going to let you over it, it is virtually impossible to climb round it. So that was the starting point: to make the scab-proof "battle" platform.

We lashed these big brackets onto the tree, built the frame, boarded it, and then we covered the top-side in razor fence, which meant that they couldn't chain-saw or saw through it. There was a coil of barbed wire on the underside of the platform, on the top, and right round the edge, so that you couldn't get hold of the thing. It was hideously difficult to get round it, even with no one on it, but of course with eight people running around on it, saying "No, you're not coming up", and being very strong and resisting them, basically they were stuffed. Then just to make it a little bit more fun, we decided to actually stop them being able to get up the trunk full-stop. So at a height of about twelve feet above the ground, we put coils of barbed wire, like you'd see on top of a prison. Then we thought, tree-surgeons with their spiky boots will just spike up it, but the only thing that can stop spikes is metal. So we got some corrugated sheet, and nailed that on the tree, then greased it just to make it even more unpleasant.



Galactica's collapsible platforms stopped the climbers

And then just to make it a little bit more unpleasant, I put another 10-15 feet of coiled barbed wire, this time vertically down the trunk, stapled on quite firmly, before I realised that I may have just put a set of handholds up the tree. So we stopped there and put another seven feet collar at the top, then greased that. The main thing with the collars is to make sure that they're really thoroughly nailed on - you need to put a helluva lot of nails in, which people do not like doing to trees, unfortunately. But we decided that we'd rather kill one tree and save a wood than not do it and just inevitably loose. A gas bottle was hung amongst the coils of barbed wire, untethered so it was just sat there- a deterrent.

I had a sun-lounger on the top, for sitting in the sun in and have breakfast on. And then came along two activists who pitched a ridge tent on top it. So there was a two man tent on top of a sun lounger on top of a razor wire covered tree house 65 foot up. This was ridiculous! That is when it became a proper shanty town.

How long were you up in the trees for?

Well I moved in and lived up there until I got taken out. The evictions started on the Tuesday and nine-days later they hit Flywood. Once we were under proper eviction it was three and a half days until me and •••• were down

The Eviction

Can you describe how the eviction started?

At 3.45am, an advance guard of Manchester cops bolt-cropper'd their way into Zion camp under the cover of aircraft noise - people heard them and went over to investigate. They were met by a large number of balaclved, riot-helmeted, baton- weilding men-in-black, who charged down a path after them. They beat the campaigners on the back of the head, and when they were either knocked to the ground or got on the ground, they sat on them and told them not to say a word. People up in Zion Tree couldn't see what was happening, but knew something was. They shouted "Are you alright?", and no one could reply coz they were gonna get their fucking heads kicked in.

Less than quarter of an hour later they hit Zion and Jimi Hendrix, which was where this journalist was - he was in a bender just before the main camp - they smacked him across the face and it split quite nastily - there was a lot of blood. It was a big mistake to start whacking HTV journalists across the face, because it just backs up the stories of violence against us.



Largely as a result they didn't go into any of the camps in quite the same full-on manner. The original raiders, about ten people, went in there absolutely psyched to attack people. If ten anti-roads activists went piling into somewhere wearing ballies, wielding sticks, they'd all be done for riot, getting eight years each. The whole thing is totally one-sided and ridiculous.

What was the media pen?

Well they fenced us off relatively early on. When they did the Zion, Jimmy and Garlic evictions, journalists were taken to a bit of field by the airport and from there you could see very little. They were deliberately being kept away from good shots. This was part of the whole strategy of the eviction, which was to control and limit the number of people that could see what was going on. It is ironic in a way coz in terms of the state it was one of the safest and most non-violent evictions to date. So, as other people could tell you from Newbury, you've got a private eviction here, and they could quite easily have trashed us.

On the whole, there was no violent resistance. We didn't need to, because the climbers moved so slowly. They weren't interested in rushing. It took nine days to get through four tree camps, none of which in their own right were particularly difficult. They just went really slowly, and generally pretty carefully. Which doesn't justify it at all, but it neutralises your anger.

When they came to the Battlestar they didn't even attempt to climb up into it, but one of the first things they did was to ring bark it. They took out a section of bark about three or four inches right round, this kills the tree. I think it was done as a bit of a sick joke, to wind us all up. They saw us as a challenge, and it did shake us up. We lost our cool. Basically it was "bollocks" to fluffy - you start sawing into our tree, we're gonna get a bit hardcore. In the end we all calmed down, but something that we'll all remember is the moment when the chain saw guy took a 24 inch chain saw to our tree and we didn't actually know what he's was going to do with it. Imagine he said, "You're not going to believe this!" and then started cutting into the tree, basically we thought that he was going to cut a wedge out of it. Or cut it in some seriously destabilising way to scare us off. If it had been a bluff it wouldn't have worked because we'd all have stayed up no matter what.

Beyond Battlestar there were the twigs, and the branches at the very top. One of our crew, who's a bit of a nutter came up with an idea. He tied a set of hang mans' nooses to the very top of the branches, you could just about get to them but it was pretty dangerous. People from below wouldn't be able to get to the nooses to cut them, and they wouldn't be able to get a harness on the person in the noose and in theory they wouldn't be able to pull you off because it would hang you. And it did work, as I found out! I did it. They did attempt to scare me, trying to get me to think they were gonna come and get me anyway. The boss climber, Richard Turner, reassured me that the branch the noose was tied to would snap like a carrot before it hung me. This wasn't very reassuring, coz if the branch snapped like a carrot I'd fall 50-60 feet to the ground and die. But in the end, either they decided to back down anyway, or they were bluffing- it was just too much for them. Most of the time I was in the noose and they were below me, I was in front of the Press Association and the BBC, saying, "Get the fucking camera to the other side of the bank, coz I'm about to die and I want it to be on telly!"

And how did they actually evict you in the end?

The Battlestar really worked- it delayed them and meant that they had to bring in a cherry picker rather than simply use climbers. They came up late on a Sunday after we'd been sitting down on the platform chilling out in the sun carving chess-pieces. I sussed what they were up to - that they were clearing trees to bring a cherry-picker in, and I saw that they were building a bridge. But I couldn't really believe they were going to come in that late on a Sunday. Then we saw a bulldozer and Chief Climber Richard Turner said, "You'd better pack your bags. Are you coming down?". It was late on a Sunday, all the Sheriffs men had gone. There was no press, no cameras, the police evidence gatherers had gone. There were nine of us up there. So everybody apart from about two or three of us went down to the battle platform and sat with all the tat and got ready to resist. A cherry picker delivered bailiffs to the platform but it still took the state the best part of an hour to dismantle the three platforms, and throw everything out, and thoroughly smash everything up. One person went down with them which left eight of us up a bare tree, with no platforms. I had a hammock and a rucksack, but no one else had their stuff with them. However we'd managed to salvage most of the bedding, biscuits, chocolate, alcohol and a spliff - all the essentials!

Then the climbers went home, and wished us an uncomfortable night, and ++++ absailed out of the tree and got arrested - she didn't want to stay. We had a bit of a meeting, and four of the remaining seven decided to try and build overnight an escape walkway system. It would have been quite amusing defending the tree for six days, causing them real grief, and then in the night just disappearing. They'd come back the next day



to find an empty tree. I wasn't into it at all, I was going to stay until the end, because that's what I'd psyched myself up for over the last few months. But other people were really into the idea. So four tried, but unfortunately they believed a bailiff who promised them safe passage off the site. They came down and got nicked.

So they went, and that left three of us up there. At this stage in the eviction the climbers could have started using the battle platform as a staging point. So me and **** destroyed it. We slung a hammock up the top of a tree, put in loads of bedding and fell asleep. When the bailiffs came in the morning, they couldn't believe we were all cozy, with food and alcohol cradled in the branches. With the entire tree so difficult to climb they realised they'd have to go off and get a cherry-picker. Every morning we took down the hammock—we wanted to hold out for at least seven days. **** came down without resisting; **** took the remaining bedding and food across neighbouring walkways to a sycamore tree.

When the cherry-pickers came, I took my harness off and waved it at them from the branches. I had my rucksack full of food and my hammock and climbed to the very top branch. I just kept climbing. The bailiff was saying, "The tree's coming down today," and I kept saying, "No, the tree's not coming down today!". He was going psychotic. Fortunately the cherry-pickers couldn't reach me, and they knew they couldn't reason with me not wanting to risk the thirty-foot drop with a noose round my neck. They decided to back off.

After a while they brought in a bulldozer to raise the level of the ground around the tree, after four hours the cherry-picker was back. With the extra couple of feet, they could reach us. So after much deliberation, I shot across the walkway to the sycamore, where I hoped they couldn't reach me. But they could. I was totally fucked after all this. Traumatised. I don't think I could go through that again. My energy was completely sapped, and their was four in th cherrypicker basket so resistance was pretty mch futil. So I absailed it down.

Tell us about the Battlestar crew?

The original plan was to have about five people up there, but people kept coming up, wanting to join the Battlestar. So we built the sister-ship, the Pentagon, which was good coz it meant we had an extra tree defended, extra space and extra shit for the bailiffs to deal with. We had a really good crew: most of us knew each other, so we tended to get on pretty well. We had a similar approach in many ways, but diverse backgrounds. We had a teacher, some dole activists, some professional climbers, long-standing campaigners that had been to Newbury and so on. Most people, like me, hadn't been in a tree eviction before. Basically it was one big happy family, with no stereotyped roles, sexism or whatever. We all grouped together for comfort, and gave each other strength. We made most decisions as a group, and got people to decide for themselves what they wanted to do. Since our eviction we all gone separate ways. We had all our different campaigns, so some went off to Lyminge, others to Sherwood Forest and so on.

To the Future

What message would you like to give to other campaigns?

Don't put a noose round your neck unless you're fucking insane! There's a lot to be said for thinking, planning - rather than just throwing yourself into the first idea that comes to your head, tactical thinking. Get to know the people and the area you're working with. Make sure your house is big, so you can have plenty of food and supplies. Before you even start thinking about building, look at the terrain, the landscape, at other trees. If you're the first there, it's worth spending a week looking into how to deal with different types of eviction. Like in a clump of trees, where you can defend each other. Battlestar was at the hub of a group of four trees. Each of those had a Battlestar- type platform. So you can have a network of trees, all interconnected. The stronger the community, the more difficult it becomes for them to get you.

Another important issue to deal with on campaigns is the macho, lairy, male, aggressive brew-crew culture. At first there was no problem. There were as many women as men, and Flywood was the vegan camp, with a pretty sorted community. But later on, the percentage of men got higher, and things got rather alpha-male.Sorted people started leaving, and less experienced people started taking over. In the end there were only three people left at Flywood ground camp, and it became really lairy, scaring away locals. This puts people off getting involved. It has to be nipped in the bud.

Get On Down & Get Involved

This was one person's story, but hundreds participated in the Manchester Airport evictions, up trees, down tunnels, and on the ground. More camps are being set up and as we go to print there is still someone in the tunnel system. You can be involved in the next stage of the camapign. This was just the beginning.

For further info contact:

Campaign Agaisnt Runway 2, 6 Mount St, Manchester, M2 5NS Tel. 0161 - 834 8221



Wilderness & Resistance

Bears, Blockades & Burning Bridges



One of your humble editors asked me to write an article on what's happening in regards to wilderness and resistance in British Columbia. I was slacking off a bit on the deadline, which seems to be what one does when writing for DoD. But I guess it drove said editor to desperation, because the next thing I knew I was in a Welsh jail charged with Criminal Damage (Without Lawful Excuse!) of earth moving equipment, and Attempting to Pervert the Course of Justice (if destroying the land by opencast mining serves the course of public justice, then I'm proud to be a pervert). The editor then told me in no uncertain terms that I wouldn't be getting out until I gave him an article, and that if people don't turn in stories on time he'd make damn sure they all ended up in the nick where they'd have plenty of time to finish overdue articles.

By an Expatriated Biocentric Turtle Island Earth First!er.

I have lived in Canada off and on since the summer of 1993. I spent most of that summer in the Maritimes on the East Coast, working with the Sea Shepherds on their "Cod Wars" campaign. The crew heard on a regular basis incredible stories of the forest defense in Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia (BC). We also heard about the Yukon wolf-kill. So, after the Sea Shepherd gig was over, two of us left for BC to check out Clayoquot and start a BC chapter of Friends of the Wolf.

First of all, I need to explain that I use the term British Columbia grudgingly, as 95% of the province is unceded native land. BC is a colonial designation which has no basis in law or ethics, and I consider it a virtual place if anything. But in order to describe the numerous bioregions and peoples who live there, for now we will settle with the term.

When I try and explain what's happening to BC's wilderness, the best comparison I can make is to the Third Reich's Final Solution for their "undesirables." In B.C., the Forest Service considers old-growth forests as decadent, overmature, and messy. The Service is doing its best to make way for young, productive tree farms. Last summer I spoke with a logger in B.C.'s interior who believed that he was preparing for a sustainable future by removing the last 1/5 of 1% of old-growth in that area; huge cedars ripped out of the earth to make way for monocultured saplings. All pristine valleys with profitable timber (and while reaping government subsidies, the industry can make a buck on almost any dead tree) are scheduled to be roaded and then logged by 2014, the Ministry of Forest's Final Solution for the problem of messy rainforests. The Wildlife Branch has similar plans for such troublesome critters as wolves and bears, and BC Hydro wants to make sure that all rivers are dammed to provide electricity for cities and water for the American West, which is drying up.

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), once the level of water flowing across the border increases, the tap cannot be turned off, even in times of drought or national emergencies. Look at

the Yukon River on a map: under the North American Water and Power Alliance plan, water will be diverted from all the way the fuck up there, down through the Rocky Mountain trench, and ultimately to the Southern U.S. for golf courses and cattle ranches.

Old-growth Rainforests (Big Trees)

The most famous wilderness campaign in B.C. has been for Clayoquot Sound, kind of like the Newbury campaign but without the Rampage.

The Friends of Clayoquot Sound (FOCS) started as a radical group of various and sundry American draft-dodger hippies, traditional Nuu-Chah-Nuulth natives, tree spikers, and other dissident voices against the clearcut logging of the largest remaining lowland coastal temperate rainforest (280,000 ha.) [located on BC's Vancouver Island]. In fact, one of the former directors of FOCS started the Society for the Protection of Intact Kinetic Ecosystems (SPIKE), which openly advocated spiking and claimed to have put nails into 20,000 trees.

Another director was convicted of burning a bridge to a logging site. Yet, by the summer of 1993, the campaign to save Clayoquot had evolved into one of massive civil disobedience; all summer long, every single day, one of the main logging roads was blockaded by crowds varying from perhaps 5,000 on the first day when the band Midnight Oil played, to just a handful of folks. Over 1,000 people were arrested that summer for criminal contempt of court by defying a court injunction to stay off the road. An extraordinary diversity of people came out and got involved: from raging grannies to loggers, peaceheads to saboteurs (more on that in a moment), New Agers to Anglican clerics, people came from all walks to take part. Hell, even a dozen Basques showed up who spoke no English but said in Spanish, "clearcutting kills men and the beasts." Unfortunately, the campaign was to a certain extent controlled by the "peace nazis," who were afflicted with a bad case of tunnel vision. Even though there were often hundreds of people around, the only form of protest allowed by FOCS was the stand-in-the-road-while-they-read-you-the-injunction-and-then-cart-you-off demonstration; consequently, there were only a few days all year that the logging was actually stopped. Usually, it was only a matter of a few minutes for the police to remove the demonstrators and then the trucks rolled on by.



In 1890, most of Vancouver Island was forested. By 2000, only 2.3% will be left—unless we stop them.

Earth First! was definitely not welcome at that point, nor were tree-sitters, or lock-ons, or elves. Even though many FOCS activists are EF!ers, that summer saw a definite change of tactics in Clayoquot, one which perhaps foreshadowed the FoE/EF! conflict here. Many years of hard work by FOCS, and help from international groups like EF!, Greenpeace, and Rainforest Action Network among others, has resulted in the main logging company (Macmillan Bloedel) pulling out of Clayoquot, and the other company has had its cut reduced by 45%.

In a sense, Clayoquot has been saved and should be considered a victory. On the other hand, the government and timber industry are using the tiny area of Clayoquot as a smokescreen to cover up the fact that they are clearcutting the rest of the province.

For instance, according to the Forest Action Network (FAN), who organize a forest defense campaign out of a remote town called Bella Coola, "The last large pristine area left on the coast is the Great Coast Rainforest encompassing an area larger than Wales. But time is running out. Virtually every pristine valley within the Great Coast Rainforest is to have a road built into it, then logged, within the next five years."

It's not only old-growth rainforest that's on the chopping block. The vast boreal forest of Canada is under assault from multinational corporations such as Mitsubishi, the world's biggest deforester. On the flatlands which characterize Taiga forests, the operations are becoming horrifically mechanized, with remote-controlled machines called feller-bunchers plowing the trees like a field of grain.

Mostly these trees are used for pulp, but Mitsubishi also owns a mill in Northern BC which is the biggest chopstick factory in the world, producing several million pairs of disposable chopsticks per



day using the most wasteful logging methods in the province.

About 14% of BC's forests are consumed by Europe, used for everything from toilet paper to garden furniture. For those interested in heading over, this year would be a good time to go to catch the "summer of rage" called against the timber industry.

EF!, FAN, and even Greenpeace will be up to their necks in direct action, defending the big wild. A new group called Peoples Action for Threatened Habitat (PATH) will be conducting actions for a critical wilderness area near Vancouver, along with Coast Mountains EF! (formerly Vancouver EF!).

If you can spring for a ticket over, you won't have to spend much there, as the base camps will have food and shelter.

Directly experiencing wilderness cannot be substituted for, and can only make one's struggle more committed, even if the wildlands are far away from home.

Charismatic Megafauna (Big critters)

The image of Canada as a vast wilderness with infinite supplies of big "game" for foreign trophy hunters is giving way to reality: swiftly declining biodiversity due to resource extraction, development, overhunting, overfishing, pollution, and climate change. But two groups in particular have been active protecting large predators: Bear Watch and Friends of the Wolf—BC (FoW).

Bear Watch was started in Clayoquot by forest defenders who became aware of guide/outfitters taking clients into the Sound to shoot bears. Guide/Outfitting is an extremely lucrative industry, attracting mostly foreign thrill-killers who are happy to give thousands of dollars to rednecks and the Wildlife Branch in order to snuff out big animals. In response, Bear Watch organized hunt sab campaigns first in Clayoquot and then other areas, directly confronting the hunters and their guns. In addition, a series of high-profile media campaigns and protests has made trophy hunting a major issue.

Another development was the formation of the Earth Liberation Army (ELA), and the Justice Department (JD). The ELA embarked on a series of attacks against the guide/outfitting industry by torching cabins, stink-bombing offices, monkeywrenching vehicles, and otherwise wreaking havoc. A hunting lobby group tried to link Bear Watch to these actions because two convicted ALF activists were involved with the group, but Bear Watch sued and earned money and big-time apologies from the beleaguered bloodsportsmen. The JD, according to the Old Bill, sent razor blade booby-trapped envelopes to every Guide/Outfitter, and apparently some letter bombs as well. Judging from the reaction by the industry and the police, the Guide/Outfitters seem to have had the fear of God instilled in them.



Wolves suffer from a persecution unlike any other animal in North America, save perhaps sharks. Although this is changing, and a growing movement of wolf lovers has put across the simple fact that no healthy wolf in the wild has ever attacked anyone, government "managers" and other biologist pests still allow the slaughter to continue. Besides official wolf-kills where helicopter gunships wipe out packs, there are still open season hunting regulations which allow anyone to kill wolves in Canada without a permit.

The Yukon Department of Renewable Resources are shooting wolves with tranquilizers and sterilizing the alpha males. Guide/Outfitters advertise killing wolves as a bonus to the regular hunt.

Some of you reading this have perhaps heard of FoW and the campaign against the Yukon wolf-kill. In large part due to FoW's hunt sabbing and direct actions, the Yukon government has ended the program, and an enormous amount of attention was focussed on the slaughter of wolves. In addition, the group brought a lot of people together who went on to work together on other issues. However, I left the group after the first winter up North because of a massive row with my fellow co-founder, Dennis Alvey. Two more years passed before a letter written by ALF activist David Barbaresh finally brought certain dealings to the light of day. Apparently that letter did the rounds in England and Europe, detailing a sad tale of rampant egoism, funds embezzlement, sexual harrassment, disempowerment of activists, and other crimes committed by Mr. Alvey. What started as an effective grassroots group deteriorated into a total fiasco, and it would behoove people over here to read the letter in order to avoid the same things happening here.

Earth First!

The experiences of Earth First! have been very different between Canada and the U.S. For one thing, even though EF!'s influence has been felt strongly by all groups across Canada, and though there have been effective EF! groups in places like Toronto, Victoria, and Vancouver, it has never really caught on as a movement. Last summer, while working to set up a new forest defense group in the interior mountains of BC, I added an exclamation mark after the end of the group's name in a flyer, and also put the EF! fist in a corner.

Even though the flyer said nothing about EF! and stressed non-violent actions, a firestorm of controversy erupted. Mainstream groups put out press releases saying that American terrorists were infiltrating their ranks and sowing the seeds of violence; the government decried the presence of extremists; the local multinational timber company braced itself for tree-spiking and armed attacks on its operations. Admittedly, the company's sawmill getting torched a few weeks later didn't help matters much. But outside of urban areas this is often the reaction to EF!, and is a major reason why more activists don't organize under that label even if they subscribe to that philosophy.

There are a few reasons for this: public fear of American influences, media hype about eco-terrorism, the mantra of fluffinesss from the peace movement, and the presence of large angry armed men who populate the countryside and work in earth-raping industries. But whereas American EF! is an acknowledged entity, albeit one often opposed violently, EF! just can't seem to be accepted as a movement in Canada. This may be changing; at the very least, direct action is growing, and EF! continues to provide inspiration, experience, and knowledge. The Earth First! Journal and Ecodefense uncannily make their way into remote locales and backhill hamlets.

First Nations

The first human inhabitants of Turtle Island (a Native name for North America) lived in a symbiotic harmony with the land that those born in civilization can never fully realize ("The Island Within" by Richard Nelson is a must read for primitivists and those who would rewild Britain). Some animal rightists take issue with the Native use of animals (a recent cover of Arkangel showed a vivisector, butcher, and Innuit as the same enemy); human rights advocates have raised the issue of the existence of slaves and a rigid caste system among some tribes; and conservation biologists point to the alleged extinction of various species of mammals due to over hunting by the first peoples.

These questions aside, a comparison between the indigenous and European way of life on Canada's West Coast is that of sanity vs. insanity, stability vs. entropy, abundance vs. scarcity, and spirituality vs. technology. Without question, the First Nations achieved a balance with their surroundings, which benefited both them and the land.

In "Towards a Detente with History: Confronting Canada's Colonial Legacy", Joyce A. Green describes Canada as an evolving colonial entity, created by imperial and colonial interests, for the express purpose of extending and consolidating those interests at the expense of the indigenous peoples and their contemporary descendants. Perhaps nowhere else in North America (another imperialist

term), except for perhaps Chiapas, is this truer on a grand scale than the Canadian province of BC.

Unlike most other regions, provinces or states, where the original inhabitants were coerced into signing treaties with the European conquerors (which were almost without exception all broken by the invaders), only a few tribes signed any kind of agreement that ceded their land or rights. This is significant because from the standpoint of international law, the BC and Canadian governments have no legal authority over those First Nations, and their sovereign status and rights were never extinguished.

In 1763, the Native tribes who fought with the British against the French (thereby assuring Great Britain's victory) demanded that the British remove their forts from Native lands. As could be guessed, Britain balked at this, so Ottawa Chief Pontiac formed a Confederacy which then torched all of the forts. King George III, whose propensity for decadence and depravity is well known, somehow managed to sober up enough (by the time of the American Revolution he was too far gone) to issue the Royal Proclamation Act, which promised to protect unceded Native people and land from his Crown subjects in the Colonies. The Act has never been repealed, and the Canadian Constitution (ratified in 1982) upholds and reaffirms its validity.

A major row exists between those Native bands who are currently choosing to negotiate with the BC government through a Land Claims process, and those First Nations who refuse to recognize the jurisdiction of BC, and will only dialogue on a nation-to-nation level. The former are considered by the latter to be modern Uncle Toms, or Apples (red on the outside and white on the inside). Environmental groups have had to choose between sides, and predictably most mainstream groups have sided with the Treaty process bands. I for one, along with groups such as Settlers in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty (S.I.S.I.S, which runs an excellent web site on the indigenous sovereignty struggle in Canada) and FAN, strongly believe that the process is a complete scam, and will only end with the participating bands in an even worse position than they were before. One reason is that the entire history of Western governments engaging in treaties with indigenous peoples ends up with those peoples losing. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, one of the great corporate swindles of modern times, is a perfect and recent example.



Another example is the situation on BCs central coast with regard to the neighbouring Heltsuk and Nuxalk bands. The Heltsuk have entered the treaty process. While the process crawls on, the band cannot protest against resource extraction and development. Consequently, they may have to wait for many years for an agreement to be reached (if ever; a different political party can come into office and cancel the whole thing, which is a likely scenario), during which time their land will have been stripped of trees, fished out, developed, and otherwise wiped out. In contrast, the Nuxalk are a strong sovereigntist nation who refuse to go along with the treaty sham, and are opposing industrial forestry with the support of FAN. Their future, by contrast with the Heltsuk, is vibrant. The historical situation involving the Royal Proclamation Act explains why some BC First Nations are currently trying to communicate with Liz Windsor about their situation. The British Crown has played a



major role in the assimilation of Native tribes, yet currently refuses to recognize or take responsibility for this. Joyce Green contends that:

The Crown's military and police presence indicated coercion, while the language used was honeyed with symbolic representations of peace, mutuality, security and well-being for all time... assurances of continued Aboriginal autonomy were made, together with promises of material gifts.

The Queen, who never actually participated in treaty-making, was represented by her commissioners as a deified parent; aware of and desirous of the best interests of Indians; munificent, all-knowing and trustworthy.

The language shows how this image was manufactured: your Great Mother, the Queen... her hand is also open to reward the good man everywhere in her Dominions; your great mother wishes the good of all races... wishes her red children to be happy... to live in comfort... adopt the habits of the whites... She thinks this would be the best thing for her red children... But the Queen... has no idea of compelling you to do so... Your Great Mother... will lay aside for you lots of land to be used by you and your children forever... as long as the sun shall shine, there shall be no Indian who has not a place that he can call his home, where he can go and pitch his camp...

A common assumption is that things are getting better for the Indians, and that the government doesn't exercise the same nastiness as it used to. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth. The Coolican Report suggests that Canada's efforts to extinguish First Nations' rights and historical claims have not only not decreased in recent years, but have actually increased. Events at Oka, Ipperwash, and Gustafson Lake (check out the S.I.S.I.S web site for detailed info) confirm this.

Another example is the story of the Gitskan and Wet'suwet'en peoples' law suit against the provincial government of BC over the issue of indigenous sovereignty. The case was loaded from the start: the judge, Chief Justice McEachern of the B.C. Supreme Court, was formerly employed by Russell & Dumoulin, a major corporate law firm with some of the worst resource extraction corporations as clients; the Crown attorney was a former partner at Russell & Dumoulin; and some of the Native bands' own solicitors were from Russell & Dumoulin! There is more evidence to support the conclusion of a conspiracy. Justice McEachern ruled against the rights of First Nations people, claiming that their lives before contact with Europeans were nasty, brutish and short (quoting the European philosopher Hobbes) and had no redeeming features.

In the spring of 1994, FAN organized a blockade against the multinational timber monster Interfor, in solidarity with the sovereigntist LilWat people. Their ancient burial grounds and petroglyphs were being dynamited to build a logging road, and their forests were being clearcut, destroying the salmon habitat. Salmon is the lifeblood of the people and the land. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police showed up and handed us a court injunction banning us from the area; guess which law firm was displayed at the top of the document (which had been photocopied from a fax), and had won the injunction for Interfor? Russell & Dumoulin. The injunction had been reissued from a blockade a few years earlier, at which time Thatcherite Kim Campbell was the Canadian Prime Minister. Which law firm did she work for before entering Tory politics? You guessed it. The conspiratorial web among the governmental, judicial, and corporate worlds is truly stunning. Yet the struggle continues against the forces of destruction, as it does around the world.

Ya Basta!

Resources

* If you want to write a letter (it won't save the planet, but it will let B.C. know the world is watching), send Premier Glen Clarke an epistle at Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V8V 1X4, Canada.
* Forest Action Network (FAN): Box 625, Bella Coola, BC, V0T 1C0, Canada; 1-(604) 799-5800; e-mail— fan@alternatives.com; web site— http://www.alternatives.com/fan/index.htm/
* FAN UK (think globally, act locally), Box F, 42-46 Bethel St., Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1NR; tel: 01603 611953; fax: 01603 666879.
* Coast Mountains EF!: Box 128, 1472 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 3X9, Canada; (604) 708-9660
* Friends of Clayoquot Sound: Box 489, Tofino, BC, V0R 2Z0, Canada; 1-(604) 725-4218; e-mail— focs@web.apc.org; web site— http://www.island.net/~focs
* Bearwatch: Box 21598, 1850 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC V5N 4A0, Canada; (604) 730-6081; e-mail— bearwtch@helix.net; http://www.helix.net/~bearwtch
* P.A.T.H. (Peoples' Action for Threatened Habitat): <pathbc@hotmail.com>
* Settlers in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty (S.I.S.I.S): POB 8673, Victoria, BC V8X 1A9, http://kafka.uvic.ca/~vipirg/SISIS/SISmain.html
* Contacts for First Nations can be found through S.I.S.I.S
* SOVERNET-L is a news-only listserv concerned with indigenous sovereignty struggles around the world. To subscribe, send "subscribe sovernet-l" in the body of an email message <majordomo@speakeasy.org. For more info, contact S.I.S.I.S

Cascadia Rises!

Free State in the Forest



The heart of the Willamette National Forest, the bread basket of the Pacific Northwest timber industry, is the Cascade Range. The land here is steep, cut through by swift rivers and streams. The salmon are a thing of the past since the dam down at Lowell, but the osprey, bear and anglers compete for the fat trout; mountain lion, coyote and black-tail deer roam the meadows, and the great Roosevelt elk that the Europeans nearly wiped out earlier this century are flourishing. The howl of the wolf has disappeared from the southern Cascades, but some hold that they've seen tracks and to the north across the Columbia the wolves have come as far south as the Gifford-Pinchot National Forest. The steeper slopes that had, until recently, discouraged logging, are covered with Douglas fir and hemlock, thicker across than a tall man stands, and the wet drainages hold the giant Red cedar. But these are pale things compared to the immense trees that grew on the lower, more level ground, some 7 or 8 meters through. The ground is covered in thick rhododendron and salal, or in clearings by huckleberry, salmonberry, thimbleberry, blackberry, vine maple and alder.

In 1991, the 9th Circuit Court ruled that the Forest Service was selling off the remnants of the ancient forests of the Pacific Northwest without regard to the consequences born by the inhabitants of the forest, specifically a small, old-growth dependent hunter called the Northern Spotted Owl. The court ruled that they must stop cutting in the endangered owl's habitat until they had a feasible plan that would allow the owl's population to recover. The areas off limits to logging were called Habitat Conservation Areas (HCA) and one such was the Cornpatch Roadless Area, on the west side of the Waldo Lake Wilderness. In October the same year, an arsonist (or arsonists) set the HCA on fire. It was very late in the season but it was in the middle of a drought that would last for 8 years; no rain fell to slow the burn. Almost 9,000 acres burned in what would be called the Warner Creek Fire, before an early, heavy snow put the fire out. One wit on the site remarked "No owls here now". The Forest Service made ready plans to salvage-log the burned area.

Area environmentalists immediately took the Forest Service to court, arguing that to log a protected area after a criminal act would set an awful precedent. They successfully fought the original plan to log 40 million board feet of timber, reducing the plan to nine million board feet instead. They also began to lead educational hikes through the burned area, learning and teaching about natural fire recovery as it happened. For four years, two graduate students from the University of Oregon in Eugene and long time EF!ers Tim Ingalsbee (a former firefighter) and his partner, Catia Juliana, committed their lives to saving Warner Creek. They fought the FS every step of the way, and they made the summer hikes and campouts an annual ritual. The list of Warner Creek partisans grew.

A district court had enjoined one small portion of the sale sold to Thomas Creek Lumber in the early summer of 1995 and legal victory loomed. Then on July 27th, President Clinton signed into law a rider attached to a rescissions bill by the Republican Congress that mandated broad, emergency "salvage" logging under the rubric of "forest health," suspending all environmental protections and legal appeals

ordinarily available to citizens to stop such sales. A section of this Salvage Rider also resurrected a host of old growth sales that had been legally stopped in the preceding 6 years. In the first of his many far reaching decisions interpreting the scope of the Salvage Rider, U.S. District Judge Michael Hogan on September 6, 1995 declared that the sold northern portions of the Warner burn area were clear for logging. The 4-year long legal effort to stop the Warner Creek salvage plan was voided

Activists, however, had been prepared for this eventuality. Three days before the judge made his ruling, a small band of Earth First!ers met in the moonlight on the only road into the released sale units and placed a dragon deep into its compacted, gravelly surface. A dragon is a large amount of concrete (in this case about a half ton) submerged in



A sabbed logging road

the middle of a narrow point of the road, wherein is vertically mounted a pipe in which one may lock one's arm thereby drastically impeding traffic (hopefully). This one, named Morrison, had a heavy steel-encased fire door off the back of our favorite Eugene pub laid on top, with a hole coinciding in position with the pipe of the dragon.

Forest Service employees arriving on the morning of the 7th (they had taken to making daily inspections of the area) found a small group of seven squatting at this site (sans the door) in front of the locked gate the FS had installed in the road to keep out vehicles. Expecting loggers at any time, the group had kept up an all-night vigil. A score more activists awaited signal of any trouble at a base camp a mile away that had been in operation since July. Many more activists, hearing news of the decision, were on the way from Eugene.That was the last time the Forest Service was to drive past the gate. That night activists put their own lock on it, Morrison was activated, and from that day forward there was always someone (usually myself in those first months) committed to locking into the dragon at any sign of FS, logger, or hostile activity.

In subsequent nights the blockade grew and grew. Rock walls sprang up and deep trenches spanned the road in numerous places. Many people swarmed over the road, folks who'd never met each other, and especially not swinging a pick. Mainstream enviros, Earth First!ers, folks from town who just believed that we couldn't let it happen. People from hundreds of miles away came, old friends brought other old friends. Our security was loose to nil; the bottom line was make sure the Forest Service didn't get the loggers through, we'd pay for our sins later.

It is difficult, a year and a half later, to recapture the constant stress, tension, and near-panic of those first weeks, expecting to get rolled over by jeep-loads of black-clad federales at any moment, bad communication gear, false alarms, *sleeping day in and day out on that goddamned door with a manacle around my wrist* (sorry). All night concrete parties, the press hiring helicopters to find our base camp, having politicians and big-wig enviros walk up the road for the cameras. But these people holding the borders of what was now Cascadia Free State were the best, the strongest. The closest family is formed under fire; in 40 years I have never known finer.

Weeks passed. The FS pushed and tested. On the 10th day a road grader and a few dozen representatives of the various branches of law-enforcement in a half-dozen vehicles came. We stayed, they left. I could pile words to the moon and it wouldn't be able to show.

Week after week into months we kept the road; they knew a major confrontation would ensue if they tried to move us. We could hold the road long enough to get more people in, and support in the Willamette valley was strong. The rocks spread over the road and the trenches grew deeper and deeper, taking on names such as "Evolution Creek" and "Full Moon Gorge."

People came up every weekend or whenever they had the time. Some who'd met us in town at the market, many had come on one of the earlier educational hikes. They brought us food, rain gear, coats, blankets, firewood, and tools.

Often they stayed to do a bit of work on the road and sing around the fire. Sometimes hunters and locals from Oakridge came up. A few were supportive, some just curious about the wackos on the hill, but more than a few were abusive and threatening, brandishing rifles and shotguns. We prayed for snow. That would give us some protection, but it wasn't coming soon.

OTHER ISLANDS

The camp continued to evolve while the faces changed. I remember certain people with certain phases. Andrew and the Stumptowners (Portlanders) when it was just my tent on the door and everyone else was scattered in hidden camps; Sis and Kev, and the punkers from Missouri when it was Shantytown; the Dark Sisters and Peter when we raised the Wall and drawbridge. And through it all, the constants who saw it all through, rotating in for days or weeks. Some only left the Free State for actions in other places as the repercussions of the salvage rider began to be felt in other dearly-held forest. We moved into tipis made from tarps as the weather grew harsher (a good storm can drive winds higher than 120 kph, and drop rain in monsoon quantities). Light snows came, only to melt away. On New Year's people were still able to drive up to the camp for a wild, hallucinogenic party that ended up on the ridgeline meadow at 5400 plus feet, miles above camp.

But the snows...they finally came to stay, months late, and lay down a full base in the course of a week (which melted in a flood a month later that nearly took part of the state capitol). Not to worry, there's plenty more where that came from. Reaching the camp to bring in supplies now took a half-day or more on snowshoes. The Forest Service snowmobiles bogged down a mile short of camp the one time they attempted to reach us. They had been conducting weekly or bi-weekly inspection/harassment visitations, but we wouldn't see them again until spring thaw. The weight of the winter bent and shattered trees, some more than 2 meters through. Nature threw up roadblocks in the form of downed trees for miles on the road leading up to our camp.



While the heavy snow protected the camp, we now had to get used to each other in close quarters. Snowshoe treks could only keep a person away from the sleeping tipi for so long; we read a lot of books as we dried wet clothes and watched our wood stores dwindle. No small amount of time was spent planning strategy for future campaigns. In forests all around us ancient trees were threatened: from the Umpqua and the Siskiyous, to the coastal range, and from north of us near Detroit in the Willamette and further to Mt. Hood friends were calling for help. In the tipis and down in our warehouse, we plotted and schemed and waited for the thaw that would allow the saws' return.

Keeping the blockade running was an enormous effort on the part of the Cascadians; gathering supplies, removing refuse, and just bearing with the day in day out tension and boredom of waiting. Of course we couldn't cope with it. When Hull-Oakes, a dinosaur of a timber company, whose mill could only process old-growth trees, picked up a sale through the same Rider that had driven us to the road... well, there was a general gnashing of teeth. The sale was called Roman-Dunn and was a remnant island of ancient forest in the clearcut sea of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in the Coast Range of Cascadia. With the shortage of spotted-owl housing, it shouldn't have been a surprise to find and film the small, bold predator. When the fallers came, there were these dripping people standing in the middle of the road in the dawn rain. The folks from the valley who'd stood at Warner continued to push their point; that there was a vast difference between what is legal and illegal, and what is right and wrong. I stayed at Warner as my friends rayed out, over half of Roman-Dunn was clearcut, five pieces of Hull-Oakes' heavy equipment were damaged or destroyed, media mildly peaked and fell. No one claimed credit for the sabotage.

The Cascadians roved as we kept the road to Warner. We ran through the pines and snow into the cutting units of the Hoxie-Griffin timber sale with the Siskiyou Forest Defenders in the south, on the high ponderosa flatlands that connect the Cascades with the Siskiyou, locking down across access roads, to logging trucks entering the mill, to the tops of 10m tripods as snow closed the roads, driving logger and enviro alike from the area. I left the hill

with a half-dozen of the pack and travelled east to help friends defend a roadless area in the Blue Mountains of the Malhuer National Forest with a pick-up truck flipped on its side and a tripod straddling the wreck. There was Honeytree, Yellow Creek, and Olalla Wildcat, Horse-Byars and Red 90. We could hold for a day, fight for weeks delaying for a few hours here and



there, but ultimately most of these places died. Great ghost firs haunt their stumps in the drizzling rain, but the Salvage Rider had enraged and focused the enviro community, and our work brought their destruction to the public like nothing else. More people became involved at every level and their involvement frequently broadened into other theatres, from social justice to urban environmentalism to native land rights.

Two campaigns of Spring '96 stand out: First and Last in the Umpqua, and Enola Hill up on the south slope of Mt. Hood. In the Umpqua River drainage 100 Km south of us, we allied with a more mainstream, though not particularly moderate, group to try to save several large areas of roadless ancient forest. The group was Umpqua Watersheds and the sales had names like Nita, Cowboy, First, and Last. They were more than classic, they held some of the oldest remaining forest in Oregon, owls frolicked in their ancient boughs, rare and endangered fish luxuriated in the clear rivers that ran amongst these mountains; this place made me plump. On the ground, the Cascadians, with our friends from the Siskiyous, locals and rovers from as far away as Alaska, tried by tripod, wrecked car lock-downs, and the now-infamous "wait, I've-lost-my-nose-ring" blockade, to hold back the Forces of Darkness (i.e. Roseburg Forest Products) as Watersheds pulled, bullied, badgered, and otherwise made an apathetic and cynical administration wiggle to escape the heat. After three weeks, 16 acres had been clearcut and three sales were saved (legal arguments rescued some of the others).

Somewhat further in the north, a site sacred to a number of the tribes in Oregon and along the River saw weeks of arrests, lock-downs, pursuits through the encampment, and helped cement relations between the Indians and the First!er packs. Enola Hill was a thinning cut on the south-west of Mt. Hood, on a site held sacred by numerous tribes of the River Peoples and others who would come into the region in its season for the medicinal and sacred plants found there. After getting a small piece of old-growth dropped from the sale, a large regional enviro group stopped fighting to save the sacred site from being logged, but the cast of partisans ran from early Warner Creekers, Greenpeace folks, EF! from Portland, Washington, and elsewhere, elders from the Warm Springs Reservation, to board members of the group that had withdrawn support from the campaign. A rally and ritual "enter-the-closure-and-get-arrested" play by 150 enviros turned into a large scale "cat and mouse" exercise as the procession made an unexpected turn off their march plan and ran into the cutting units. 30 of the protesters who'd made the furthest progress went limp and forced the federales to remove them over harsh terrain on stretchers. This group, which calls itself WALL (Witnesses Against Lawless Logging) has been a venue for cross-pollination between the different watersheds, and between the direct action groups and their more conventional cousins. The Rider did more to validate direct action and civil disobedience as reasonable, respectable and appropriate tactics than anything since the Civil Rights movement. Suits did it, grannies did it.

By Summer, "Warnerization" had become a term of common usage in the Northwest. The Siskiyou partisans threw up a wall of rock, logs, and concrete, with a derelict car over a dragon the Cascadians had placed 9 months before, and a Free State was born at Sucker Creek to defend the forests and streams targeted by the China-Left sale. In the roadless regions of the Cove-Mallard timber sale area, in the wildest areas of the North Rockies, Jack Squat sprang up in the midst of the 1996 EF! Rendezvous, featuring walls of liberated culvert pipe planted at a facinating angle, three tripods, a dragon under the door, and fortresses and battlements that appeared able to withstand the charges of brontosaurii. And for a month or two it lasted.

But in August, the raids came. Camps were run over in the space of a day; the greatest of defensive structures couldn't be held without the personnel. Finally the federales moved on Cascadia Free State. The lower wall was quickly overrun, but four women who've received an embarrassing but deserved amount of attention [sound familiar?!],

locked into the upper baricades and held the road for the whole day, until it was obvious that the Forest Service had built the means to bypass them. Ironically, this came the day before we were scheduled to have a public camp clean-out. The news that the government had made a deal with Thomas Creek Lumber to drop the Warner North sale had been circulating for a week; the activists were only waiting for solid verification before folding up the show. The four women, another activist who had his arm broken during his arrest (case pending) and two journalists were arrested in a blatant face-saving effort by the federales, as the deal saving Warner Creek was verified. But the storm wouldn't clear so fast. Denied access to the arraignment of the Warner women, a couple hundred town folk crowded into the jail house, and in what was somewhat inaccurately described as a "riot", 38 more people were tasered, given pain-holds, and jailed themselves.

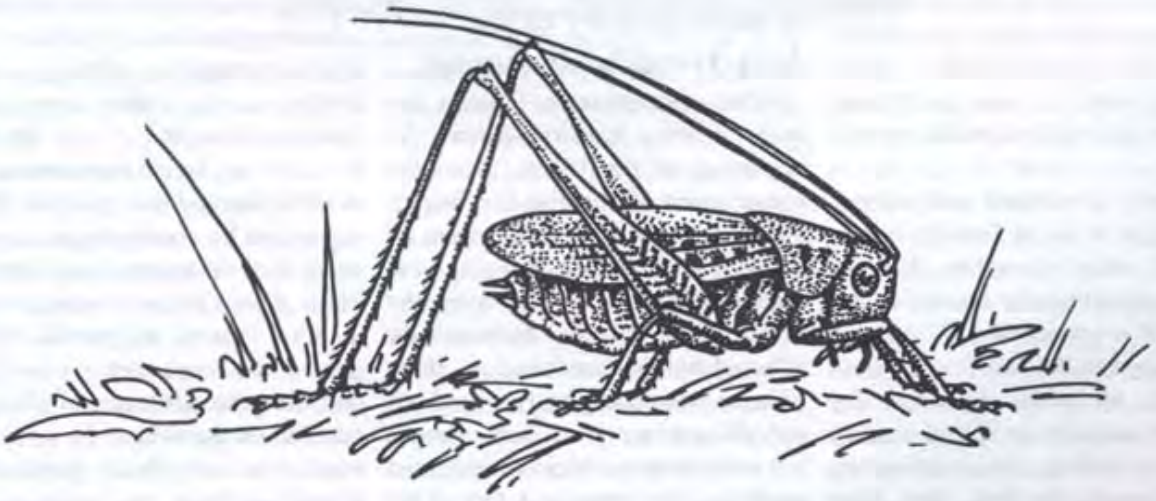


Trials for many of the heroes are still pending as the snows melt off of the slopes above the old encampment site, and if you hike up FS 2408 now, you won't see much sign of the log wall, the bunkers, or where the great Cascadian Dragon stood watch against those who would come against this forest. But I drank with the defenders of the Siskiyou last weekend, and the fight for the North Santiam River has been on for three weeks. About a dozen of the Women's Warrior Society blockaded the road into the Hull-Oakes mill a month ago, and I hear of a massive road takeover in North Cascadia (British Columbia to some) later this summer. Anyone with the experience of the British road wars would find a warm welcome to a new home.

Cascadia rises!

For inquiries, donations and t-shirt orders, contact: Cascadia Forest Defenders, PO Box 11122, Eugene, OR 97440,

—"feel free to stop by for dinner and a blockade".



Wart - biter

Temelin

Anti-Nuclear Action Camp

Temelin Power plant, Czech Republic July 6th—July 14th 1997

Since the catastrophe at Chernobyl in 1986, the Western nuclear industry has had many problems in continuing its work. Due to public opposition and financial problems no more new nuclear power plants (NPP) have been built in Western Europe (with France as a glowing exception) nor have new NPP's been ordered in the United States. Thus the nuclear industry lost its market. Unsurprisingly they started to search for a new market, which they think they have found in eastern Europe.



Fancy some East European radiation and radicalism?—July 6th-14th

Temelin NPP is a prime example of the western nuclear industry's expansion into the East; situated 150 km from Prague, it is an unfinished VVER 1000/320, built and abandoned by the Soviets. Now CEZ (the Czech electricity utility) and Westinghouse (an American multinational) are completing this unneeded NPP. The American government (through its Export-Import Bank, and thus using tax-payers' money) has just decided to grant Westinghouse a loan guarantee, despite high levels of public opposition.

The mix of western and eastern technology in use at Temelin is new and not tested for safety. Besides that the capacity to be created by the new NPP is unneeded. CEZ has run a campaign in the last few years to promote electrical heating. By severely subsidising the electricity prices and selling and installing the heaters nearly for free, they have created an electricity demand even higher than the proposed capacity for Temelin. In the meantime the government has no money left over to make the existing brown coal plants more ecologically sound (i.e. through filter systems), because of costs-overrun at Temelin. Thus the brown coal plants continue to heavily pollute large areas of the Czech Republic and even Germany, affecting peoples' health, life expectation and even birth rates.

A Brief History of the Anti-Temelin Movement.

Public opposition to Temelin has quite a long history. Since the beginning of the 1980s, when the construction of Temelin first began, there have been several waves of opposition. The first protests were organised by locals who were the first people to be dramatically affected by the construction: three villages were completely wiped out and villagers resettled. Some people left immediately, others were forced out later, a few remained. Out of the 60 original inhabitants in one of the villages, only 7 still live there. The Pizinger family exemplify this struggle today. They were bought out by CEZ 13 years ago, and given low prices by the state for their property. Now that their house is destined for demolition this spring, they will be forced from their home with only a fraction of the house's value and will have lost their only trade—farming (they have been "relocated" to an urban setting which doesn't allow farm animals).

Reacting to these injustices, villagers attempted to publicly protest. Unfortunately, the oppressive Communist regime of the '80s didn't allow organised movements and in effect banned their protests. They responded by continuing to demonstrate their disapproval individually. Their most common response was to send letters of protest which gained little sympathy or consideration from the government. The only reaction on the side of the establishment was an official explanation describing how the plant would play an important role in helping the future construction of socialism. Soon, this local opposition was

completely silenced. There was little resistance in the years that followed because villagers felt it was nearly impossible to influence the government's centralized decision making structure.

Fortunately, a big opportunity for campaigners opened up after the political changes in 1989. Supported by Austrians, the region experienced its first public and mass protests. Huge gatherings took place at the Temelin construction site. As a result, a tradition of opposition was created. The biggest protest occurred in 1991—a festival at the main gate of the plant which was attended by nearly ten thousand Czechs and Austrians! This newborn movement achieved some notable victories—in 1990, the regional government voted not to prolong the construction license for the 3rd and 4th reactors. This decision meant that the plant would now be half its original size. But despite this triumph, chances for initiating a complete shut down of the project were vanishing quickly.

Although the numbers involved in the movement were rising, their influence was decreasing due to time pressures. The oppostion experienced its peak in 1990. During this time, putting the new democracy to the test with public protests was a popular activity. As a consequence, many people actively participated in the campaign against Temelin which, combined with temporary hesitation on the part of the state institutions, greatly influenced decision makers. However, numbers began decreasing monthly as people lost interest in participating in large scale demonstrations. As a consequence, decision makers became more self-assured and less fearful of public pressure. CEZ, the Czech electricity utility, ignoring the desires of the people, continued the construction of the plant, pretending its completion was never in question.

It was not long before this second wave of opposition began to withdraw and diminish, discouraged by politicians who still made decisions regardless of public opinion. With no culture of opposition, most people preferred to go back to their private lives rather than continue resisting a government which didn't seem to be listening.

In the middle of 1992, the government made their final decision on Temelin's future. These decisions again challenged opponents of the plant and in response a third wave of opposition was created. This time, its core was formed by a wide coalition of several dozens of environmental organizations. Their aim was simple: to convince the government to reject Temelin. They organised actions, petitions, public debates, open letters and other media events. The newly elected (1992) government, led by recent Prime Minister Klaus, was not interested in public opinion at all. Most requests for debates were simply ignored, petitions were not even formally answered, and open letters were thrown into the dustbins.



By autumn 1992, despite clear opposition and obvious alternative resources, all ministers had agreed that Temelin was necessary and the best solution. Studies had proven that Temelin was not the least-cost solution to the Czech Republic's energy needs, as claimed by the nuclear establishment and ministers of government. Even though these results were published in papers and shown on TV, the ministers were already decided. In a formal decision in March 1993, all 18 voted in favor of Temelin.

The announcement of this decision had a killing effect on the anti-nuclear movement—almost all the groups cooperating in the coalition gave up, thinking that further efforts would be a waste of time and resources. Consequently, they began focusing on other winnable issues. After another battle lost, only a few decided to continue the war against Temelin.

Those few still bravely opposing the plant realized that it depended upon the involvement of the Western players, such as the US Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank and Westinghouse. Both of the project's needs—technical and financial—were being met by the United States: Westinghouse would supply the technological upgrades and the Ex-Im Bank the loan guarantees. Therefore, a holistic strategy was adopted—using internationals to pressure the Western institutions, and a strong local civic movement using direct actions to target the Ministers at home.

One of the campaign highlights was the move to stop the Ex-Im financing for Temelin in 1994. Extensive lobbying at the U.S. Congress, whose members had the power to reject Ex-Im's decision, took place. In February and March 1994, with the help of several U.S. organisations, representatives of both Austrian and Czech move-



ments opposed to Temelin travelled to the U.S. After many exhausting weeks in Washington, and despite the support of fifty Congressional representatives, the Ex-Im headquarters confirmed their decision to provide money for Temelin.

Today, there is a stronger focus on supporting the civic/direct action movement. The direct action movement, which still grows today, represents historically the fourth wave of opposition to Temelin. Our first blockade of the Temelin site took place in May 1993, with about 50 participants blocking one of the gates for a few hours. All were arrested. Nevertheless, it brought wide media attention to the problem of Temelin.

Then, that same summer, a protest camp was organized for the month of July. Both actions—blockades and camps—became the corner stones of the movement. Now, every year, a blockade and protest camp is organized. As the number of participants at the blockades grows (1993—50, 1994—150, 1995—250, 1996—500), and the length of the blockades increases (in 1996, it lasted 72 hours and covered all 11 entrances of the site!) these actions become more and more effective, making the life of nuclear proponents difficult. Furthermore, the yearly protests attract a considerable amount of public attention to the problem.

The blockades have also been supported by many well-known personalities: several singers, writers, and politicians (including Petr Pithart, former Prime Minister and recent Chair of Senate, and Petra Buzkov, the Vice-Chair of the House of Representatives). We believe that the resistance will continue to grow. In fact, we are expecting at least 500 people at the blockade this July 1997. Everyone who wants to help and is willing to respect the non-violence guidelines, is welcome.

International Contacts:

*For Mother Earth Belgium Gewad 15 9000 Gent Belgium tel +32-9-2334924 fax 2337302

*PIANO: Praha International Anti Nuclear Office Chvalova 3 Praha 3 13000 Praha Czech Republic NEW tel +42-2-90031895

*http:/www.ecn.cz/private/piano

*Contact for Britain: c/o Lune EF!, 78a Penny St, Lancaster.

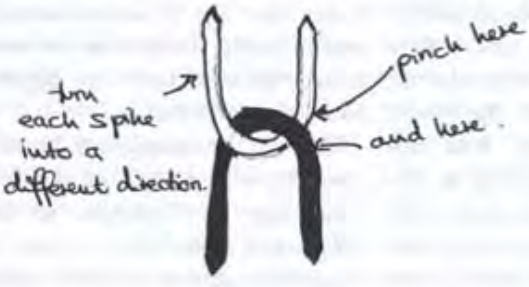
It's the same story in Slovakia.

A similar evil NPP construction is happening in Slovakia, where SIEMENS is constructing the Mochovce NPP (in an earthquake zone!!!) and doing the same experimental mix of eastern and western technology.

The Slovaks are not ready to have international activists on their actions in the second week of july. This is mainly because their media reacts very negatively to foreigners protesting in Slovakia. But they can use your help!! The German government has decided to give a Hermes loan guarantee, and the Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau is a big financer for this dangerous project. This is German tax money!!!

Please boycott Siemens products, like Siemens Nixdorf computers, Bosch tools, Osram lightbulbs, Siemens kitchen equipment etc.. Send lettters of protest to Siemens International: Dr. Karl Hermann Baumann Hd. Guenther Wilhelm Wittelbacherplatz 2 80333 Munchen Germany. For a sample letter contact For Mother Earth Slovakia—Za Matku Zem, P.O.Box 93, Bratislava 814 99, Slovakia. Email: Zamatkuzem@seps.sanet.sk Tel/fax: 42- 7- 713 506

Acme Tyre Pressure Reducer Mark 2



A follow-up to the ATPR in the last DoD. This is cheaper, does not require a workshop but is only effective for smaller vehicles.

You will need–

- Galvanised fencing staples (from Hardware shops)
- Two pairs of fencing pliers or similar.

1) Link staples together as shown.

2) Pinch just above where they meet, so they cannot come apart.

3)Bend 'spikes outwards in different directions, so that whatever way it lands there is always one spike pointing upwards.

Carry and use carefully.

Do not use on roads or where there may be fast moving traffic.



Green Partisans

Crazy happiness-giving ideas in Poland

We would like to start our short report from Poland with a piece of happy news—for a year now an ecological movement has existed in our country, with an ideology which is very close to the activities and philosophy of Earth First! We even identify with Earth First!, we use the same symbols and concepts of activity.

The name of our organisation is: The Green Partisans—Earth First! (in the name we use the title of a punk music group from Poland called "Ewa Braun"). So far the structure—the "network" of GP-EF!—has been spread across such cities as Kalisz, Stupsk, Warsaw, Bielsko-Biala and Lodz.

We participate in many campaigns in Poland for the protection of the earth. For example: "The Wild is Beautiful" (protection of wolves); "The Tatras (Polish mountains) Are Not a Toy in the Hands of Man!—Stop Olympiad 2006!"; "Anti-Shell"; "Anti-Multinational".

In the summer of '96 we also took part in the blockade of the power station in Temelin, in the Czech Republic.

Although GP-EF! is a small structure, the people who are connected with it have been activists for many years, in the Green Federation, the Collective "Social Activity", and The Workshop for All Beings (the Polish name for which is: Pracownia Na Rzecz Wszystkich Jstot -the PNRWJ).

Till now, our role has lain in making "background" for the activities of PNRWJ, which is like an engine for the radical ecological front in Poland. PNRWJ was the first organisation in our country which started to identify its philosophy of activity with EF! The PNRWJ is interested in more than just power for humans, and it is this that enables the Earth not to feel lonely in the never-ending fight with man.

At present, PNRWJ leads the campaigns for the National Park of Bialowieza, in the southeast of Poland, and for the protection of the Tatras (especially the Polish part), which are endangered by the Olympic lobby, business and a plague of tourists. PNRWJ has also gotten involved in the campaign for wolves and other wild beasts ("The Wild is Beautiful"). Its latest project is the "Network of Guards of Environmentally Valuable Places", and PNRWJ is instructing, teaching the people to guard and keep safe some places with which they feel strongly connected. They are to protect their places from an offensive of civilisation. PNRWJ also edit the first Polish magazine referring to bioregionalism, deep and radical ecology, called "The Wild Life" ("Dzikie Zycie").

The most important issue for Polish nature is "The Vistula-Now", led by Club-Gaja. Their aim is to make it impossible to 'civilise' the main and still wild river in Poland. The co-ordinator of that campaign edits the bulletin "Vistula-Fax" (Wista-Fax).

The members of the Green Federation hinder the building of motorways in Poland. Although the people from the G.F. are for youth, vigour, energy and the anti/sub/-culture style of life, they gained legal status: as the 'Ecological Cultural Association Enklawa' in Kalisz. It enables them to fight with government and its crazy "happiness-giving" [stupefying?] ideas.

We should mention the oldest Polish magazine— 'The Green Brigades' ('Zielone Brygady'). It was founded by the people who created the basis of the Polish ecological movement. The Green Brigades are also printed in English, and in this way it's easier to communicate and learn about ecology and so on.

We're reaching the end of this short and imperfect report from Poland. If you are interested in any of our campaigns, write to a co-ordinator of any one. We'd like to suggest (very kindly) that at present the most important is the Tatras, so get in touch with PNRWJ. If we happen to have made any mistakes, please, be willing to forgive us.

Best wishes, green colours, thousands of kisses,

Green Partisans Earth First!

Contacts:

1) Green Partisans EF! (Zieloni Partyzanci Federacja Zielonych "Enklawa"): C/O Igor Strapko, Borkowska 9/1, 62-800 Kalisz, Poland.
2) Pracownia Na Rzecz Wszystkich Jstot: PO Box 40, 43-304 Bielsko-Biala, Poland. Tel/Fax: 033-183153.
3) Klub Gaja: PO BOX 261, 43-301 Bielsko-Biala, Poland.
4) Federacja Zielonych "Zielone Brygady": Stakowska 12/24 (IV p), 31- 014 Krakow, Poland. Tel: 012- 222147.

Ecology in Euskadi

Battles in the Basque Country



10th annual Korrika (run for the basque language) —the masks are Daniel Unziti's face.

Daniel Unziti Condemned to Three Years in Prison

Daniel Unziti, from the village of Itoiz, has been condemned to a three year prison sentence in connection with acts against the construction of the dam near his village.

As you know (see the Earth First Action Update May 1996 and Undercurrents #6), in April '96, activists sabotaged the construction of the Itoiz dam in the Basque Country to brilliant effect.

Using circular saws, they were able to cut the steel cables needed to transport concrete to the dam wall, thereby forcing the authorities to abandon the project, at least for the time being. [And who says direct action doesn't work?!] Eight of the people who participated in the action were imprisoned, but were later released thanks to impressive mobilisations in support of them.

Although Dani didn't take part in the original action, he and another campaigner, Patxi Gorraiz, were tried on the 11th of October. They were arrested after a march against the dam which went to the construction site to give a letter of disagreement to the construction company. After a lorry drove over the demonstrators, the security guards and the police began shooting live ammunition and charging against them. People panicked and some of them started throwing stones in retaliation. No one was arrested at the time, but a few days later both Dani and Patxi were arrested in conection with the demonstration.

The coincidence is that both are members of the only two families who still live in Itoiz, and are known anti-dam activists. Patxi was sentenced to two years and Dani to three. Dani is also liable for military service and has a previous "criminal" record for resisting conscription—therefore he has to remain in prison for longer.

As you may know, the anti-conscription movement ('Insumision') is very strong in the Spanish State, and especially so in the Basque region [for obvious reasons]. Around 500 people are jailed every year for refusing conscription.

In Dani's words: "I am completely innocent. It's not possible for anyone to be in two places at the same time. My only crime is to be 'insumiso' [that is, to refuse the draft] and consequent with my ideas, to be against the militarisation of Itoitz and of the whole world, to be from Itoitz and to defend peacefully the right to live in the house and land of my ancestors."

Since the day of the hearing there have been mobilisations for Dani and the other imprisoned 'insumisos', and against the dam. On the day of the hearing itself two people

went up onto the roof of the court and hung a banner in solidarity with Patxi and Dani. They were evicted with cherry pickers and arrested. After this no demonstration was allowed by the police. For Christmas, a tree house was set up in front of the prison in Pamplona where Dani remains imprisoned. The sentence is three years. He'll be glad to hear of your solidarity:

Daniel Unziti
Iruneako Gartzela
San Roque Kalea z/g
Irunea-Pamplona (State of Spain)

The Campaign Against the HST Continues.

The environmentalists of the Basque Country haven't forgotten the fight against the destructive project of the 'High Speed Train', which will affect both French and Spanish sides of the border. After the summer the campaigners organized a camp protest in Anoeta (Gipuzkoa), and a very successful demonstration of about three thousand people in Donostia (San Sebastian) on the 16th of January (again, check out Undercurrents #6 if you want to see some of the actions against it). Now they are waiting to see how things develop before they take the next step forwards.

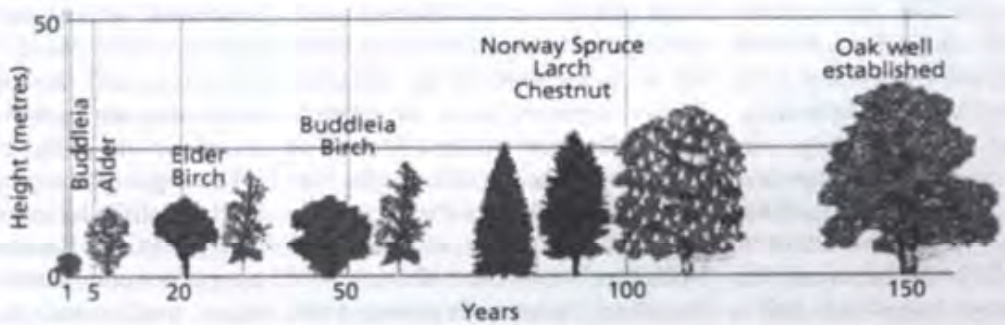
As with previous enviromental struggles, the project threatens to do huge damage to the Basque enviroment, and mainly in areas which, because it's so mountainous, have remained intact up till now. The HST needs a flat and straight surface in order to reach the speeds of 150-250mph that it requires. This means building tunnels, slicing up mountains and filling in the valleys: one tunnel of 5 miles, one of 4 miles, three of more than 2 miles, as well as 55 bridges.



It will create the same effect as the Irunea-Donostia (Pamplona-San Sebastian) motorway: that is, destruction all the way through previously untouched lands. The HST will need a completely new railway network: a total of 310 kilometers of new railways in the Basque Country, without using the pre-existing network. It will need safety lighting all along the railway of around 25,000 volts. This voltage exceeds the electro-magnetic field our health is able to cope with (imagine what it will do to animals, especially nocturnal ones). The HST also produces huge vibrations and noise on its way. In such a wilderness area, its speed will also have a terrible effect on the local fauna.

As with all expansions of development, the HST has a clear link with other forms of enviromental destruction. The HST is very closely linked to nuclear power, because it needs a huge amount of energy to reach that high speed.

But we know who gets the benefit: as in the UK with the motorways, it is the big construction companies. You can imagine the budget for a project like this, which is starting from scratch. The cost was initially put at 3,500 million, but you can be sure that when [if !] it actually comes to be built, it will be three or four times as much.



The Philippines

A Country for Sale



Cordillera Peoples Alliance Chairwoman, Minnie Degawan, addresses a gathering held in the community of Fidelisan, Mountain Province. The banner in the back reads "Tribal War–Stop Genocide". Some community leaders have warned that "although mines are not tribes, the people will declare tribal war against them."

While revisiting the Philippines last year I was travelling and viewing the panoramic scene from a bus on my way from Pagadian City to Ozamis City, in the southern island of Mindanao. I pondered what I had seen and heard over the last two months. The outrageous beauty, magnified now by the quickly declining sun, created myriads of reflections on the waters of the rice fields, leaving the beholder in awe.

Going up the crumbling road carved out through the mountains by PADAP (Philippines Australian Development Assistance Plan) in the early 1980's, the beauty of this country almost lured me into a sense of security and serenity that seemed to belie the alarming stories I'd heard from my friends—stories of the mountains being sold off to British (RTZ), Australian(CRA), American and Canadian companies for mining.

I was forced back to relive the reign of terror of the Marcos years, which regrettably did not end there. We were inspired by the Peoples' Power demonstration in Manila, which ultimately forced Marcos to leave the country. We began our own Peoples' Power Picket to save trees in the parish of San Jose, Midsalip, in the diocese of Pagadian. I remember now that this was during the presidency of Corazon Aquino. We successfully maintained a 5-month round-the-clock picket and blocked the road to stop the illegal logging of trees in the only remaining forest, which is also the watershed for the Pagadian area. The picket was eventually supported by all the surrounding parishes and raised the level of awareness of the environmental issues that are central to the socio-economic life of the area.

The logging company at the time used an armed fanatical paramilitary group, the Kurotong Baleleng, who at gunpoint terrorised the picketeers and routed the picket-line.

destroying all our posters, placards and paraphernalia. It was the eventual death of two Philippine Constabulary men—sent to bolster the local police force and to ensure peace and order at the picket-line—at the hands of the Philippine Army, that forced the suspension of the company's 'Timber Licence Agreement' (TLA).

Luckily for us the local police force and the Provincial Commander of the now defunct Philippine Constabulary supported the action of the people, because they too were concerned by the effects of the illegal logging.

However, the District, Regional and National Offices of the Bureau of Forest Development (BFD) sided with the Logging Company. That all the beautiful Forestry laws were broken by Sunville Timber Products Inc. [the licensees] was completely ignored by the government—and this is no wonder, considering the culture of corruption that existed and continues to exist in the government.

The wealthy company bought a lot of public administration and media support but the battle was won by the persistence of ordinary people despite the intimidation, terror and fear they were subjected to. Warrants of arrest were issued for me and eight other leaders, including the Chief of Police of Midsalip [!], for "ursurpation of public authority". It was another attempt at intimidation but the Court was forced to do justice to the long campaign that was gaining momentum. It was only in December of 1988 that the Timber Licence of the offending company was finally cancelled.

We are now into the final year of the Presidency of Fidel Ramos, Aquino's successor. Cory had to fight for political survival against several attempted military coups. Ramos, a general of the Philippine Constabulary in the Marcos era and Minister for Defence in the Aquino government, has had an easy term of office and has been able to pay a lot of attention to the ills of the Philippine economy.

The generation of electricity (coal and oil fired, multi-purpose hydropower, gas and geothermal), the requirement of industry, is being "fast-tracked" by the government in a craze to fuel NIC (New Industrialised Country) status by the year 2000. "Philippines 2000" is the ill defined Ramos Plan which many feel spells disaster, not only for the people but for the integrity of the very fabric of the tropical environment of soil, trees, air, water.

That the very survival of the Philippines environment itself is at stake is well documented. The danger is desertification; agri-business eats up the best land to provide cash crops for the world market, and puts bananas, pineapples and palm oil on our tables while the Filipino peasant continues to go landless and hungry. Cut flower and asparagus production is the newest addition to the export-imposed, import-dependent economy.

The country is threatened enough by the other demands already being made on its resources; not only by a large and growing population, but by the encroachment of foreign fisheries. This diminishes the food supply of a population which depends primarily on fish for protein, and forces the Filipino fishermen to engage in dynamite fishing, causing irreversible damage to the coral reefs.

Too often we can blame the victim for short sightedness while we ignore the real causes of the degradation of our planet. It is the rules of the international financial structures that compel 'underdeveloped' countries to penalise their poor, in order to repay the unpayable loans that the poor never benefited from in the first place. We should ask "Will there be any future for generations to come if we do not take these institutions to task now?" Political will is what is needed to change the injustice of this system.

It was amusing to read in a Filipino Daily that the IMF (International Monetary Fund) is concerned about the environmental impact of the macro-economic plans of the Ramos government, when it is they who direct operations and lay the ground rules in the first place. Nor was I surprised, as I read on, to find that the IMF would not however be putting any obstacles in the way of these government plans. They play both sides; that of the critics and of the criticised. The World Bank/IMF has also been credited with forcing the Philippine government to open Filipino fishing waters to foreign trawlers in the early 1980s, with the disastrous consequences described above.

I was very perturbed when I was told of the impending invasion of the Philippines by mining companies. I researched what I had been told by the people in Midsalip, and by the Subaan'n Tribal Peoples there, and realised that at least half the total area of the Province of Zamboanga del Sur has been divided into blocks, each containing more than 81,000 hectares.

Each of these blocks is subject to a "Financial Technical Assistance Agreement" (FTAA) with foreign mining companies. The areas covered are mostly the ancestral lands of indigenous tribal peoples, and are the last remaining tropical forests of the country and western Mindanao. In the Philippines the overall FTAA scenario is devastating. Northern Luzon is also covered as are all the other islands of the country.



We expect the Third World to adhere to 'sustainable development' while we send our mining magnates to meet in Singapore, to force Asia to open its gates and liberalise its laws.

The Philippines have just made this scandalous concession, opening the whole country to global rape in 1995. Other countries in Asia, in Africa and South America are expected to do the same. The financial institutions that poured billions into the Marcos coffers as he raped a nation, must at some time take responsibility for that and for the greater crime now of forcing the Ramos government, hungry for money for development, to open the forests and mountains, the rivers and seas, and the indigenous peoples themselves, to wholesale mining operations that scrape the very bowels out of the country.

Let us consider the 1995 Mining Code. It was, to no small extent, initiated from sources external to the Philippines. Because of the country's large debt, and the legitimate [?] desire of the post-Marcos Filipino Administrations to acquire funding to develop their economy, western interests now take unfair advantage, knowing full well the stranglehold they have over the Philippines because of the debt issue.

This leverage was used to ensure that a scandalous mining law was pushed through Congress. Pressure was used not only by the powerful mining groups but even by some of the international financial institutions and development agencies, who are mandated [in theory] only to promote and support sustainable development.

The Mining Code, which became law in March of 1995, gives foreign companies the right to 100% ownership of mines, 100% repatriation of profits and 50 year leases. It calls the actual inhabitants of the land "surface dwellers". Tropical Exploration Philippines Inc. (TEPI), a member of the CRA Group (which recently merged with its parent company, RTZ), has applied for a licence to explore and mine in the very parish where I worked.

The area is mostly the home of the Subaanen Cultural Community, who are alarmed at the prospect of their lands being opened to mining. They are frightened of the prospect of their lands and forest being further destroyed by the incursion of a mining company and are united in defence of their lands.

That it was described in Messianic terms of "the mountains being laid low" is no joke for the people but a signal of disaster to come. As I skimmed the daily newspapers I could not help noticing the array of environmental disasters in Luzon, Negros and Mindanao already causing havoc, poisoning rivers, seas and people with mercury and cyanide.

The disaster at the Marinduque mine of the Canadian Placer Dome company in March 1996 was the worst and most ominous of the last couple of years: mine tailings actually burst through the holding area and left the local river and countryside heavily polluted.

That the same scenario, of threats and intimidation and the use of paramilitaries, will repeat itself, as TEPI press against local resistance to mine gold, is not beyond the bounds of possibilty in the Philippines.

We need only look at the past record of multinational agri-business and other corporate incursions into the Philippines. British Palm Oil is such a case. Backed by money to buy off officials, and by government forces, paramilitary fanatics and lawyers, they threaten, kill and sow fear among the people, and prevail in their corporate target to maximise profits and keep their western shareholders happy. In the process they divest local inhabitants of their lands and livelihood, thereby violating the human rights of the whole citizenry of an area.

At least 30% of the entire land mass of the Philippines is now under these FTAAs. The definition of the inhabitants as mere "surface dwellers" enables the government to claim total ownership of all the minerals within the territory of the Philippines, not only on public but also on private lands. And only the big foreign mining companies have the vast capital needed to undertake the extraction of these minerals, ostensibly 'on behalf of' the government.

The people of Midsalip have been told to expect only that the environmental "impact [when mining begins] *can* be minimised, if not avoided..." TEPI also claim that "Prior to the conduct of any exploration activity, [we identify] sensitive areas which *should* be protected and also adopt appropriate procedures to minimise environmental disturbance and facilitate rehabilitation".

These quotes are taken from the letter by Henry P. Aqupitan, TEPI's Exploration Manager, asking for permission from the Director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau "to conduct exploration and mining operations in the Municipality of Midsalip, Province of Zamboanga del Sur including the SCC (Subaanen Cultural Community) areas". They are disturbing and misleading.

I have italicised the words 'can' and 'should' from Aqupitan's letter, words which when taken literally or legally belie any commitment to environmental protection in an area which wholly needs protection from



The ore feels homesick.
It wants to abandon the minting houses and the wheels that offer such a meagre life.
And out of the factories and payroll boxes
it wants to go back into the veins of the thrown open mountain, which will close again behind it.
-Rilke

any further mechanical intrusion. The area still needs time to recover from the impact of the illegal logging which was condoned by the government for so long. A healthy, protected forest is the best resource for the health and economic life of what is still a largely rural, agricultural based community.

The claim to ownership by the State of all minerals is based on the 1987 Constitution (Article XII Section 2). This is the subject of the 1995 Mining Code. However, the same article also promises ancestral land to the Indigenous Cultural Communities (Article XII Section 5).

State policy as laid down by the Constitution makes it incumbent upon the government to "protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature", (Article 2 Section 16). So, why has a law not been enacted to enforce the claims of the tribal Communities to their ancestral claims? Why are the remaining forests and environment, so essential to the Philippine ecology, not aggressively protected in the same way as the mining law was rushed through?

In its quest for 'NIChood' (Newly Industralised Country status), the Ramos Administration is depleting the resources and minerals that could be used to benefit the Filipino people and their social, cultural and economic life. [There are many small-scale indigenous miners who will probably be squeezed out by the Mining Code.]

By acceding to international pressure to open the country to opencast mining, the Philippine environment, already severely degraded, has been placed in a terribly vulnerable position.

But we do live in hope, and take on the responsibility to change policies and make transparent to the world what is going on. The Filipino Bishops wrote a Pastoral letter in 1988, *What Has Happened to Our Beautiful Land?*, and reflected on the ecological destruction of the country. They mentioned the efforts of Midsalip as a sign of hope then because of the struggle against illegal logging.

Since then thousands, indeed millions of Filipinos have woken up to a realisation of the interconnectedness of the fragile tropical

environment. They realise that a certain percentage of forest cover is essential for maintaining healthy water tables and rivers. They have learned—through bitter experience—that there is a connection between the degradation of their natural environment and the increasing number of droughts and floods. They realise that when there is balance there is fresh cool air and rain comes at the right season, there is little soil erosion, no drought or floods or landslides or siltation.

From mountain to sea there is harmony as the birds fly freely and the fresh clear mountain waters meet the sea, kissing and mingling with the salt water, keeping the mangrove trees alive and well to provide food for fish. The farmer and fisherman is happy. However, this now is history and the dream of a new story and new relationship with the earth awaits.

Mindanao was still forested in the 1930's, when people from the northern islands, because of the continual refusal of the government to have a genuine land reform programme, were promised settlers' land on the southern island of Mindanao—the Land of Promise—Yuta nga Saad.

So there are many people alive today who have actually seen with their own eyes the result of deforestation and its impact from mountain to sea. Midsalip used to have abundant fish in her rivers and the climate was less hot and humid. Today soil erosion is rife and the rivers only appear in the rainy season, while the droughts get longer and longer and the hot season lasts longer.

A new way of living harmoniously can be learned by listening to the indigenous people and absorbing their understanding of the earth. We must learn again that it is planet Earth that is God's cathedral. The chirping birds and flowing streams praise their Creator. [1] The smallest insect and plant in all their diversity tell us a story of dependence and interconnection. The various colours of people, and diverse ways of speaking and knowing and believing point to a beyond that is Diverse and Divine.

We need to tread gently on the earth, to take off our shoes and realise again that the ground on which we stand is holy. That ground may be an insect or a culture or a language, a person, a people, a sea, a tree, a mountain, they are all holy. We must bring back the sacred into our vision of the soil, the air, everything. The only one who is a foreigner on earth is the person or group who does not recognise that we are dependent on the earth and its interconnectedness.

Some hope remains because the Philippine Government froze all but two of the 70 mining applications for FTAAs last year, because of the outcry from opponents of the Mining Code. However, the law has not been abolished. Some cosmetic surgery or window dressing has been done, by giving more attention to the people and the environment affected in the "Implementing Rules and Regulations" (IRR). The changes are not nearly enough. Now the government is set to give out eight licences in February of 1997. The people still demand that the Mining Code itself must go. Then, the rights of the indigenous peoples and the environment must be safeguarded in law.

Existing forest cover (12%) is less than is recognised and recommended for the sustainability and healthy balance of a tropical environment. That the FTAAs between the Government and Mining Companies incorporate the remaining forest area of Western Mindanao, the Cordilleras and Indigenous Lands is alarming to say the least, and warrants the strongest protest of individuals and organisations to both the Philippine Government, the British and Australian Governments, and the Mining magnates involved.

[1] Some readers may such sentiments hard to accept, but the writer is a Catholic priest, and chooses to express his love for the natural world in these terms. Does that lessen his commitment? I don't think so—Catholics have been at the forefront of the (often extremely dangerous) battle against environmental destruction in the Phillipines.

For further information, contact:

1) Cordillera Links - C/O 111 Faringdon Rd, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Oxfordshire SN7 8LD. Tel/Fax: 01367- 718889. (Produce the excellent newsletter 'Tong-Tongan'.)
2) Minewatch - Methodist Clubland, 54 Camberwell Rd, London SE5 0EN. Tel: 0171-277-4852. E-mail: <minewatch@gn.apc.org>
3) PARTiZANS [People Against RTZ and its Subsidiaries]: 218 Liverpool Rd, London, N1 1LE. Tel: 0171-609-1852.

"We are going to impose our agenda on the coverage by dealing with issues and subjects that we choose."
-Richard M. Cohen, Senior Producer of CBS political news

"Our job is to give people not what they want, but what we decide they ought to have."
-Richard Salant, former President of CBS News



What's on in Germany

From Autonomen to Zeitgeist

So you know Germany is full of old fascists getting drunk at football games, and that the Chancellor's name is Kohl, and that he is the large fat guy whose favourite dish is sow's stomach. But maybe you aren't privileged with any insights into the radical ecology movement in the land of the huge Black Forest, the hilly countryside along the Rhine river and of the "progressing" industry.

"Gorleben" (in early March 1997) was a huge thing that you may have seen on TV—10,000 anti-nuclear protestors up against 30,000 riot police. If you take these 10,000 protestors and deduct about 9,500, you're left with a handful of energetic activists that are involved with radical ecology.

We, two German vistors to Britain, will try to sum up aspects of doings and activist life in Germany *from our perspective* which means, due to the disappointing lack of effective networking in our as yet small movement, that we only have faint ideas of what's happening in other parts of the country/in some local groups we've possibly never heard of. This is just a personal account of our experiences.

The idea of radical ecology is not unknown—hey, and there's already been a green and black flag shown on TV (well, once).

The movement has just started to become an independent one, only in the process of developing a distinctive profile. It is sort of emerging from other movements concerning partial oppressions/single issues (animal rights, anti-nuclear, anti-fascist, environmental), initiated by activists who wished to combine their revolutionary/anarchist perspective with radical ecology/green anarchism/earth liberation ideas.

Some—mainly young activists—went on to form Earth First! groups, most of them in 1994, in many cases inspired by EF! in Britain (so you can be proud of that!). There were many attempts to build up a network and get their explanation of who they are, why they are active and from which "philosophical" background together. The latter was very well thought out, but unfortunately failed to appeal to a wider audience, due to individuals in EF! who put others off with arrogant and cliquey/exclusive airs and EF!-connections with Frontline (the german "revised" adaption of USA Hardline [dodgy, right-leaning punky vegans]), EF! did not appeal to many activists with radical environmental ideas. These problems led to the break-up of the EF! network at the end of 1996/beginning of 1997. But its (very good) main publication, "Die Eule" ("The Owl") still exists and promises to keep on spreading radical ecological thoughts.

Action continues nevertheless, there is just no "national coordination" in most cases. Local groups tackle local issues with direct action—for example with blockades of streets, sit-ins on fields where genetically manipulated vegetables are tested (or attacks on them), attacks on diggers, construction sites, companies etc., bicycle demonstrations and the like. Protest camps on the other hand attract more activists from around the country: there are for example "hut villages" against motorway construction—one camp against the A33 in Dissen that had existed for five years has recently been evicted again and has moved on to a new site. You may have read in the last Do or Die of the "Anatopia" village (which existed for 4 years up to its eviction in 1995) against a planned Mercedes test track right through the moor. This test track is now being built in a different part of Germany. Also, the first tree protest camps in Thueringen and Freiburg have emerged (see other articles!).

To mention the situation we have with cops: camps are not flocked with security guards as in Britain but are observed and evicted by the police. Actions and demonstrations are disrupted by special units—either the "Bundesgrenzschutz" (police with military training) or the anti-terror squads ("SEK") who are dressed up as robocops. They are usually so thoroughly protected (even their ankles are out of reach) and armed as well, which means battles with them are more or less distance fights because otherwise people would feel too powerless. As to repression and state spying, we're not sure how they really are reacting, as you cannot tell exactly as the movement does not have very much experience.

Radical ecology already has made its way into "left circles" but not quite as the activists would have wished it to. Many have somehow got the impression it has something to do with fascism. This critique has come from the kneejerk undifferentiating left who often follow the



equation: if fascists have had anything to do with it, it cannot be a left-wing issue. Narrow-minded leftists squirm when they hear of biocentric apporaches or of real concern with nature, as they fear what they think is an inevitable degradation of humans/social issues as a result. An ex-Green Party member, Jutta Dittfurth, who is now involved with a left-wing environmental group, has evolved into an expert in slagging off alleged ecofascist doings. In her new book "Entspannt in die Barbarei" ("Relaxed into barbarism") she speaks of fascist biocentrism, fanatic vegans and the construed connections of radical ecologists to fascists.

In Gorleben, when she came to congratulate four activists who had stopped the Castor by climbing up trees and put up a walkway over the road, the reaction of the crowd was to ironically yell: "Hey, somebody get those ecofascists out of the trees!" Poor Jutta was received with boos and hisses and she lost her composure and stuck her middle finger up to everyone. Geniune support of the ideas and actions usually comes more from the anarchist "Autonomen" scene.

Well, there isn't that much more we could tell you about (except maybe that 1997 has seen the first edition of a new green anarchist calender), but we hope there soon will be.

If you are planning to visit Germany, you may want to get in touch with some activists there or have a look at "Die Eule", so here is one address we can offer: "Naturfreundejugend", c/o Infoladen, Brunnenstrasse 41, 42105 Wuppertal.



Thüringen—

Thoughts and impressions about an anti-road tree camp.

After you got a short survey about what's happening in good old Germany at the moment, you're now able to read the lines I wrote in the dark and damp cellar of the DO or DIE Headquarters; not allowed to leave until the article was ready. I put all my lousy English together and turned back time to the beginning of autumn last year.

In September of 1996 a handful of powerful activists started to initiate an as yet unknown kind of resistance, the squatting of trees to save them from the stupidity of politics personified in chainsaws. The trees of the "Bettelmanns Holz" forest are a part of the 'Thüringer Wald', one of the biggest still existing forests in Germany, and were expected to give way for the most expensive and destructive motorway in our history. The motorway from Erfurt to Coburg with 160 bridges and tunnels, 8,000,000 m3 of removed ground and thousands of killed trees should cost about 16,000,000,000 DM minimum. In the time when work was supposed to begin the first platforms were set up and people not only started a new form of resistance but also chose to live a real free life close to nature.

Unfortunately this life without electricity and other "benefits" of modern society lasted only three days. Then Hans-Peter, our slightly overworked local chief of police, ordered the first of four evictions because we didn't ask him before building the platforms!!! Despite the fact that the eviction-cops were from the SEK (an anti-terror-unit) they only managed to get down 3 of the 6 people up in the trees. Unfortunately there wasn't enough food and bedding around so the rest went down in the night. The cops learnt from this and during the reoccupation two weeks later the bastards only threw away all the food and blankets and waited for the cold night. One of us was prepared for this in the top of the 30 m high beeches, survived the night and was then joined by another one who managed to come through the cops who were observing on the ground. But also these two activists were evicted again after a short time.

The cops seemed to be very afraid of new occupations and therefore watched the forest with more than 70 cops day and night. But this still couldn't keep us from climbing the trees again on the day that the result

OTHER ISLANDS

of a court case about the ownership of the "Bettelmanns Holz" was expected. It was important not only for the life of the trees but also for us, that the court case against the building of the motorway by B.U.N.D., (a German group similar to Greenpeace), over who owned the land, would be successful; because then the trees would live and all former and probably forthcoming ocupations would have been legal. After it was sure that the trial was postponed the three of us left the trees because we did not have enough stuff for a longer occupation.

One week later the whole thing came to an end. Again four of us managed to climb the trees in the early morning of the 27th of November, despite there now being 100 cops with dogs and big floodlights. As expected the result of the the trial about the ownership of the "Bettelmanns Holz" was lost and a few minutes later the chainsaws started their work. Outnumbered by the Police we weren't able to do much. A number of women tried to break through the police line but were immediately stopped by the state's marionettes.

Only one managed to reach a digger and locked herself on for five minutes before she was taken away as well. The people in the trees were a bit desperate about the fucking situation going on on the ground. All the trees around the four squatted ones were cut and so two of us went down (with one of them managing to escape without giving his ID for criminalization). The two other stayed two days longer but under the cold blanket of 20cm of new snow and the impression of the horrible battlefield around them, they also came down and the fifth ocupoation ended.

During that period many other things happened. We were supported by most of the local residents in a really unexpectedly hospitable way. Along with warm clothes for the upcoming winter they even cooked vegan meals after they heard that a lot of us were vegan.

A blockade of the building site that lasted seven hours on Oct. 21th was added to the various forms of protest. On November the 17th a forbidden demonstration under the beeches took place because a local priest declared it as a mass [!] and so the 100 cops with their dogs weren't able to interfere. Only when people tried to climb the trees again did the police come in, and brutally cleared the ceremony where they also broke the arm of a participant. Most of the media were very sympathetic to our ideas and so one of the nice headlines the next day was the following: "Movie-like punch-up at mass". Also the local people organized nice agit-prop actions like pretending to cut the Christmas tree in the local market place. The distributed leaflet said that everything these damn ecologists say is rubbish, that the air cleans itself and that these stupid trees only stop progress. That's why the tree in the market place should be cut down to ensure that the traffic can flow freely. The funny thing about that was that the hardcore pro-road dummies didn't understand these satires at all and tried to threaten us (!!!) with calling the police.

Here the first chapter of the battle for a better future in the forests of Thüringen and life in general comes to its end. I think I have to add that unfortunately the whole security on the site is done by the police, which means these costs didn't appear in the working bills, but the 10,000 objections against the motorway shows a rising consciousness of the people. And last but not least the monkeywrenching of several diggers in January, which caused a total damage of £180,000, are a sign of a growing resistance which drives the economic and political price to the point where it's impossible to build any more roads and where we're able to rule our own lives!!!

The fight continues...

If you want to have further information on us or to join the new camp in spring of 1997 just contact us . Tel: 0171-8234846.



Freiburg Tree Eviction



This interview was snatched during Gorleben with a German activist.

"Traffic through Freiburg to Switzerland was getting heavier. The plan was to put a four lane motorway going through Freiburg to the Eastern direction, just one part of Germany's road plan. The fights for and against are about twenty years old. The people living in the main street were told by politicians the only solution to pollution and dangerous traffic is to have a four lane motorway somewhere else, so they say "Okay!"

Well, I live on that road and I don't want it anywhere. I would rather move, but nature can't move. I was born in this region, in the valley where they want this new road, and I don't want to give up my home, my nature. That is why I am fighting for it.

The construction was planned to start three years ago but nothing happened. But then in October '96 they wanted to start cutting trees. We found out about this. It consists mainly of oak trees of some 200 years old. There were many actions before, like human chains of about five thousand people for the day, surrounding the park.

At 4 am of an October morning, one week before work was to start, 50 of us met in a big house with a bus full of equipment. At 5 am we arrived at the park and by 6 am, we had everything we wanted in the trees. On one platform, we had a computer with internet and fax powered by solar, another platform was for the media; we would lower it down and hoist them up with it. Rampenplan gave us a kitchen for a ground support camp. All the platforms were 6 by 8 foot with tarps fixed like a tent and swinging from branches. Between four trees we fixed a net; the net was from Claremont Road.

We knew about our eviction from three different sources, having the exact date and time. On a page we had on the Internet we had a message from a woman (we think it was the mother of a policeman) - she told us her son was going to be in Freiburg on Tuesday morning to evict us. Also, a woman from the Red Cross told us they were booked for food in the park Tuesday lunchtime. And a bus driver for the police said they will come at 4 am.

We had lots of local support, but they were not into conflict. Some even said if we resisted or fought back, they would help the police evict us!

On Monday, we cleared the ground camp and set off the phone tree for the following morning. Up to twenty of us stayed awake in the trees all night.

At 4 am they came. 400 police surrounded the site while they used cherrypickers with police climbers to evict us. 600 local supporters came to watch from the other side of the line. It took one day - we did not resist.

Many good things came out of it - we stayed as a group and every Tuesday for the next year, we had a thousand people on a Critical Mass through the streets of Freiburg. All kinds of people, young, old, anarchists and doctors all protesting against pollution, cars, and traffic. And every Tuesday we would stop at the park and have a picnic.



Go Gorleben!

Word up from the anti-nuke Massive

Nine percent of the radioactive cargo doing its chicken run to the disposal plant in Gorleben comes from Sellafield in Cumbria. For this reason, six eco-louts from Brighton decided to represent the nuclear waste from our own power stations.

Gorleben is a small town about 50 miles southeast of Hamburg. It had been a relatively peaceful and politically inactive place until recent years. Over 20 years ago plans were released for a nuclear waste disposal plant on the outskirts of the town. The plant was to be used as a giant European dumping ground. As plans became public knowledge, local residents began a campaign against the plan and swiftly gained support from Germany's enormous environmental movement. The resistance grew steadily until the point where the plant was opened, around three years ago. Local peace and anti-nuclear campaigners initiated a campaign of civil disobedience and direct action which involved people from all around Germany and much of Europe.

Protests occured against each transport of waste to Gorleben. This year, for the third convoy, between fifteen and twenty thousand people gathered to ensure that if the German state were to succeed in using the rural town as a radioactive dumping ground, then it would cost them as much as possible. The intention was to make the cost of policing the event so high as to render future transportations unprofitable.

The waste was first transported across Germany by rail to a town near Gorleben called Dannenberg. Here it was transfered on to trucks and driven the last 15 km down country roads through small villages and woodland. In the few days before the convoy arrived in Dannenberg, 30,000 police had been mobilised, the biggest mobilisation of police in post—war Europe. The police had also recruited several armoured personnel carriers, numerous water cannons and up to fifty helicopters. However, unfortunately for them, they were up against opposition from all sections of the community. Children and teachers occupied school halls to prevent them being used as accomodation for the drafted in police, the fire service refused to provide water for the water cannons that were to be used on protestors, and activists felled train power cables, removed sections of railway track and even cemented themselves to the railway. Once these obstacles had been overcome and the transport had reached Dannenberg station, the biggest obstacle of all still remained for the convoy: the road between Dannenberg and Gorleben was fully blockaded.



Road blocked by sleepers from...



...the sabotaged railway line

The lengthy process of moving the dangerous waste from rail to road meant that there was a day spare to allow people to relax after the previous days' actions, and for more activists to arrive from around the country and from much of Northern Europe. There were two possible routes that the convoy could take. Defences had, unfortunately, been concentrated so heavily on one route that the other had seemingly been forgotten about.

The main gates of Dannenberg station were sealed by the many thousands of protestors who had blockaded it with an enormous sit down protest. Whichever route was selected for the convoy this would need to be cleared and would take some time. After this, however, the cargo would still have to face an array of burning barricades, blockades of about 70 intertwined tractors, tunnels under the road, prefelled trees across roads, and "liberated" girders from railway track sunk into the road in the shape of a giant "X". This was both a symbol of defiance from the people and also the campaign logo. The route was covered with people from all around Europe, from peace, anti-nuclear and environmental backgrounds, all clearly holding different political views.

At around 5:30 in the morning, police began moving people out of



the path of the transport route, armed with water cannons, and accompanied by ex-East German border guards, who had been drafted in especially for the occasion. The peace protestors, proving difficult to move, became subject to constant spraying by high-powered water cannons and to baton charges as the police worked their way through the blockade.

The water cannons were being used in a desperate attempt to speed up the process of clearing the road as much as possible. The ingenuity of the protestors, however, thwarted their efforts, as they covered themselves with huge tarpaulin sheeting to prevent themselves being soaked by the cannons on the freezing March morning. It was only direct hits from the water cannons which posed a threat at this point.

Other actions and blockades were happening at each of the seven camps, with individual tactics set up along the route. The countryside around Dannenberg became an autonomous zone, a virtual no-go area for the police, who were nowhere to be seen apart from those lining the route—and even they only moved around in large numbers (for their own protection). The first camp was the showplace for the mass blockade of peace campaigners holding strict pacifist policies; this camp was the largest, and not unlike Glastonbury festival. The next camps were Gusborn and Quickborn, where you would find the Autonomes (German anar-

chists), burning barricades of tyres and hay. The Autonomes mask up, which is illegal in Germany, and charge in lines with red, black or green flags chanting "Kronstad, Kronstad, Oi, Oi, Oi!". These camps were not unlike Castle Morton. Other camps further down the route included the biker's field, the FrauenLesben (anarchafeminists') camp, and a family camp with tipis. Every camp had an efficient internal communication network, an office, tool lock-ups, and a donation-based kitchen (much of the equipment donated by the glorious Rampenplan).

Our lift took us to the camp of hundreds of German bikers after we had left the blockade. Meanwhile, a group of climbers from the Thuringen anti-road site in Germany had lowered themselves from the trees in climbing harnesses to prevent the convoy passing, with one woman alighting onto the roof of a truck when the police ignored dangerous exposure levels and let the Castors pass under the climbers. And further up the route, two families announced—just as the convoy was nearly on their doorstep—that they had dug a secret tunnel system from their garden and under the road.

We received word over the radio that Castor was approaching. About 300 of us, peace campaigners, bikers and a few Autonomes (who had just finished rioting on the other side of the forest) crossed the battlefield. We were only able to get within 50 metres of the road, as we were outnumbered by riot cops, mounted police and St. Bernards police dogs (?!) keeping us in line. Groups split into numbers of about 50, mainly sitting in wait and complying with the new legislation—brought in specially for the Castor transport— which forbids processions of groups within 50 metres of this road. Others, more adventurous, edged their way slowly closer. Our small affinity group got right up to the police line on the road; just in time to see the procession of six cargo lorries—flanked by at least a mile of anti-riot vehicles, police vans and water canonns, and overlooked by about 20 helicopters—emerge out of the forest. My English companion and I got ready to charge. When we could see the whites of the lorry driver's eyes, we leapt at the police line, only to be nudged back to see everyone else behind us waving fists and taking pictures. It was then we remembered we were on a peace action.

Feeling the extremities of disempowerment we stormed off along the field. The police, eager to disperse us, tried to funnel us back. A line of masked up activists retaliated by throwing stones, the riot cops formed ranks and charged. The activists pulled back, formed a line and advanced with an artillery of rocks. Large numbers of the police under attack broke ranks and hand to hand combat followed.

A group of seven riot cops, having felled a masked anarchist, proceeded to punch and kick his head, groin and stomach repeatedly. My attempt to come to his aid was greeted by a full punch to the face. Police tactics on this day seemed to be focused more on clearing the way using any force they considered necessary than on arrest.

Meanwhile, our side had retreated to the FrauenLesben Camp, where rail sleepers and hay carts acted as barricades. The police vehicles pulled out under a hail of bottles, one platoon of about 30 cops became isolated and surrounded by activists chanting and rock-throwing, until the peace campaigners pleaded with us to let them go. In the end, they were air-lifted out to safety, and the deadly cargo reached its final resting place two miles into the heart of an ancient pine forest. We picked puffball mushrooms and went off on our tour of Belgian squats.

On reflection, we realised there was no love lost between anarchist Autonomes and long-term peace campaigners. A lot of tolerance was exercised and (very efficient) pre-organisation to include a spectrum of radicalism in that week. But they seem to have just as many internal squabblings as we do, though I don't think they would stoop to public slagoffs as our more liberal organisations have done in the past. They perhaps realised that having a no-compromise fraction in their ranks ups the ante in their opposition, and helps in costing the authorities a cool £52 million to execute the shipment.

Though Gorleben reached a critical mass, it was still a single issue symbolic gesture. 2000 people could stop the cargo, hold it to ransom (four hours contact is dangerous levels of radiation), and make demands. But with an overruling of non-violent reformists who do the job of the state, we didn't stand a chance!



Groen Front!

Earth First! in Holland

Groen Front is the Dutch Earth First! We started with our first action somewere in May of last year (1996), at Schiphol airport, against a TV-program for flying holidays. On a critical moment we walked with banners onto the set (it was an almost live program). After a few times one of us got arrested. Eventually they managed to save their program (too bad).

In June '96 we did an action against building a road/bridge in Amsterdam. We climbed with 3 people on a crane that they needed for the work. 6 other activists blocked the crane by the feet. On this part of the workplace they were not able to work for the whole day (successful for us!). We did get a lot of press, because the police came with so many people to take us away (40 policeman/women on 9 activists!).

In Sept '96 we did another action against the bridge in Amsterdam. We did the same as last time, but now they didn't take us away. Later in that month we came back again and planted litle trees on the building site. On April 15th, 1997, we occupied the building site of an aquaduct for the A4, near Rotterdam. By arriving very early we managed to occupy the main gate and three building cranes without any problem. We were with only 18 people. The building of the A4 goes step by step. Every step gives an argument to do the next one. I'm sure you will recognize this. In this case, a viaduct has been standing alone in the meadows for years. On the day of the action the Parliament was supposed to make a decision about the next part of this road. Of course they postponed it.

Anyway, I was pretty surprised that we did not encounter any violence. We saw a policeman in a civil car when we left from the secret meeting place, but there was no police on site. The workers were friendly, even thanked us for a free day. One even explained where the pumps were that keep the site dry. And a lot of press showed up. Eventually we left at 16.00, knowing we that we had cost them at least 50.000 guilders, but maybe even 300.000 dutch guilders, and with big plans for follow-up actions.

Nijmegen: 'Can we take your cops ?'

On May 26th there was another very fluffy action in Nijmegen. There they are building a parking garage on a historic (Roman) and green site, that is needed because they want to forbid bicycles in the city centre. A very bad idea of course ! We arrived real early, at 6.00 am. The police were waiting at our meeting point, and followed us to the site. But the occupation went without any problems by the police. Some British Earth First! people joined us, making a total of 40 people.

Soon the site turned into a playground for activists; we built a weird construction from scaffolding material ('construction-tower building pipes'), a crane was decorated, some optimists put some tents up, a woodhenge was made, and people were digging holes and traps in the approach slope for the sand lorries. This time we did not get that many press, only from the region.

Both times we were allowed to stay for a day, to the surprise of the English activists ('Can we take some of your coppers with us ?').

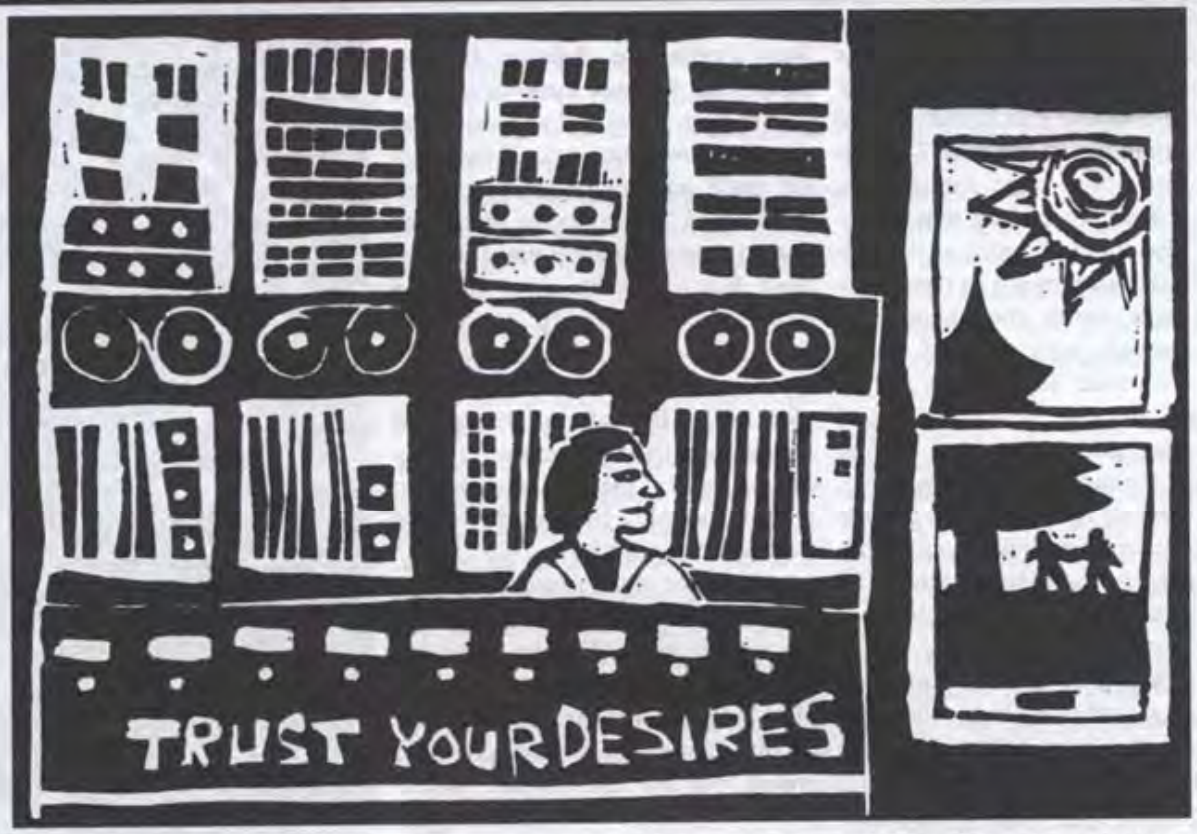
Now we are very busy giving info-shops in different cities in Holland, in the hope that other activists are going to use this name, with the principles. Besides that we are planning new actions. We like to work on big protests against some infrastructure in Holland. Like a bigger Schiphol, and local airports, actions against the Dutch TGV and a very stupid treintraject [train track?] that they are planning through some nature-area's just for the industry. You'll hear more from Groen Front !!

c/o Friends of the GF!, Postbus 85069, 3508 AB Utrecht, the Netherlands



RTS Amsterdam

Revolutionary tourism: a good excuse to get stoned



Excitement was mounting on both sides of the Channel last February,as Amsterdam hosted its very first Street Party!

Around 30 British activists took a busmans holiday to the land of canals and bicycles to see how our Dutch cousins deal with a "public order situation". We arrived by coach the day before, suffering a mild dose of culture shock as we were led from the art-deco station, through meandering cobbled streets with canals and Bauhaus bridges, to a secret location that was to house us for the event.

The squat (an old brewery warehouse sat on the oldest canal in Amsterdam), was home to a group of Dutch anarchists with a sorted itinerary and enough floor space to sleep an army!

The day drifted into evening as we spent time acclimatising in coffee bars, toking freely, meeting old and new friends (some of whom had come to actions in England), and speculating on the following day's events.

Our only instructions were to meet at the main station at midday. About 1,000 protesters buzzed around the station; ranging from students to anarcho punks, and with many people from France, Belgium, and Germany present. The police, looking more like 70's bikers, seemed as laid-back as the crowd. We were unobtrusively split into two groups and rumours spread quickly that our affinity group should head to the underground terminal leading south. Marshals hidden in the crowd blew whistles signalling our destination. 200 of us raced to the street with orders to hang a left; as we turned the corner we could see a group of about 500 protesters being driven back by only a handful of police. Seized by the moment, we ran with drums beating to join our comrades, and the party began.

A single sound system on a customised bicycle trolly chugged out repetitive beats on a now deserted highway about two miles south of the main city. Two portacabins acted as stages as people pretty much made their own entertain-

ment, and we soon found out about all the things that didn't make it. The main sound system,tripods,banners and food, all confiscated by police who didn't want to play!

Also there was mounting tension about a missing 200 odd people who were acting as the decoy posse, and who, rumour had it, were sealed off in another part of town. The celebrations ticked over, though you were left with a feeling that something else should happen as we didn't feel that occupying an out of city street was worth the excitement. Sure enough, with roars of cheering, the once lost decoy posse charged through police lines and gave the party crowd a strong enough feeling to go on the move. With a bit of to-ing and fro-ing the merry troupe of now about 1000, led by the sound system, danced its way 2 miles to a busy roundabout on the city border where the police were waiting in greater numbers. Tension mounted as, being closer to the city, we now posed a greater threat.

The following events happened pretty much spontaneously and were the inspiration for others to follow suit. A critical mass of about 30 bicycles processed round and round, sealing off traffic from all exits. The police, now geared up, sealed off some of the main road exits and tried to shepherd us down slip roads. The crowd, most of whom I would say were inexperienced in street tactics, soon found it made sense to carry on moving. We had now reached the typical situation—raised often at street parties—of rising conflict or party. A police cordon tempted a group of 50 or so to charge its lines; on doing so the mere finger reaction of the riot cop's hand on its truncheon was enough to send the crowd scurrying in retreat. A brief exhilaration on our behalf and it was time to go down the road that we chose ourselves. We were now heading down the busy shopping street of Amsterdam with its twee little houses; it felt more like a carnival as we more or less ignored the State's orders to disperse. By this time I had become curious about a unit of police that had slipped intentionally down the back of the market place, parallel to the main street. I followed suit, only to see them darting into the market place to grab their lunch, which gave me the wonderful opportunity to sample the almost gypsy-like stalls (excuse my romanticism but I was a tourist after all!). By late afternoon we ended up in the town centre in a big open square at the foot of a church, where people lit bonfires and danced till nightfall.

In terms of success it did manage to mobilise a vast number of possibly new people and as we found out later that night we had carried out plan B of the operation. Plan A was to hit a main Autobahn close to where one of the biggest motor shows in Europe was being staged, but this had been rumbled the night before. So in terms of the damage limitation exercise I think we coped well.

Epilogue

A small affinity group found they could not leave Amsterdam without visiting the largest show of monstrous death traps, and as we were in the area at the time we found slipping in rather easy; although faced with 4 of us and 4000 of them, we did feel a bit intimidated, though not deterred. It was only slightly ironic that it was ineffective technology that beat us on the day as not a single fire alarm or sprinkler was responding that day. So much for health and safety!



A shy Finnish Hawk-owl



Earth First! Finland

A movement faced by Finnish society.

Disclaimer: Naturally, as for everything , I only speak for myself and therefore take responsibility for my writings as my own opinions.

A brief history of Finnish nature conservation.

In Britain you have a long history of civil disobedience whereas in Finland our first enviromental movements were established only in the late sixties. Our radical eco-movements dried up right at the beginning. The first (and in my opinion the last) really huge action was at Koijarvi, in which right from the beginning the media gave a negative image of the movement.

Koijarvi was a small lake in the north of Finland (we have thousands of lakes that size so you must understand how pitiful it was from our perspective even if it really is a normal size lake to people in Britain). It was an important breeding place for many birds. The local farmers wanted to drain the lake because it flooded their fields every spring.

When the digging of the drying-trenches began the local ornithologists were outraged and called for people to gather and stop the digging. Hundreds of people gathered in a few days, dammed the trenches and stopped the machines by chaining themselves to them. The radicality of the movement was really reflected in an incident where the conservationists themselves had to guard the machines, because the most radical wing had threatened to blow them up with dynamite.

After a couple of days the police got organized enough to make a hit on the place. The people were then just dragged out of the site by only a couple of dozen police officers. The failure was afterwards blamed on the inexperience of the people involved. But more important was the media's reaction to the blockade: right from the beginning they portrayed the protestors as either young radical leftists (or communists) or stupid anarchists.

In the wake of Koijarvi the Finnish Nature League's Forest-action team is the only one I know of still doing serious actions these days. People have chained themselves to machines and blockaded logging roads many times, and dozens of people have been arrested. Such actions have saved many small areas of great value from logging or have ensured that they are permanently protected.

However, while I don't want to underestimate the influence of their actions in the protection of our old-growth forests, it's kind of funny to expect to save the biodiversity in our forest ecosystem if 95% of it is already under plantation (the famous "sustainably managed Scandinavian forests, as seen on the back of greeting cards) and the remaining 5% is in continuous danger of getting chopped too.

After the Koijarvi incident the green movement became dominated by conservative compromisers, whose new agendas—such as unemployment, the lack of housing and other important but social problems—were added to the original green agenda and have taken a great deal of attention away from the original true issues. The contradiction between the old radical agenda and these new ideas was reflected in the argument against nature conservationism that you could have heard during the last recession or even nowadays: "while there are so many unemployed in Finland who gives a damn about nature" or "the growth of GNP and the market economy will develop new jobs, so nature conservationism is actually all bad in this situation".

And (in my opinion) we *did not* have a homeless problem (if we compare the magnitude of the problem to you or the States) so it was just another invention of the wishy-washies to blur the original agenda. Nowadays the green movement is a political party that has places in government and Parliament (and even in the EU Parliament). You can guess what is left of the original ideas after the party decided that getting the votes was more important then the issues they were trying to pursue.

A movement faced by Finnish society.

Our number of movements and organizations is very small if you exclude the humanitarian organizations. Of course, movements like anarchists and animal-rights people are regarded as total loonies or dangerous vandals or terrorists, but even not-so-radical movements like Amnesty International or WWF are respected only so long as they don't give any negative news about Finland. [Not a million miles removed from the British situation—eg. Thatcher's fury at Amnesty for questioning the treat-

OTHER ISLANDS



An even more shy osprey in the midst of a Finnish forest

ment of prisoners in Northern Ireland—'human rights abuses' only ever occur in other countries, of course.] Student organizations are only working within universities and mostly under political parties so our "intellectual sector" has always been on the leash of industry and government. To understand the difficulties faced by an enviromental movement in Finland you must understand the Finnish society.

The general mentality of the Finnish people differs much from your society. We have never had big social gaps between people and in fact one of the stongest qualities has always been the unity of people and respect for traditional values. Christianity and nationalism have always kept our nation strong against outside threats. These values are good for the independence of our country but within a peaceful society they turn into conservatism and racism.

It has always been utterly difficult for minorities and radical movements to get any stand in Finnish society. If you try to change something, or even just criticise the society, you will get the hate of at least some part of the people and the ignorance of the rest. If you aren't a communist then you are a fascist or terrorist or just a plain young anarchist idiot. There's no way you can get the sympathies of the people if your agenda irritates them in any way.

The police have always been the ultimate power in finland. We rarely have demonstrations. For example, while there are 500,000 unemployed in Finland (10% of our population) and while the government is pursuing a policy that promotes industries but not in a way that would create new jobs, the last demonstration on this issue that I can recall was a year ago.

Apathy and ignorance are the two strongest qualities of the modern Finnish people. Authorities aren't respected so much as they are feared. It's easy for the authorities to intimidate people when all the media does is repeat everything that the police and the politicians say. The SUPO (police under the Ministry of Interior) has had difficulties finding "enemies" to fight after the fall of the Soviet Union. Animal rights people and nature conservationists are an easy target for them.

When the media has done it's job of intimidating people and getting them to fear our not-yet-so-radical eco-movements, it is all too easy for SUPO to justify their illegal home searches and blacklists. SUPO has established a wing that concentrates on animal rights and nature conservationist people (similar to your MI5). The authorities are so paranoid that they even keep a record of every individial who, for example, subscribes to certain magazines or has shown up at a peaceful demonstration. They also invent absolutely hilarious claims that—for example—we are a throughly organized bunch of terrorists whose only pur-

pose is to get political power by spreading violence and chaos... etc.

So, you must understand that methods that are effective in Britain and the US aren't necessarily any use in Finland. Actions like demonstrations don't evoke any reaction but laughter, and on the other hand radical non-violent direct action like road blockades would probably be met with brutal force (and anyhow people will not give their sympathies—regardless of our message—if you disturb their "normality" of living.)

Monkeywrenching could have even more serious consequences. If we are terrorists (according to the speech by our PM) just by sitting in front of a factory then what are we when we actually go and do some damage to it? As we have seen in the cases of animal-rights people releasing foxes from fur farms and burning them down you could have the whole state's police at your back if you did even a small scale ecotage.

You can imagine the situation if you know how for example the authorities dealt with the local motorcycle gang. They used an army APC to crush through the front gate of the headquarters while an armed chopper hovered above the building. An armed to the teeth strike team then crushed the front door, shot a sleeping dog on the sofa with their assault rifles and then rushed upstairs to brutally arrest a couple of unarmed sleeping gang members, and to confiscate their "huge weapon hideout"—an unloaded revolver in a locked safe.

As I see it, if our enviromental movements don't fall apart due to their internal discrepancies then they will certainly stumble from the oppression of the goverment, the intimidation of the media and the ignorance and racism of the people. So while we are making progress in getting the wishywashies out, making the movement more radical and agreeing in our agendas (all these things aren't exactly so perfect yet) we should really concentrate our brainpower to solve this problem of methods.

Earth First! Finland

Earth First! Finland isn't exactly anything yet. We haven't done anything yet but stupid WWW pages. On the other hand we have had a lot of positive dialogue with Finnish animal rights and ANTIFA people and we have agreed about solidarity between the movements. The crucial questions are now at hand.

Where and how to start ? It's not that we would have problems in agreeing about our goals, or have moral problems with using extreme methods. It's just that the methods we have available are far from the goals we are pursuing. And there is also a contradiction between the causes of some radical methods, as you can probably conclude from what I have said about Finnish society.

We either have to choose the path of extremists or compromisers. In other words you can either try to change the minds of politicians and people with tolerated actions or you can try to force and destroy the system brick by brick. Both paths look hopeless and both have been tried many times before. It's just a question of which of these belong in Finland.

As with any other Earth First! group, non-violence in our methods is one thing we are going to follow. No other method is as effective in taking the moral basis out of our enemies' attempts to directly attack us (abuse us they always will). But remember everyone, damage to lifeless objects can't be considered as violence .

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Address: Viivinkatu 17 as 17, 33610 Tampere 61 FINLAND.

For more information and contacts:

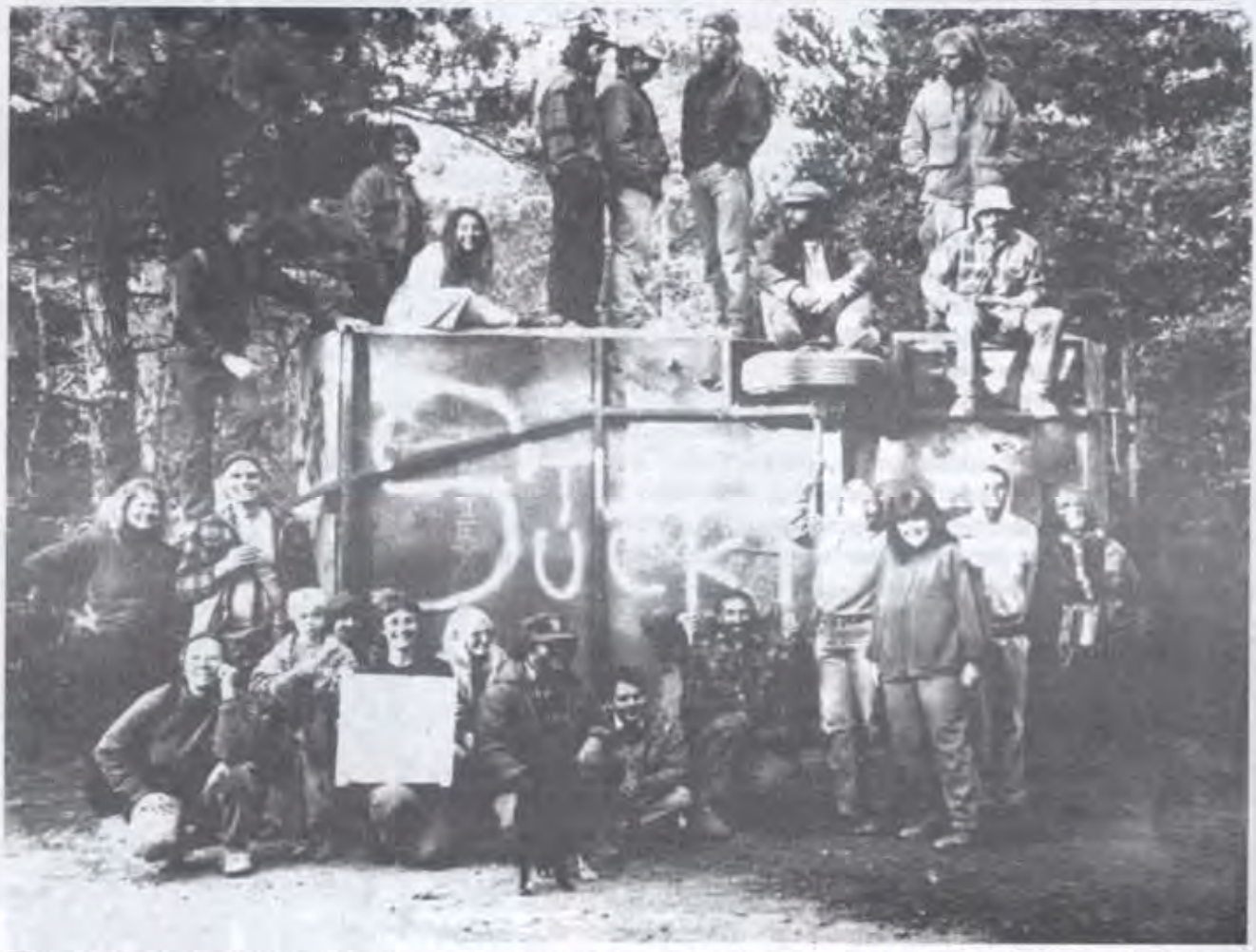
1) The Nature League: Tallberginkatu 1D, 00180 Helsinki. Tel: +358-0-6947 899.
2) Finnish Forest Action Group : Kullervonkatu 29 AS. 2, 33500 Tampere. Tel: +358-31-555 023.
3) Taiga Rescue Network : Coordination Centre, Box 116, S-962 23, Jokkmokk, Sweden. Tel: +46 (0)971 17039. E-mail: kldahl@pns.apc.org.
4) Women's Environmental Network : Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA. (For their "Snow Forest" campaign.)
5) Joni/ 'Muutoksen Kevat': PO Box 847, 33101 Tampere, Finland. ('M.K.' is a well produced magazine (in Finnish, with English summary), that describes itself as 'eco-revolutionary'. Welcomes international contacts.)



Helsinki RTS—17 May 1997.

The Last Stand

For Headwaters Forest



The Ancient Redwood Forest: Going, Going ...

In the coastal ranges of northern California, the tallest of all living beings—the ancient redwoods—are crashing toward extinction. Myriad creatures depend on the forest's dense canopies, clear streams and rich soils for their continued survival.

Ancient forests provide some of the last refuges for endangered species, and set the stage for raging battles over property rights, biodiversity and the enforcement of environmental laws designed to protect endangered species and their habitat. Activists and earth warriors have defended the remnant forests with non-violent civil disobedience and direct action in the woods.

The majestic giant redwoods thrived for thousands of years unaffected by the birth of Christ and the arrival of Columbus. These ancient redwoods lived with black bears, fog larks and prehistoric tailed frogs. Native people lived on the edges of the dark forest, fishing for salmon in its cool, clean streams and fashioning homes, ceremonial lodges and other essentials from the soft, even-grained wood of fallen giant trees.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, industrial civilization had arrived at the edge of the continent, driven by its ravenous greed for gold and timber. As the saws chewed through the great pine forests of Minnesota and Michigan, lumber barons began to look westward to the Pacific Northwest's lush valleys, filled with almost unimaginably giant redwoods, cedars and Douglas fir. The newcomers proved themselves capable of unspeakable brutality, exterminating whole

tribes of the area's inhabitants and removing the survivors to distant reservations while carving their ancestral lands into "property." Railroads drilled their iron tentacles deep into the steep river valleys, and the giant trees began to fall.

Mostly owned by large timber companies, the rich forests of ancient redwoods were converted to cattle ranches and fiber plantations with increasing speed throughout the 20th century. By the 1990's, over 96% of the 800,000-hectare coastal redwood forest was gone. However, a few timber companies were reluctant to simply clearcut their lands, preferring to "selectively" cut some ancient trees while leaving others to stand, holding the steep, fragile soils in place and allowing the forest to recover. One such company was Pacific Lumber Company (PL), a family-run corporation that still possessed relatively large tracts of undisturbed forest late into this century.

In 1986, PL's remaining old growth trees had become more valuable as their rarity increased, and the potential for a quick profit from these lands attracted the attention of corporate predator Charles Hurwitz, CEO of Maxxam Corporation. From his air-conditioned Houston offices, far from the towering calm of Headwaters, Hurwitz leveraged $750 million in junk bonds to buy out PL and take over its Board of Directors. To pay off the junk bond debt, Maxxam raided the PL workers' pension fund and hastily began a program of liquidating the company's 78,400 hectares of forest land.

In the course of financing the takeover, Hurwitz took actions that caused his United Savings Association of Texas to go under. This failure was one of the largest in the series of thrift [US equivalent of building societies] collapses that swept the US during the last decade, spurred by corporate mega-mergers, hostile takeovers and unbridled financial speculation [and also thanks to deregulation by the Reagan government]. The US government had to bail out the savings and loan, a move which cost taxpayers $1.6 billion. Activists are now calling for a "Debt for Nature swap," in which the public could acquire title to Headwaters Forest in exchange for the outrageous debt Charles Hurwitz owes American citizens. Meanwhile, his rampage through the forest continues.

Almost overnight Maxxam transformed PL's selective logging policy into one of clearcutting the last of the ancient redwoods, doubling and even tripling the former rate of cut. Now only six groves of redwoods remain, surrounded by clearcut hillsides and ruined streams, providing a last refuge to the once plentiful creatures of the forest. Together, these six groves and the lands around them comprise the 24,000-hectare Headwaters Forest.

The largest unprotected stand of ancient redwoods remaining on Earth, Headwaters Grove covers approximately 1,200 hectares. So named because it straddles the upper reaches of two watersheds, the grove's shady canopy cradles rare birds while providing cool cover for the salmon spawning in its still-clear streams. The water in the Little South Fork of the Elk River is pure enough to drink without filtration or treatment, and tastes like no other nectar on Earth. The nearby Elkhead Springs Grove is fairly small, but every summer its canopy thickens with marbled murrelets, endangered seabirds that lay their eggs only in the mossy upper limbs of old growth trees. The murrelet has been driven to the brink of extinction by industrial forestry on the West Coast, and the six groves of Headwaters taken together constitute one of only three nesting areas left in California.

Across a sea of clearcuts stand the other four groves: All Species Grove, its rich landscape crisscrossed with roads and skid trails from recent "salvage" logging; Shaw Creek and Allen Creek Groves, largely intact stands of redwood forest; and Owl Creek Grove, the site of a recent legal battle that resulted in a US Supreme Court victory for the marbled murrelet and its environmentalist friends.

Up From the Grassroots

Since the takeover, environmental activists have engaged in diverse strategies to protect these remnant forests from the corporate saws. Earth First! staged protests to awaken the public to the plight of the redwoods, and mounted a decade-long campaign of non-violent direct action aimed at slowing the destruction. Citizens took a wrench to the bureaucratic wheels by attending agency hearings, reviewing logging plans, and drafting initiatives to reform California forest policy. Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC), a watchdog grassroots group, began a litany of lawsuits against Maxxam for violating environmental laws, leading to a series of court victories that have temporarily protected the ancient groves.

Over the years, a diverse and sometimes fractious coalition of environmental groups has collaborated on the Headwaters issue, building on the local work done largely by EPIC and Earth First! This coalition is largely responsible for organizing a massive outpouring of public support for Headwaters preservation over the past few years. In 1995, a rally in the tiny,

remote timber town of Carlotta drew over 2,000 people, the largest forest-related protest in US history at the time. 265 were arrested in a ritual civil disobedience action organized by Earth First! The rally in 1996 was even more successful, with more than 6,000 protesters converging at the end of the main haul road into Headwaters; 1,033 citizens were peacefully arrested for trespassing as they walked over PL's property line, symbolically reclaiming the forest that many citizens believe they already own.

President Bill Clinton, scouring the country for cosmetic environmental victories that might help to salvage his dismal reputation with environmentalists, made the Headwaters issue a quiet part of his 1996 election campaign. His cronies in the industry-friendly Department of Interior, along with California Senator Dianne Feinstein, a shrewd political manipulator, negotiated a deal with Charles Hurwitz and trumpeted to the world that Headwaters had been saved.

Of course, they were lying. Their bogus deal merely declares a logging moratorium for Headwaters Grove and Elkhead Springs Grove. If the other conditions of the deal are met, these two groves alone would be acquired along with a small, largely devastated buffer zone. In order to take effect, the deal calls for quick government approval of long-range management plans that could eradicate our hard-won legal victories and allow the other four ancient groves to be clearcut within the next fifteen years. Topping it all off is the deal's disgusting price tag: $380 million dollars worth of oil leases, real estate and cash, plus almost 8,000 hectares of public forest land in California's Sierra Nevada mountains. In exchange for all these goodies, Hurwitz agrees to stay his bogus lawsuit against the federal government (which alleges that enforcement of laws protecting endangered species on corporate land amount to a seizure of private property). The Clinton administration seems dead set on further rewarding this corporate criminal, even to the point of paying him millions to drive endangered species to extinction.

So, even after a decade of grassroots struggle, Headwaters Forest is still under siege. Lawsuits, direct action and legislation have hampered logging but ultimately failed to curb Maxxam's ravenous appetite for redwood lumber. Grassroots groups remain undaunted by the dirty deal, however, and continue to work toward real protection of all six ancient groves.

The Architecture of Struggle

Earth First!'s campaign in the redwoods has been waged in strict accordance with a non-violence code inspired by Gandhian principles. Our code prohibits violence, whether verbal or physical, forbids sabotage and property damage, and strongly encourages non-violence training for anyone taking part in direct action. These principles have been controversial within the larger Earth First! movement, but those of us living in the redwood region for the most part have agreed to abide by them.

Earth First! icon Judi Bari, a longtime resident of Northern California, was instrumental in developing the philosophy behind these principles. With her long history of labor and feminist organizing informing her efforts, she worked tirelessly to establish Earth First! in Northern California as a community-based movement for social and environmental justice. She brought class and gender issues to the forefront of what had previously often been a male-dominated, elitist movement, clearing space for women to take leadership roles and insisting on the importance of class analysis in fighting what she called the "Timber Wars."

Most timber industry employees work incredibly hard under extremely dangerous conditions. When millworkers and loggers attempted to organize unions decades ago, they were machine-gunned by local cops and beaten by company thugs. The unions that exist now are like most others in the US, beholden to industry and largely powerless or unwilling to defend workers' rights.

Also, the logging industry relies heavily on "gyppos," independent timber fellers and haulers who work for themselves, and are paid by the volume of timber they cut and haul. These workers receive no benefits, are unemployed for months during the rainy season, and own and operate their own equipment. They are also our neighbors, sharing small rural communities with the environmental activists working for justice in the woods. Sabotaging their equipment makes little philosophical or strategic sense in this context.

Judi Bari, along with other activists, organized a chapter of the Industrial Workers of the World here on the North Coast, and fought for the interests of millworkers injured by their employers' lax attention to safety standards. In conjunction with displaced timber workers, she also developed a "Jobs and Restoration" plan that would provide employment at good wages restoring local watersheds devastated by over a century of industrial forestry.

Just before the historic Redwood Summer campaign of 1990 got

underway, Judi and fellow activist Darryl Cherney were bombed as they drove through Oakland, California. The bomb, placed under the driver's seat of Judi's car, was meant to kill her, and almost succeeded. Instead of investigating the bombing, local law enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested Judi and Darryl, accusing them of having bombed themselves! The FBI's smear campaign against Earth First! represented another shameful milestone in this state-sponsored terrorist organization's years-long effort to discredit, disrupt and destroy movements that challenge corporate hegemony. Judi was crippled by the bombing, but chose to answer with a renewed commitment to non-violence; she and Darryl also initiated a major lawsuit against the FBI which has revealed very clearly that Earth First!ers are the targets, not the initiators, of terrorism (for information about the lawsuit, contact Redwood Summer Justice Project, PO Box 14720, Santa Rosa, California 95402, USA).

The philosophy behind non-violent direct action is based on non-violence as a way of life. Non-violence is not simply an absence of violence, but a positive force and source of considerable power in a violent world. Economic relations in this society are guaranteed by violence, both state-sponsored and corporate-controlled. Corporations and the police have infinitely stronger means to violence at their disposal than do our movements for justice and change. If we challenge them on their own playing field, the field of violence, we will lose.

Our campaigns also differ from revolutionary struggles like the one in Chiapas, Mexico, where indigenous people are fighting extermination by a ruthless colonial regime. We are fighting for our lives here, but in a much less direct way. We have far more to lose by adopting violent methods than we have to gain. The principle behind a community-based movement for change is that local people must work to understand each other and create the power necessary to determine their own collective future together. Our common enemies are the corporations and their governmental allies. They are impoverishing our communities, devastating our region and controlling our lives, and we need to find ways to build power collectively rather than further widen rifts that support the corporate divide-and-conquer mentality.

For the most part, non-violence works beautifully on the front lines. By refusing to damage equipment or harass loggers, we have reached a fragile, unspoken state of affairs where very few activists are hurt—except by the cops. Local law enforcement is very fond of a low-grade form of torture called "pain compliance," which involves pinching, holding and twisting parts of a protester's body in such a manner that extreme pain—and presumably "compliance" with police—results. Many of us have suffered nerve damage and even broken bones at the hands of overzealous pigs. Local judges have held non-violent activists in jail on bogus charges (including conspiracy) which they have no intention of pursuing through the courts. The average stay in jail for an Earth First!er (before even being charged) was about a week to ten days during last fall's campaign.

This mistreatment makes some people wonder why we continue to negotiate with the cops in order to hold our large public demonstrations, such as the two massive rallies in Carlotta. We have in Headwaters Forest an issue that resonates with people of all political persuasions and backgrounds, and the towering coast redwoods are a powerful national symbol for many Americans. Also, many children, elders and disabled people feel strongly about the issue and wish to demonstrate their support. Thus we have many allies who may be either philosophically reluctant or physically unable to engage in deep woods direct action, equipment lockdowns or road blockades.

Earth First! therefore works in coalition with other, more main-



200-strong Critical Mass for Headwaters in nearby town of Arcata.



stream organizations in order to organize large public rallies that all can attend. Safety is an issue at these rallies, so we meet with the police beforehand to try to ensure that we can hold the rally in a safe location that also holds political significance for the issue.

We don't compromise at these meetings. In fact, we frighten law enforcement into giving us what we want by our large numbers and our refusal to compromise. Last year, with unknown thousands expected to arrive for a demonstration which had no legal site, the cops held out until the day before the rally, when they finally cracked and offered us a strip of county land across from Pacific Lumber's Carlotta mill. The people who accuse rally organizers of complicity or compromise never attended any of those meetings: picture more than 20 cops from every conceivable jurisdiction, a dozen other government officials, and a few Earth First!ers staring them all down until we win.

Some critics have also ridiculed the practice of mass civil disobedience, which also requires a level of coordination with law enforcement. Civil disobedience has a long and glorious tradition in the US, and many individuals feel that they can make a stronger statement by getting arrested at a rally than by merely showing up. Furthermore, whenever large numbers of people assemble to voice their outrage at the pillage of the Earth, it is wise to provide a peaceful outlet for action so that participants don't simply run amok, provoking violence on the part of cops and possibly even protesters. A mass trespass action channels this energy into a powerful collective statement.

Of course, Earth First! continues to focus primarily on stopping the destruction at the point of production. Activists lock themselves to gates and heavy equipment, forcing law enforcement to cut them loose and stopping work for hours. Tree-sitters perch high in the ancient redwoods, risking their lives to defend these threatened giants. Road blockades using tripods and other ingenious methods keep the machines of destruction from reaching the forest.

On September 16, 1996, a coordinated and simultaneous series of actions shut down every road leading into Headwaters Forest, while deep woods crews occupied all six ancient groves. [The photo on the left is from one of the blockades.] A "tree village" composed of dozens of tree-sitters and a shrimp net holding activists slowed a clearcut plan near Owl Creek Grove for over two weeks. Actions lasted until the winter rains began, culminating in a large rally on November 15. At that rally, police went wild, charging into the crowd and arresting organizers, videographers and even journalists.

Even in the face of this blatant attempt to provoke violence, rally participants remained calm, refusing to take the bait and averting tragedy. All of our experience here in the redwood region points to the fact that non-violent direct action works, and that its principles are an excellent guide for a community-based, grassroots movement focused on social as well as ecological justice.

Endgame

The Headwaters deal announced by the Clinton administration, which could spell devastation for most of Headwaters Forest, continues to be negotiated. The process of developing the long-range plans mandated by the deal is expected to take until February 1998. Although this process is only cosmetically open to public input, our coalition mobilized well over 5,000 people to comment on the deal, both through the mail and at public hearings held in January.

The main issue is a Habitat Conservation Plan, or HCP, a document that allows landowners to get around legal prohibitions on killing endangered species. HCPs, invented during Ronald Reagan's reign largely for the purpose of weakening the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), have resulted in destruction of critical endangered species habitat from coast to coast. The Clinton deal calls for an HCP which would creatively "redistribute" the endangered species living in these ancient groves, according to the most manipulable science money can buy, so that Pacific Lumber can clearcut everything that the public won't be allowed to purchase.

PL's HCP fits into a wider political context, namely the sleazy attempt by Clinton and his corporate friends to line the pockets of the ruling class at the expense of whatever or whomever stands in their way. Legislation is already moving through congress this year that would further institutionalize deadly compromises like the HCP, and supporters of this legislation are hoping to use the Headwaters agreement as public relations cover for their attempt to gut the ESA. Clinton has proved over and over again that his interests lie with further enriching large landowners and corporate resource barons, not with preserving biodiversity or working toward a future in which we can all survive.

Fortunately, the process allows for some public input, and environmentalists are currently preparing a "citizen's alternative" to the deal. This proposal, based on the principles of conservation biology, watershed restoration and sustainable forestry, would protect biologically critical areas (including all remaining old growth forest), allow for recovery of endangered species, and hire local timber workers to restore the watersheds their former employers so ruthlessly ravaged. We already have considerable support for the proposal, even among government employees working on implementation of the deal.

Numerous pitfalls, as well as opportunities, remain on the horizon. The government will likely try to find some unprincipled environmental group to back a bogus compromise, selling out both grassroots activists and ecological integrity. Such groups already exist, and some seem to be demonstrating a willingness to compromise. The Clinton administration will also likely pressure decent people working in federal agencies to take a weak stand on the issues so as to avoid angering corporate interests. Finally, property rights groups (which already have a sympathetic presidential ear) will continue their battle in the courts to prove that environmental laws should not be enforced on private lands without compensation. Although many such groups claim to represent small landowners, ranchers and farmers, most of these organizations are well-funded fronts for large corporate interests.

These coming months will witness the culmination of our 11-year struggle to save Headwaters Forest. Nobody can predict what the final outcome will be, but one thing remains certain: wherever ancient forests are threatened, wherever corporations bulldoze and ravage the land, wherever the interests of big money run rampant over people and nature alike, Earth First! will be there. No Compromise!

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6,000-strong rally at Carlotta, Sept 15, 1996

Introducing...

the Unstoppable Ecodefense!

Ecodefense! is an international, non-governmental, non-profit, environmental organization founded in 1990 in Kaliningrad (former Koenigsberg) Russia. We stand on principles of deep ecology and biocentrism, combined with social responsibility and justice. We work to inform and involve more ordinary citizens in environmental and social activity through the organizing of educational events, environmental campaigns, non-violent direct actions and the spreading of environmental information. We are working to stop violations of human rights, and insists that the rights to a healthy environment and information are fundamental rights that must be available for every single person.

Ecodefense! urges: We have no right to any compromises in the defense of our Mother-Earth, at least because this is only Earth we can live on!

Campaigns we took part in

Against the pulp/paper mill 'N1' in Kaliningrad, 1990-1991, in which about 10,000 of Kaliningrad's citizens participated for two years, and which resulted in the mill being closed down by the spring of 1991

Against the nuclear plant in Nuzhny Novgorod (Russia) in the spring of 1991; the plant construction was closed later the same year.

An Action Camp in the summer of 1991 against the chemical plant in Zaporozhie (Ukraine); this was the third largest chemical plant in the USSR. The plant was closed down after the 10-day occupation of plant chimneys by activists.

The 'Save the trees!' Campaign, 1992-1994, which succeeded in preventing the clearcutting of about 30% of the forests in the Kaliningrad region.

An Action Camp (summer 1992), against the construction of the extremely dangerous Russian-Swedish plant "Viking Raps" in Lipetsk (Russia). The construction was halted after different actions, including the occupation of the office of the governor of Lipetsk region.

A 1993 media campaign against the construction of an oil terminal and new nuclear plant in the Kaliningrad region: construction on both of the projects was frozen. In the case of the terminal, even such powerful institutions as the New York City Bank and British Petroleum gave up in the struggle against the environmentalists. But now, in 1997, this project has reemerged amongst local politicians. Ecodefense! is therefore in the process of starting a new oil campaign. Ecodefense! is sticking to its own original position: oil drilling is one of the most dangerous businesses for the marine ecosystem—stop all the drilling in the Baltic Sea!

An Action Camp (summer 1993) in the Samarskaya Luka National Park, near Togliatti (Russia), where the construction industry was exploding the mountains. The explosions were stopped.

The 'Save the Wolves!' Campaign (1994-1997), which is currently working to prevent the hunting of wolves in the Kaliningrad region.

In the summer of 1996, Ecodefense! urged the Kaliningrad authorities to refuse permission to enter its seaport for a ship carrying uranium. After two weeks of campaigning, supported by many international environmental organizations from the USA to Africa, we won: the ship did not get permission and left Kaliningrad waters. The nuclear industry lost at least a million dollars.

A lawsuit was later iniated against us, but there was victory in the court too. At the present time we are working closely with the Kaliningrad parliament, in order to persuade them to adopt a new law on nuclear transport.

Environmental Education Campaign

Since 1993 Ecodefense! has devoted large resources to educational activity. Specialists in the organization developed and implemented an award-winning educational program for kindergartens. This program is now implemented in 5 kindergartens in Kaliningrad and has been published as a book. We are also working with schoolteachers, running year-long teacher training programs on 'game-methods for environmental education'.

The Climate Change Threat

Paying attention to the growing threat of climate change, Ecodefense! started related activity in 1994. Some months before the United Nations Climate Summit [in Berlin—see DoD 5], we organized the 'Climate Tour' in the ex-USSR, together with other European environmental groups. Activists travelled through the former Soviet

Union, meeting different local environmental groups and asking them to come to Germany to support the AOSIS [Association of Small Island States - those nations rightly terrified by the prospect of imminent non—existence in the 21st Century!] protocol, and the other documents proposed to the UN for ratification by environmentalists. In the beginning of 1995, the report on [the effects of?] Climate Change processes in the Kaliningrad region was prepared right before the UN Climate Summit in Germany took place.

An Ecodefense! representative was working as an official NGO observer during the UN Climate Summit in Germany. Ecodefense! took part in the blockading of the buses of the UN delegates from industrialised countries—because they themselves were blocking AOSIS protocol ratification by the Summit (The AOSIS protocol requires a 20% reduction in the CO2 emissions from industrialised countries before 2005).

Energy

Ecodefense! prepared their report on the energy situation in Kaliningrad in late1996. This stated that Kaliningrad's energy sector needs urgent restructuring and that top priority must be given to alternative sources of energy, and to the development of energy-efficiency technologies rather than to traditional fossil fuels. Otherwise, the energy sector will face a large crisis by 2010. In late 1997 we will release a new report on the opportunities for the development of alternative energy sources in Kaliningrad.

Youth Involvement

In 1995 and 1996, in cooperation with other groups in the region, Ecodefense! organised two summer youth camps in the Kuronian Spit National Park. In these camps we keep the focus on education about environmental problems, and the actions required to solve such problems.

Chemical Weapons in the Baltic Sea

In 1992-1993, Ecodefense! collected a database on the chemical weapons dumped in the Baltic Sea by Russia, America and the UK after World War II. The threat to the flora and fauna of the Baltic is increadibly high, and we have been urging the decision makers in the Baltics to take urgent action to prevent the danger.

Work with Information

Ecodefense! has always paid a lot of attention to collecting and spreading environmental information worldwide. It publishes electronic newsletters in Russian, English and German. One of the focuses of its work is to spread information in different languages through the WorldWideWeb—particularly Russian, because there is a lack of information in Russian on the Internet. We also publish a journal 4 times per year [I think Do or Die needs some lessons from them then! Although it is obviously much more sophisticated to operate on an 18 month rather than a quarterly schedule] and, in cooperation with other environmental groups, books and other materials. To help its work with citizens and the mass media, "Ecodefense!inform" Press-Agency was formed in 1993. This agency is involved in different projects of cooperative environmental newspaper publishing in Kaliningrad.



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The Criminal Element

Delta reports on the reality of Shell's role in Nigeria



News of a further clampdown in Ogoni should come as no surprise to observers and activists used to the cynical disregard for environmental and human rights by transnationals and the governments they support. Despite the deaths of 2000 Ogonis killed by the Shell-backed Nigerian military regime, and the internationally-condemned executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his 8 colleagues, it is business as usual as far as those in power are concerned. Another 19 Ogonis are being held in prison on the same false charges that led to the execution of Saro-Wiwa, and the conditions in Ogoni have worsened. Without any pretence of interest in democracy, Shell is now planning to resume its corporate piracy of oil in Ogoni against the wishes of the people, and the Abacha regime is plotting to succeed itself in a still-born transition to democracy.

Shell's political influence

The laws under which Shell operates in Nigeria are unjust and brutally repressive: military decrees have removed people's fundamental human rights to land and resources, and to freedom of speech and assembly. Shell is, and always has been, inextricably linked to the politics of Nigeria. As part of the British establishment, the company has roots in the ruthless colonial exploitation of people and resources. In the 1960s it had a role along with BP in ensuring that the Biafran secessionist movement was defeated, in order to keep the oil wells in the right hands and safeguard long-established British interests. At least 1.5 million people died in the conflict.

With a history of supplying fuel to the army of apartheid South Africa, Shell is certainly no stranger to working hand-in-hand with repressive regimes wherever and whenever it can profit. According to N. A. Achebe from Shell, "For a commercial company trying to make invest-

ments, you need a stable government. Dictatorships can give you that." And Shell provides the throne for any regime it can do business with: the company currently supports the Abacha regime with economic guidance and major investment. Shell managers have even worked in key government positions: Ernest Shonekan, now head of the Shell-backed economic development project for Nigeria, 'Vision 2010', was even president of the country in 1993. To date Shell has accrued $30 billion from its investment in brutal regimes and its theft of resources.

Poverty and environmental devastation

The indigenous struggle of the Ogoni for environmental and human rights was precipitated by the poverty of the oil-producing regions and Shell's devastating pollution. Oil provides over 80% of the illegal military regime's income, with Shell responsible for half, and yet those who live above this source of wealth are amongst the poorest in Nigeria. Environmentally, Shell operates a clear policy of racist double standards. In contrast to its performance in areas where white Western shareholders tend to live, the company has for forty years plundered the oil from the Niger Delta and left a trail of neglect and indifference.

Rusting high-pressure pipelines criss-cross villages and farmlands, and the countless oil spills and blow-outs are often left unchecked. The land, rivers and lakes are polluted with oil. Canals, or 'slots', have permanently destroyed fragile ecosystems and led to polluted drinking water and deaths from cholera. Gas flaring and the construction of flow stations near communities have led to severe respiratory and other health problems, and contribute massively to global warming. And exploratory and other work has devastated more rainforest, mangrove and wetland habitat, threatening the biodiversity of the Niger Delta. The traditional, sustainable lives of Ogoni farmers and fishers are now virtually impossible.

Colluding with the killers

The people's mobilisation threatened the profits of Shell and angered the regime which saw a major threat to its income and security, particularly if other minorities began to emulate the Ogonis. And so the catalyst for this peaceful and effective grassroots resistance—the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and its president Saro-Wiwa—had to be stopped. Peaceful protests at oil installations were crushed by the paramilitary Mobile Police Force whose presence Shell has repeatedly requested, and the company continues to operate behind a military shield in the Delta. Forced last year to admit to having imported weapons and paying the military in Ogoni—after years of denial—the company has in fact financed military operations throughout the region, and supplied vehicles, boats and a helicopter to transport soldiers who have raided villages. Killings, beatings, rapes, large-scale looting, arbitrary arrests and torture are commonplace. The company even has its own armed police force, the Shell Police, who have themselves been responsible for human rights abuses.

'Ruthless military operations'

The democratically-organised MOSOP grew in strength, and 300,000 Ogonis rallied peacefully against Shell on Ogoni Day, January 4, 1993. The company was declared persona non grata and forced to stop all oil production in Ogoni. By 1994 a confidential internal memo by the head of the newly set-up Internal Security Task Force, Major Okuntimo, called for "ruthless military operations" to ensure that "smooth economic activities" could commence. He reminded the oil companies of the need for "prompt regular inputs as discussed." Four conservative Ogoni chiefs were subsequently killed by security agents within a mob, after which Okuntimo launched a genocide against the Ogoni which has left a total of 2000 dead and up to 100,000 as internal refugees. Hundreds have since fled Nigeria to refugee camps across West Africa.

Judicial murder

Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP activists were arrested on trumped-up charges, tortured and held without trial. They were finally sentenced to death by the Special Military Tribunal, a 'kangaroo court' involving prosecution witnesses who had been bribed by Shell and the government to give false evidence. Despite its influence with the regime, Shell refused to help Saro-Wiwa. In 1995 the head of Shell Nigeria, Brian Anderson, told Saro-Wiwa's brother Owens Wiwa that he could try to secure his release—but only if the international campaign against the company was called off. It wasn't, and the Ogoni Nine were hanged in November of that year. Just a few days later Shell announced the construction of a $4 billion gas project in partnership with the regime. "A reward to the military or just a coincidence?" asks Owens Wiwa.

Shell to re-enter Ogoni

Huge rallies on Ogoni Day in 1996 and 1997 have shown that the Ogoni's spirit has not been broken,

despite Saro-Wiwa's death. The demands of the Ogoni Bill of Rights, for respect of full environmental and human rights, have of course not been met, and Shell's collusion with the military continues. Its corporate irresponsibility and arrogance is the same as ever, and against its own promises not to resume operations in Ogoni without the full support of the people, the company is violating the people's wishes and preparing to re-enter Ogoni for full oil production.

For this to succeed the communities must be split: pro-Shell, pro-government organisations have been set up, local chiefs have been bribed to toe the line and some even forced at gunpoint to sign invitations requesting that Shell comes back to Ogoni. The company is also trying to split the NGO sector, particularly in Europe, by funding or 'consulting' certain groups. It has succeeded in co-opting those who want money or are naive about the corporate agenda and Shell's willingness to change. [See 'The Conservation of Business...', note 4, in this issue - Ed.] Shell's new improved PR machine is working busily on many fronts to repair the company's image and greenwash the dirt away. A number of journalists have been taken on Shell trips to the nicer parts of the Niger Delta and fed propaganda about the company's commitment to reconciliation and its support for the communities, while others seem to fear the threat of legal action and are effectively censored from reporting the truth. Shell's 'community projects'—which may involve taking over a project near its completion and erecting a Shell sign—are clearly little more than PR exercises.

Despite the army of occupation there is grassroots resistance to the Shell/government intention for renewed oil production in Ogoni. A recent Nigerian magazine covering the issue showed Ogonis demonstrating against the plans. This has led to the latest wave of repression: Ogoni is still an occupied zone, and any dissent is dealt with harshly.

Militant Resistance

Across the rest of the Delta, recent occupations of flow stations and hostage-taking have disrupted oil production by Shell and Chevron. These actions are a result of the continuing anger felt towards the oil companies and the regime for the lack of benefits locally from the oil revenue, and the frustration that nothing is changing for the better. "The youths are no longer afraid of death," according to a southern minorities activist. There is also some ethnic conflict, arising from Shell/government manipulation of tribal differences and of the local political situation.

The Nigerian oil workers' unions have a great potential for bringing about major change. They have a radical history of solidarity links with opposition movements in apartheid South Africa, and initiated a huge nationwide strike in 1994 whose demands had similar elements to the Ogoni Bill of Rights. Realising a lack of effective networking with the oil producing minorities during the strike, however, they are now working towards closer activity.

It is clear that the Nigerian oil workers occupy a strategic position in the Nigerian economy, and that they are becoming more conscious of this. Indeed, a union official in Lagos said that the unions will "articulate a comprehensive agenda to challenge military dictatorship in Nigeria," and that Shell "could easily become the target of very serious political action" in the future.

Meanwhile, pro-democracy activists both internally and externally are building firm foundations for the organised structures of resistance needed to successfully replace the regime with some form of democratic representation.

Accepting responsibility

At this year's Annual General Meeting of Shell the board and major shareholders rejected a motion from a number of concerned investors who were calling for greater corporate responsibility. The directors were offended that their competence or desire to monitor environmental and human rights issues was being questioned. As Cor Herkstroter, group managing director, said, "There's already someone responsible for these—it's me!" And indeed, Shell is being sued by the family of Saro-Wiwa and the Centre for Constitutional Rights for conspiracy to "violently and ruthlessly suppress any opposition" to its operations in Ogoni and the Niger Delta. The prosecution also allege that the executions of the Ogoni Nine were carried out with the "knowledge, consent and/or support" of the company.

There is an awareness that the Ogoni issue is a test case for our response to the growing militarisation of commerce and the corporate-sponsored attacks on environmental and human rights activists worldwide. Such an awareness demands a stepping up of our organisational ability and our activity. Paramount is effective networking and international solidarity with indigenous groups at the sharp end of the corporate stick.

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Zapatista!

Today Chiapas—tomorrow the world!



New Model Army—Zapatista toys in a Mexican marketplace.

While some of the momentum has been lost from the Zapatista uprising of January 1994, the shock waves are still reverberating through Mexico. Despite the government's best attempts at side lining the Zapatistas[EZLN], the spirit and the people carry on with their struggle.

Chiapas today is scattered with army troops conducting what amounts to a psychological war against the campesinos and indigenous peoples who live there. The local human rights organisation in San Cristobal,"Fray Bartolome de Las Casas", is still frequently visited by campesinos (some of whom walk for days to reach it) reporting arbitrary detentions, torture, unexplained disappearances, violation of personal security, illegal entry, plunder, harm to personal and communal property and executions. Most of these outrages have been committed by the Federal and State Authorities. Rarely is anyone brought to task for the attacks! In the heart of Chiapas, San Cristobal is still alive with tension not so much because of the presence of the EZLN negotiators, but more because of the ominous army base just outside the town. Deeper into Chiapas at Ocosingo another army base dominates the town. Ocosingo is the centre of Mexico's biggest municipality and since it contains the EZLN heartlands it is the most troublesome. Across the mountains and jungle of this area, army outposts are a constant reminder to villages of the state's desire to smash this uprising.

Recent trouble in the North of Chiapas has directed attention away from the EZLN and also forced the government to spread its troops more thinly across the state. The occupations of Rancheros' cattle farms by campesinos intent on creating 'ejhos', or collective farms, is a historical phenomenon in Mexico, but since the uprising, greater confidence and desperation has meant that these actions have gathered momentum. At the same time a "civil group" calling themselves Pax y Justica (Peace and Justice) have violently expelled and attacked campesinos, adding to the tension. Pax y Justica are rumoured to be state supported, while there is much speculation about links between campesino groups and the EZLN. In this game of tension both sides are raising the stakes. Recent concessions by the government on the way negotiations with the

EZLN are to be conducted and on the release of EZLN prisoners has raised hopes of civil progress. The armed EZLN has developed a civil EZLN wing to deepen and spread the spirit of the Zapatista uprising. Meanwhile as government soldiers occupy mountain villages the EZLN remain on Red Alert and have announced that they will not tolerate any more human rights abuses by the army in their territory.

If you go deeper into Chiapas and turn right at the tourist site and Mayan ruins of Palenque the road runs along the Guatemalan border, which is punctuated with army checkpoints and the camps of impoverished settlers. This is a Mayan area and split politically. While one group of Mayans has sold logging rights to their land, those deeper in the jungle fight with the Zapatistas to defend their home in the last rain forest in Northern America. In nearby Mayan Belize a major UK-funded road threatens a similar 'development' of the jungle, bringing mining, logging and poor settlers. The settlers disparately carve a living out of land too steep to grow maize. It is usually no more than 3-4 years before the land becomes little more than bare rock. These slices of dead mountainside can be seen from the road and everybody knows the jungle is dying.

The signing of a peace agreement in Guatemala between guerrilla groups and the government could well help the situation, by allowing 50,000 refuges from Guatemala to return from Chiapas. These camps have been supported by their Mayan cousins in Chiapas because of the shared culture and the shared problem of land. The Guatemalan war was started by Indians who make up 70% of the population but have been refused rights to own land by the Spanish speaking elite.

Across the whole of Mexico the spirit of Zapata has new energy. The central squares and main streets of towns across the South of Mexico have blockades and stalls of various groups opposing the state. This would not have been possible five years ago. In Chiapas in late October campesinos protested in over 80 municipal capitals about water and electricity prices. And were able to protest openly - not because the state has had a change of heart, but because it is terrified of the reaction any repression would provoke.

It is hard for Europeans to avoid looking at the insurgents in southern Mexico through anything other than Eurocentric eyes. For the Zapatistas the armed struggle is not separate from the civil one. Without the armed uprising the government would not have taken the Zapatistas' challenge seriously. Activists, radicals, campesinos and indigenous peoples have been tortured and killed with equipment supplied by the West for decades. While activists in the West debate the issue of non-violent direct action the peoples of Southern Mexico are gambling with their lives. Many in Chiapas fail to understand why Western radicals with all their freedoms achieve so little.

Chiapas is one small state in Mexico, the Zapatistas a small insurgency movement. What they have achieved is beyond anything they could have dreamed of before January 1994. What the Zapatistas and peoples in Southern Mexico want is for us to create the seeds for such a situation in our own countries.

Now as never before the world is linked together, so that for things to change in Mexico, things must change here, and if change can happen in Mexico, it can happen here.

Where there have been sparks of revolution in Mexico the whole country is a dry wood pile waiting to go up in flames. (See DoD No4 for background information.)



The International of Hope

In the last twenty years people around the world have been the target of neoliberal policies, resulting in everything from unemployment, marginalisation and poverty,to land expropriation, pollution and neurosis.

Against these effects people around the world have responded with strikes, riots, rebellions, occupations of land, schools and factories, squatting, lobbying, public campaigns, demonstrations, radical literature, meetings, conferences, self organisation in communities, guerrilla movements, etc.

Yet, the fragmentation and isolation of these different forms of struggle is one of the main problems these movements face.

Between the 27th of July and the 3rd of August 1996, more than three thousand people from all five continents met in the jungle of South-East Mexico, Chiapas, in the territory held by the insurgent Zapatista army, and hosted by indigenous communities.

The participants in this 'First Intercontinental Meeting Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity', (otherwise known as the Encuentro), were coming from a

large variety of social backgrounds and political affiliations.There were strikers from France, mothers of the disappeared in Argentina, exiles from Iran, squatters from Berlin, ex-guerrilas from Latin America, social centre activists from Italy, trade unionists from Brazil and community activists from the USA. All these diverse individuals met in the jungle and transcended their ghettos.

Those at the Encuentro decided to set up an International Collective Network of Resistance. This network will work "by recognising the differences and knowing the similarities... and will be the means through which the different resistances can support each other".

The Encuentro was only the start of the process of global communication and coordination of different resistances and struggles. The rest is up to us. By learning from and coordinating with other struggles we can only become stronger. The next Encuentro is in Barcelona from 25th July to August 2nd 1997. fHuman is a collective of those interested in linking struggles in Britain and worldwide, and participating in the Encuentro network. If you want to take part you can contact them at:

fHuman, c/o BM-CRL, London WC1N 3XX.



No Compromise in Defense of Lilly-Pillies!



The news from Australia is that activists are back blockading in the forest . We have a base camp set up in an idyllic warm temperate rainforest area of East Gippsland, where a resident sooty owl calls and a pristine river flows. There are tree ferns 35 feet high, older than science can guess, but as slender as saplings. The light through their latticed umbrellas makes enchanting dapples on the leaf litter. Nearby under the vines, lilly-pillies drop their edible fruit. Along the river there are ancient granite boulders like the cracked eggs of a huge serpent. Like many such areas it is unprotected from the loggers.

The rainforest is being felled to be turned into paper pulp for export to Japan. So we're on the logging roads with tripods, various lock on devices and most importantly our bodies. We don't even have to monkeywrench! The timber industry is going down the gurglur and there is a dog eat dog climate in local towns, desperate workers sabotaging their own machines—for insurance money—and others' machines, to limit competition. Even the police acknowledge that loggers are monkeywrenching each other. The standard joke is that your machines are never so safe as when a load of greenies are crawling all over them!

The reason for the loggers' crisis is that the Japanese company Daishowa has made large inroads into Australia, changing logging from a timber industry to a pulp industry. It only takes seven seconds to turn a tree into chips for paper production. This combined with 'corporate rationalisation' has resulted in jobs decreasing by 40%. Unfortunately the loggers still publicly line up behind the corporations, who if they succeed in clearcutting this forest will leave for another. The workers will be left crying into their beer about how stupid they were, not to listen to activists ranting about sustainable forestry.

Do you want a holiday in a rainforest down under? Lend a hand and be a part of the growing ecotourism industry!.

Contact

Melbourne Friends of the Earth: CROEG, Bonang Highway, Goongerah Vic 3888, Australia; (03) 9419-8700;
fax (03) 9414-2081

The Empire Strikes Back



"In the last five years, the Metropolitan Police has had to deal with 510 separate policing operations classified as being concerned with environmental groups—and the trend is upwards." - The Police Review, 21 March 1997.

The Recent Past

As illustrated by the above quote (it works out at an action every 3/4 days, and these figures are for London alone) the last few years have seen a huge growth in, and increasingly effective actions by, the radical ecological direct action movement. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than by looking at the events of the last twelve to eighteen months. The success of the Whatley Quarry action in December 1995, the Newbury campaign (both early in 1996 and the more recent occurences at the anniversary rally), the M41 Reclaim the Streets action of July 1996, the Liverpool actions in September of the same year, and the large actions so far this year—all have seen a change, not only in the face and direction of the movement itself, but almost as importantly, in the way the state regards and treats our movement.

With the relative failure of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJA) 1994 to halt direct action, whether it be hunt sabotage or anti-road protests, the state, and the economic interests that support it, have employed a number of other methods to try to halt the massive increase in direct action that has taken place since the CJA was passed. They have used complex and wide ranging methods (and these are just the ones we know about) and it is beyond the scope of this article to go into all of them, so I will just cover a few of the more obvious manifestations of repression.

The most prominent, widely talked about and feared of these tactics has been the growing use of conspiracy charges against people involved in direct action. Conspiracy charges are worrying for a number of reasons, not least being the severity of the sentence one is likely to incur if eventually convicted.

One of the first groups in our movement to be on the receiving end of such charges were people allegedly connected with 'Green Anarchist' magazine, who, together with two people from (again, allegedly!) the animal liberation movement, faced 'Conspiracy to Incite Criminal Damage by Publication' charges after a series of raids in early 1996. The old adage that 'the first targets of a succesful movement are its publications' proved to be true with 'Green Anarchist' magazine—which draws together animal liberation and radical ecological theory and practice into a most unpalatable mix for the state—hit with these charges.

As well as helping to provoke an increase in militancy in the direct action ecology movement, what may be most worrying for the state in this context is the prospect (however distant) of the more generalised opposition to authority which can develop from a widespread breakdown in respect for the forces of oppression (masquerading, of course, as the forces of law and order).

Green Anarchist have by no means been the only people hit with conspiracy charges. Some of those arrested after the Street Parties in the summer of 1996 have faced them as well—notably in London and Birmingham. After the storming of the Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) offices in central London in July another activist was arrested and threatened with conspiracy charges. In December 1996 people from the Somerset area were



raided in connection with the sabotaging of the Whatley Quarry railway track in September, accused of conspiracy and subjected to very strenuous bail conditions. Finally, the run-up to the 'Reunion Rampage' at Newbury in January 1997 saw a number of people arrested for digging up the Transport Minister's front garden— they too were threatened with 'Conspiracy to Commit Criminal Damage' charges.

Although this may seem like an intimidatingly long list, most, if not all, of these cases have actually been dropped before they have even come to court. Despite this they seem to have had at least some of the desired effect of scaring people involved in direct action into ineffectiveness. This is not helped by certain people within the movement that seem to shout "conspiracy" at every available opportunity. This is exactly the effect that the state would like these threats to have, one of fear and inactivity, and it is for this reason that we must be careful not to overeact and play to their agenda.

Raids of private addresses, as well as offices, have also been on the increase over the last year or so. This has continued recently with a number of EF! and animal liberation activists raided in connection with the 16th May 1997 action at Shoreham Harbour, Sussex. These raids can be seen primarily as information gathering exercises, both for prosecutions and general collation of intelligence, and also as a way to intimidate activists into inaction.

The other more obvious manifestation of state repression has been the huge growth in surveillance, both overt and covert, by the police and security services, as well as by private detective agencies. The sight of police Evidence Gatherer (EG) teams on actions and demonstrations is now commonplace, as are the green hatted Brays Detective Agency employees at anti-road actions and evictions. Indeed there is not even any real pretence that this information is not for state use with the state admitting that it has spent 700,000 on companies such as Bray's in order to identify us. (The Guardian, 28th May 1996)

An interesting development in this area has been the fairly recent formation of the Public Order Intelligence Unit (POIU), also known as the Forward Intelligence team (FIT) in London. Based at Scotland Yard this unit, seemingly consisting of around ten to fifteen police officers, was formed after the series of riots in the summer of 1994 surrounding the resistance to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. "[W]orking in uniform, [the POIU/FIT's] job is to build a rapport between themselves and street activists so that people likely to provoke disorder can be identified in an event." (The Job [A Police Newspaper] Issue 708, Volume 28 - 7th July 1995) One of their main functions seems to be the identification of 'key' individuals that are likely to provoke, and participate in, public order situations, whether they be ecological direct action, football crowds or far right gatherings, so they can predict, and help prevent, these situations happening. In practice this remit seems to translate into mainly overt intelligence gathering, both with video and stills cameras as well as profuse note taking, although they have also been used to point out people in crowds for snatch squads to arrest. They are usually in uniform, but have also been spotted at some events in plain clothes, and even on mountain bikes!

They seem to be primarily focused on London, but have also been seen at large actions and demonstrations outside the capital. In London they have focused a certain amount of attention on Reclaim The Streets and in practice this has involved having a presence on all RTS connected events, as well as the major demonstrations in the city.

Whilst this surveillance has not actually translated into much action on their part there should be no doubt that the information gathered by them does, officially or unofficially, cross departments into Special Branch, (the largest SB department in the country is in the same building at Scotland Yard as the POIU/FIT), or MI5. It may even be possible that one of the major functions of the POIU/FIT is in fact to act as intelligence-gatherers for Special Branch/MI5, (thereby freeing up their agents for more sensitive tasks), as well as the rather more obvious one of dealing with public order situations.

The Animal Rights National Index (ARNI) was set up in 1983 to monitor militant animal liberation activity, but since the early 1990s it has expanded to cover the radical ecological direct action movement as well. Indeed Special Branch now boasts that it has identified 1,700 activists that come under this category. (Sunday Express, 14th January 1996) The information has most likely been gleaned from work carried out by private detective agencies—notably Bray's in Southampton, police (POIU/FIT especially) and Special Branch operatives—through overt methods such as arrest records and monitoring attendance at actions and demonstrations, along with more covert means such as mail and telephone interception.

Tie this in with information obtained from the numerous raids over the last few years and you realise that it is fairly easy to believe this figure. The type and detail of information held on ARNI databases is staggering: alongside the obvious name, address, date of birth and photographs, it records details such as known aliases,



haircut, vehicles driven, school reports, friends, family, all previous jobs, bank and building society details and movements such as sightings at actions and demonstrations. A recent example of ARNI information being put into use was the intelligence briefing spotted on the back seat of a police car [!] at the 'Shut Down Milford Haven!' action on Saturday 15th February 1997. Entitled 'Earth First!: Its History, Tactics and Activities' it included a chapter on the title page called 'key activists'.

Most of this information is gathered, as mentioned before, by overt surveliance of the type employed by Brays, EG teams and the POIU/FIT teams. However some of this information cannot be obtained by these methods alone, thus requiring more covert methods, including infiltration into groups.

The use of infiltrators and informers in radical groups is widely documented in history, and whilst often dismissed by the ignorant in the direct action movement as pure fantasy or paranoia, it is fact that some people have been approached by various factions of the police and/or security services to provide information on active direct action groups and the individuals involved in them. Most recently someone was approached in Lancashire and asked to pass on information about the Ploughshares group active in their area. They refused and went public with the offer. In addition to this others have been approached, including activists from groups in Brighton and London, with one person in London Reclaim The Streets being told that if he provided the desired information he would 'win' his forthcoming appeal.

While this all seems optimistic, in that we know about people that have been approached and refused, we can be sure that there are some people that have accepted the offer and are now active informants for the state. Now here's a frightening quote for you: according to Gordon Winter, a former BOSS (South African Secret Service) agent; "British intelligence has a saying that if there is a left-wing movement in Britain bigger than a football team our man is the captain or vice captain, and if not, he is the referee and he can send any man off the field and call our man on at any time he likes." (Lobster 26, December 1993.) While it is unlikely, for various reasons, that the state has (yet?) achieved as deep a penetration of our milieu as it did of the left/the unions, and it's important not to get silly about this, it IS something to bear in mind. The experiences of London Greenpeace, as revealed in the McLibel trial, are very relevant here— both because of the high level of cooperation between Special Branch and McDonald's private detective agency, and because the infiltrators outnumbered activists at some of London Greenpeace's meetings!

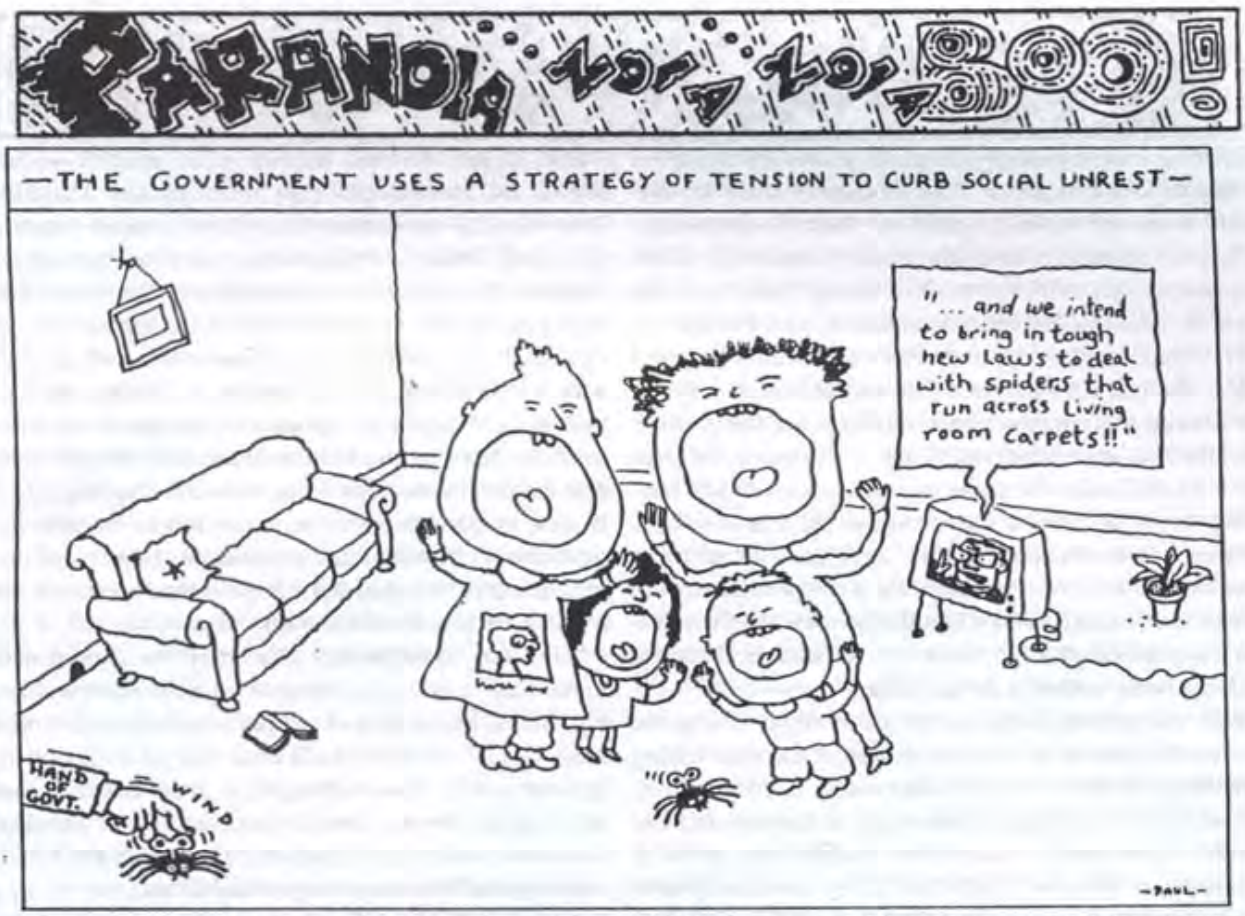
Infiltrators into radical direct action groups, and even not so radical groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of The Earth, seem to fall into two main categories. There is the classic 'deep cover' long term infiltrator that is a very active member of the group and 'lives the life', and there is the 'shallow cover' infiltrator that is more likely to just turn up at occasional meetings and actions to try and glean intelligence about individuals, the group and further actions. From looking at the past experiences of others, the former are more likely to be Security Service personal (MI5) or Special Branch, whereas the latter are far more likely to be 'normal' police, even though they may be Drug Squad officers that are used to looking less like police when undercover than others are.

To the writer of this article it seems that by far the bulk of information gathered by state agencies about direct action groups, and the individuals involved in them, is actually freely available without need for infiltration. As a start all publications that originate from the movement will be read, analyzed and filed, as well as related information such as articles in the mainstream and alternative press.

As a supplement to this, notes and photographs—including video film—taken by cops and others at actions and other gatherings will be used in building up comprehensive pictures of friendship networks, group dynamics such as who is the most active, who holds what political theories and sympathises with other groups or causes. These two ways of intelligence gathering are the main sources for the information collated by the police and security services. Occasionally boosted by telephone tapping and attendance at meetings and actions, it is possible to build up a fairly comprehensive picture of most, if not all, of the information that they want and need.

Having said this, as we can see from the fact that some people have been approached to be informers, state agencies are always looking for new avenues to enable them to gather more information that is not freely available to all. To stop this happening we constantly need to be aware of these potential weaknesses and try and limit their ability to exploit them.

Telephone tapping is an oft talked about yet little understood subject. The stereotypical image of a police or secret service employee sitting by a tape recorder is little more than ridiculous in the present day. Far more likely is the use of the Key Word Recognition System (KWRS) developed over the past decade. This system recognises selected words, scans them from conversa-



tions, records them and then searches through previous communications looking for similar words.

Indeed, to illustrate this, look at the case of the Kuwait City telephone exchange. When British soldiers went into the city in 1991 after the Gulf War they found a recently installed KWRS, put in place by British Telecom, that was programmed to recognise 2,000 keywords. Tie this in with the fact that General Communications Head Quarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham, the centre of all government communications, has the ability to listen into 6 million telephone lines at any one time and you realise that they not only do have the ability to listen in to all our communications, both electronic and telephone, but that it is most likely that they do so on a regular basis.

It is not only this country's surveillance technology that is used—for example the presence and possible use of the US National Security Agency's 'listening post' at Menwith Hill in Yorkshire. Interestingly, the permits granted by the Home Office for 'legal eavesdropping' have more than doubled over the past year.

If anyone doubts that they listen in on our telephone communications, you only have to listen to what they themselves say. In The Observer of 28th June 1992 it was reported that a group of "current highly placed intelligence operatives from GCHQ" stated that they were unable to "remain silent regarding... the gross malpractice and negligence within the establishment in which we operate." They were complaining about the routine interception of Amnesty International and Christian Aid's communications. The Observer went on to report that by typing in a 'key word' the secret services were able to scan communications and home in on any from of communications where this word appears.

Mobile phones are often seen by people as more secure than other telephones, but in reality they are the only type of phone for which a 'bugging' warrant is not required, as they are classified as radio communications. In addition to this it is possible to track peoples' movements through their mobile phone signals—according to recent press coverage, this makes it possible to track people to within 50 feet (and records of movements are kept by the phone companies for up to 2 years!)

Bugging of houses is also another possible factor that we may well have to contend with in the future, especially with the introduction of the Police Act (1997) which allows police chiefs to authorise surveillance, previously done by High Court judges. The incidence of 'fishing trip' covert searches of houses will probably also increase under this Act.

What Can We Do About It?

To overcome these attacks on our movement the first obvious thing to address is security, both of groups and



individuals, as hopefully this gives us the ability, if not to thwart some of these assaults then at least to slow them down and make it harder for them to operate.

Aspects of security can take many forms and it is not possible to deal with them all in this article, but I will mention a few of the more significant ones briefly.

The tapping of telephones has been briefly covered under the previous sub-heading and although ways to get around this method of surveillance are fairly obvious, they need to be repeated again and again for people who still make the same mistakes—do not say anything over the phone that you would not say to a policeman! In addition to this, any senstive information should not even be said near a telephone, as with a digital exchange even when the handset is in the cradle it is possible that the phone can act as a receiver and pick up noise within a certain area.

With the growth in the use of technology such as the internet by radical groups the danger of the state taking advantage of these channels increases. The same rules for telephone communication apply to the internet and e-mail, although an encryption programme such as Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) can help with security of e-mail communications. (Be warned that PGP may well not be as unbreakable as often claimed, so total trust in it would be misplaced.)

Computers, as has been witnessed by numerous groups who have had theirs seized in raids, are a security liability. Information stored on them, even when it has been deleted, can leave a shadow that it is possible to 'read'. The only way around this is not to write anything at all on computer that is remotely incriminating. It is possible to obtain software that not only deletes files but also wipes them so no shadow is left. Even so the most sensible suggestion seems to be just not to write anything that requires this treatment on any computer if at all possible.

Whilst talking of technology and its possible uses for us (if any) a few people are currently discussing the possibility of secure telephone communications using a software package called Pretty Good Privacy Phone (PGP Phone). This package scrambles communications, broadcasts them along telephone lines and then unscrambles them at the other end. Although at first glance this seems to be ideal for us it is the opinion of this writer that the PGP phone is a wasted effort. Not only would I feel no more secure in discussing action details down a PGP phone than a normal phone, but if there is anything more likely to result in a bugging device being planted in your front room than you talking to another activist using telephone encryption I have yet to think of it!

The more obvious measures to protect security should be commonplace in their useage. Disguising your identity on actions should be second nature by now, and other simple things such as giving false names when stopped and searched (even when arrested if you can get away with it) and having bail addresses sorted out before going on an action will go a long way towards making life harder for them. Addresses that are published for group contact points should be made as hard as possible to trace back to individuals and for this bookshops seem to be a better bet than PO Boxes, as these have to be registered to an address. A monomarks box in London (called BM Boxes) is probably the most secure, but these do tend to attract automatic attention from the authorities.

With any information that may be incriminating make sure it is destroyed as soon as practically possible. Maps, plans, lists of telephone numbers and names are, if found, likely to addd great weight to any charges against you or others charged, as well as being useful intelligence for the state to have access to. Destroyed does not mean ripping up and putting in the bin, but burning and then disposing of the ashes.

As said earlier, I will refrain from going into to much depth about possible security measures that we can take, as not only is there not room in this article, but there are numerous well written books on the subject that are far more comprehensive and useful than this piece can ever hope to be. (See Further Reading and Related Interest book list at the end of this article.)

Of course any look at individual and group security cannot be looked at in isolation, but must be addressed alongside tactical considerations. To overcome the measures that we have had levelled against us we need to be constantly thinking about, and then adapting to suit, our tactics and organisation. We need to be addressing questions such as: is what we are doing effective? Is it the most effective way, in terms of time and energy spent, that we can do things or are there other ways that are better? Are the risks of imprisonment we face worth it in comparison to the impact of the action on the target? Our tactics and way of organising ourselves come into all these questions and need to be addressed if we as a movement are to expand our size and influence and become even more successful.

There are complex and in-depth measures that the state uses to disrupt successful movements and one way that they do this is by the use of the facilitation/repression tactic. This is a two pronged approach that involves the repression of the more radical elements of a movement whilst facilitating the moderate end by giving it small concessions and 'vic-



tories'. Local Agenda 21 is a prime example of this facilitation which, whilst diverting from direct action, ties up previously active groups in paperwork and bureaucracy [sounds like the production of Do or Die to me!], and ultimately achieves nothing. At the same time as 'offering' intiatives such as this they clamp down on the more militant wing using the tried and tested means of conspiracy cases, severe prison sentences, raids and surveillance. The ultimate goal is to divide the broad based movement into a more militant smaller group that can be easily alienated from its support base and then destroyed. This works, as can be seen by looking at the animal liberation movement, now generally perceived by the public as terrorists. A look at the mainstream press will show you that the same thing is starting to happen with the radical ecological direct action movement.

The infamous John Harlow 'Summer of Hate' article in the Sunday Times (3rd July 1994) is a classic example. On 27th March 1996 an article in The Guardian purported to say how the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) were asking for the anti-terrorist squad to monitor the activities of militant greens. The relevance of this article can be seen, not in the light of trying to get us monitored by the secret services, as we know we are already, but rather in trying to create the climate of fear and compliance amongst the population at large that will enable the state to destroy us without fear of a massive backlash. The Welsh press coverage in the run-up to the Milford Haven action was a classic example of this, with the added element of trying to whip up anti-'English rentamob' sentiment.

There are other active direct action groups that we can learn from, especially the hunt saboteurs and animal liberation groups. The way the hunt sabs organize themselves, with local affinity groups that are self-financing and fully autonomous, with their own transport and communications, is a way to be looked at, adapted and used if it is appropriate for us. One thing that is severely lacking within our circles is, ironically, transport, with the organisation of any action seemingly having a fair proportion of its time taken up with sorting out movement of people from one place to another.

If every active group could sort out a van with a CB radio, mobile telephone and scanner, as some hunt sabs groups do, these problems would be much reduced. As well as this we could have individual, group, regional and national phone tree networks that could enable us to call actions at short notice, thereby circumventing the recent problems of surveillance and repression of a few 'key' organisers.

Whilst looking at tactics and strategy for the future we must be very careful that we do not divide the movement. If some sections of the movement feel it is better that they work on a different tactical level, then all the better if it is effective, but we must not allow divisions to artificially appear between us all. If there is an active underground it is still part of the broader movement and we must acknowledge it as such, rather than distance ourselves from it, as is all so easy to do to take pressure off the more 'legitimate' parts of the movement.

After all this talk one thing becomes clear; it is crucial that we all realise that we are engaged in a war and we must act as such. Although we must never lose our sense of humour, spontaneity and feelings of love that underlie every action taken in defence of the earth and its inhabitants we must treat certain aspects of the struggle with the seriousness that they deserve. These aspects include building a decent prisoner support network, constantly questioning ourselves and our actions, creating solid affinity group structures, and learning, quickly, the value of individual and group security. If we fail to do this it will only be ourselves and our friends that suffer, with an increasingly large number of people going to prison, and maybe, if the experiences of other radical groups are anything to judge by, much worse.

All this talk of surveillance, security, prison and state repression can engender feelings of alienation and disempowerment in people quite easily. If I have done that in this article I have failed in what I set out to do. An objective view of what the facts are is necessary if we are continue and succeed as a movement. Whilst the powers of the system we wish to overturn can seem monolithic and all encompassing, we only have to look at some of the actions that have happened in the last few years to realise that not only can we beat them, but that we do so very frequently! (And sometimes in the most absurd ways imaginable!)

To continue doing this our movement must always be looking to the future for ideas as to how we can adapt our tactics to stay one step ahead of those that want us to fail. A crucial part of being able to do this is increasing the numbers of people involved in all forms of direct action. Whilst small groups of people have succeeded in slowing the destruction of the earth, as a look at history illustrates, we must not be under any illusions that this small number of people will ever be able to do any more than that. What is needed to not only slow, but eventually stop and reverse the destruction is the involvement of a large percentage of the numbers of people on the earth. In the very near future, if we are

to have any sort of earth worth living on at all, we must learn to link partial fights and struggles against particular aspects of techno-industrial society into a wider war that, whilst engaging in fragmentary battles, can maintain the vision of, and work towards, the overall goal of total ecological and social change.

"Despair is the worst betrayal, the coldest seduction is to believe that the enemy will at last prevail."

- Marge Piercy.

Further Reading And Related Interest

"Agents of Repression" by Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall. (South End Press: Boston 1989) - very detailed account of the FBI's war against all forms of dissent in the US, notably against the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement (AIM).

"At War With The Truth" by Larry O'Hara. (Mina Press: London 1993) An account of an attempted infiltration of the Green Anarchist network by Tim Hepple.

"Ecodefence: A Field Guide To Monkeywrenching" (Third Edition) edited by Bill Haywood and Dave Foreman. (Abzugg Press: California 1993) - especially chapter 9 on Security.

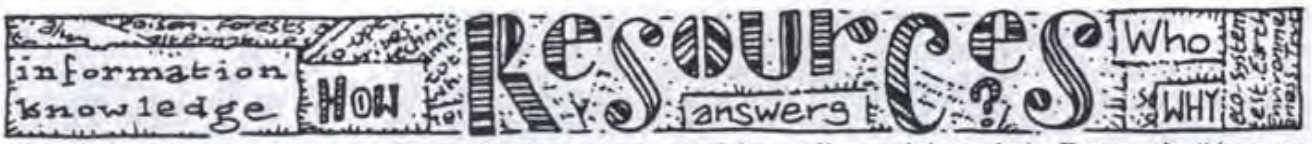
"Turning Up The Heat: MI5 After the Cold War" by Larry O'Hara. (Phoenix Press: London 1994) - especially chapter entitled 'The Gallery Enlarged: Green Targets Enter The Frame.'

"War At Home: Covert Action Against US Activists and What We Can Do About It" by Brian Glick. (South End Press: Boston 1989) - useful account of how in the FBI worked to destroy radical movements.

"Without A Trace: To Live Outside The Law You Have To Be Honest" by Anonymous (Self Published) - one of the best accounts available of state surveillance, repression and the ways around them.

"Ozymandias' Sabotage Skills Handbook: Volume 1 - Getting Started." (First Edition 1995) - has excellent security section written from a UK perspective. Find it on the internet at: http://www.cafeunderground.com/Cafesite/Rooms/Ozymandia/handbook_1.html





"Twyford Down: Roads, Campaigning and Environmental Law",

Barbara Bryant, E & FN Spon 1996.

This book has a relevance far beyond the specifics of the Twyford Down campaign. Barbara Bryant's experiences during the campaign, and the conclusions that she draws from those experiences, reflect in microcosm many of the questions still facing the green movement in 1997. As Peter Kunzlik puts it in his "Lawyer's Assessment", it is the story of a "struggle within the law to stop the desecration of [a] local landscape and about the frustrations... encountered along the way." (p.226) He believes that "Twyford Down has come to epitomise the failure of the system to protect the environment or to allow its citizens an effective legal role in challenging its despoilation" (p.225). Understanding the law—who makes it, whose interests does it serve, what does that tell us about our society, and thus what strategies for social change should we adopt—is the crucial question here. On the evidence of this book, Bryant flunks the test.

There is no doubt that her feelings are genuine. She says that her opposition to the DoT grew out of "an instinctive love of the countryside, rather than any technical background" (p.71). Of work starting on the Down, she says: "That really hurt, when they first stripped off the topsoil. But I've got used to it now. You've got to - otherwise you'd go mad." ("The unmaking of the English landscape", The Times 30/5/92, p.16.) That level of connection to a place is very healthy, something to be cherished, nurtured and acted upon. That love drew her to take extraordinary action in its defence, pushing her personal allegiances to the limit. And yet, it is a question of how that love is expressed - unlike David Croker, and some of the other members of the Twyford Down Association (TDA), she proved unable to take that last step, and transcend the constraints (or rather the priviledges) of her background.

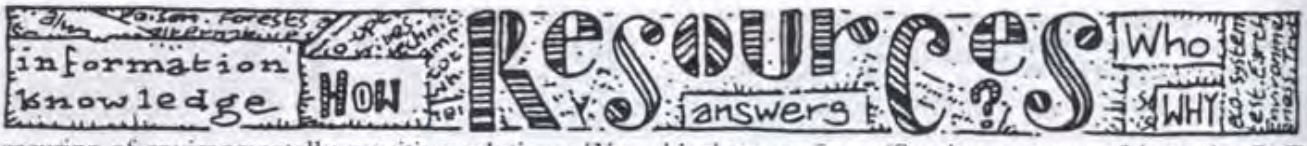
Twyford generally, and the experience of those who took the legal route to opposing it in particular, is THE textbook example of how the 'usual channels' simply don't work - the state will always move the goalposts if you come close to beating it at its own game.(1) Bryant and her colleagues were pillars of the Winchester establishment (one of the wealthiest, most Barbour (strait) jacketed in the country.) Bryant talks of her "well-known monetarist, free market approach to most issues" (p.122), and describes their admiration for Thatcher's 'achievements'. Their message to the 1990 Party Conference was: "We are Conservatives - we want Twyford Down to be a winner for our Government" (p.146). (Later they put forward a proposal for a toll tunnel through the Down - the " immaculate 'Tory' solution ... [utilising] market forces to work for the environment" (p.179).) Personally, and through the Winchester/Winchester College old boy network, they had contacts going up to the highest levels - their supporters were able to send "very erudite letters, from impressive [?!] addresses - to the DoT and to ministers, often on first-name terms" (p.142). This instant access to the elite, of which they made great use, relies upon the disproportionate influence of the upper classes - their 'cultural capital'. (This in itself is a perversion of the 'democracy' Bryant professes such devotion to - what chance of the residents of say Pollock being able to draw upon such networks of influence?)

And yet they still got stitched up at every stage of the game - by Winchester College, their erstwhile allies (largely responsible for the choice of the route through the Down - eg. see p.28/9), in Public Inquiries, at the High Court and finally in Europe. (There is now strong evidence - not explicitly referred to in the book - that one of the main conditions for British acceptance of the Maastricht Agreement was for the European Commission to drop the Twyford case.) If somewhere as "well-connected" (p.61) as Winchester can get shafted, then surely nowhere is safe.

Rather than opting for mass action - mobilising the great unwashed - Bryant clung to a faith in the 'charmed circle' of the elite. She at least has the honesty to acknowledge her own mistakes in this regard - until the High Court hearing she simply had no idea of the existence of other anti-road groups (eg. Oxleas Wood, the M11 - p.149). Likewise, due to their exclusive focus on the Winchester clique, "It was not until the Tactical Voting campaign [of 1992 - and they began fighting the M3 in 1985!] that we realised how much support we had in Southampton" (p.200). I guess it's a case of "live by the establishment, die by the establishment".

Given all of the above, it is hard to explain why Bryant still fails to question all that she had held most dear, and to see through the big lie. The way in which she remains a prisoner of her background, despite the punishment inflicted on her and her beloved Down by a vindictive state, is more than just inexplicable, it is tragic.

Even now she laments the "widespread disaffection with constitutional campaigning" (p.viii) post-Twyford, and throughout the book one gets a strong sense of her need to restore 'democracy's' tarnished image. She warns that "Conservationists in Britain are in danger of falling into an over-adversarial mode. Surely it is not a battle which is the objective, but the



securing of environmentally sensitive solutions. [Yes, and ...?] The view that victory is a bourgeois concept, and that glorious defeat is better than victory must not take hold of the conservation and environment-protection groups" (p.viii/ix).

But why not choose a different tack if experience demonstrates (as Bryant's surely must) that "constitutional campaigning" is largely useless? She appears to be suffering from 'cognitive dissonance' - in this debate, SHE is the idealist (ignoring the facts and clinging to some rosy notion of hallowed 'democracy') and us the pragmatists.

Likewise, can she not see the connection between the capitalism she so ardently supports and the destruction of 'special places', not just in Winchester's backyard but all over the world.

She was always instinctively averse to direct action, and uncomfortable with these grubby, pungent 'tribespeople' who were - both literally and metaphorically - muddying the controlled environment of her natural habitat, the committee room. Democracy is, to an extent, about keeping any issue at one remove, abstracted, defused - let's not get physical. Heaven forbid that the British stiff upper lip should tremble, the mandarin mask crack, and we should admit to some emotion. ("the campaign which [we] ... mounted was deliberately rational and measured because we wanted to avoid a repetition of the highly emotional 1970s campaign" (p.26) - why, when this highly disruptive campaign actually succeeded?!)

Unlike David Croker and Chris Gillham, I don't recall ever having seen her at the Dongas camp - she always kept her polite distance. She was one of the main figures behind the stance of the last Twyford Down Association meeting, in the summer of 1992. Here, they shrank from throwing their weight behind the direct action campaign, apparently because, in the words of the TDA President, "to become involved in anything illegal ...erodes the edges of democratic society." (p.215.) Doubtless they were exhausted after their long fight, but they resolved instead to go out with a whimper, not a bang: with the TDA relegating itself to laughing-stock quibbling with the DoT over whether the 'inevitable' new road should have a tarmac or a blacktop surface. (See her account of how the DoT even betrayed them over this one - p.49 and p.209.) Thus they consigned themselves to the ludicrousness of all lobbyists - fiddling while Rome burns.

None of this would matter, if it wasn't for the fact that, as a consequence of her own "glorious defeat", Barbara now has (pernicious) influence - peddling her wrinkled nose distaste for direct action to new 'learner-driver' anti-roads groups, such as the A27 Action Group, Lewes. Now, Barbara's view of events may be enshrined as the definitive historical text, with direct action largely written out of the main picture and into a much less troublesome footnote. This makes the upcoming 'Friends of Twyford Down' book (see below) all the more important, if only to redress the balance away from Bryant's saga of the Great and the Good.

In one sense, reading this book was an education. Much as I may pour scorn on their approach, I have to acknowledge the courage of their actions, as far as they went - for example, if you are a member of Thatcher's 'property-owning democracy',then the prospect of losing your house over court costs is probably at least as terrifying as a beating from a security guard. Without the herculaean efforts of Bryant and co., it is unlikely that the Twyford campaign would ever have reached the pitch that it did. They laid solid foundations (at the very least, in making it "An Issue" in the public consciousness), and to mangle metaphors, we picked up the baton that they fumbled. Therefore, given that other campaigns largely flowed from Twyford, I'd like to bestow a most unwelcome title upon Babs: she is the "Mother of all Anti-Roads Battles". (Swampy's your foster son Babs!)

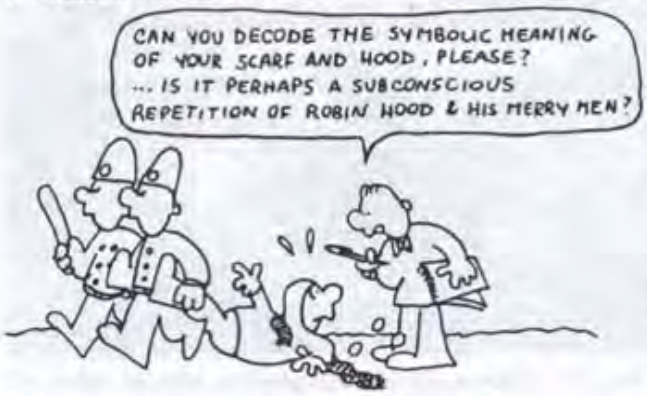
One last thought: Babs' husband - Dudley - is a chartered surveyor." Before coming to Hampshire he had worked in London and been involved for many years in public inquiry and compulsory purchase work in London's East End." (p.19). M11, anyone?

(1) Although this isn't meant to imply a total rejection of 'legal' or 'constitutional' routes - just handle with (extreme) caution!

Let's write our *own* history...

"We must record our history before it is forgotten, or someone else writes it for us!" Friends of Twyford Down invite submissions for their book. It is intended not to be the views of any one person, nor an academic analysis, but the story of the people who were there in their own words. They want personal memories, poems, songs, photos and drawings. Send any material to the address below - photocopies of written material, and copies or negatives of any photos (black and white preferred). They can also arrange interviews with those who wish to contribute, but don't want to write anything down. Contact: Friends of Twyford Down, PO Box 162, Winchester, Hants SO22 5ZD. (Donations very welcome!)





'INTERROGATING THE MOVEMENT ...'

Senseless Acts of Beauty - Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties

George McKay (Verso 1996)

The title is offensive. I thought of all the people present at the Battle of the Beanfield, the Molesworth eviction, Yellow Wednesday, the 1990 poll tax demo in Trafalgar Square, the Newbury evictions and the countless other landmarks of our "cultures of resistance". Most of these events were not inspired by "senseless" people. Some were far from beautiful.

A book claiming to chronicle and analyse our "cultures" should be one of two things: a pure academic analysis, or a personal account of one person's adventures in subculture land. Unfortunately, "Senseless Acts of Beauty" is neither.

Dense, laboured text suggests the analytical approach, rather an inappropriate way to chronicle people and ideologies who shun analysis and constantly re-invent themselves ahead of the state and academia. However, the scope of the book is a bit limited for it to fully attain this goal—there is scant mention of labour struggles, the Miners Strike or Greenham Common, all of which have had a profound effect on our politics and thinking. McKay's approach is rather too biased towards his own enjoyment for objective academia; many people have mentioned to me the extensive tracts on Crass and then said, "but I've never heard any Crass". There is hardly any mention of acts like Roy Harper or Hawkwind, stalwarts of free festivals in the 1980s, or of the current upsurge of fine musicians like Heathens All, Theo & Shannon or the Space Goats, who are not (and are often anti-) commercial, but are vital to our gatherings.

If the book is a journal of George McKay's own experience, then it is sad that the text and layout are so boring. There is little attempt to reflect how full ofjoy, fun and creativity "cultures of resistance" are. Reclaiming art is part of the resistance and to have all our creativity squeezed into such drab presentation seems rather tragic. For a more interesting read, try "A Time to Travel, an introduction to Britain's newer travellers" (Earle et al, Enabler Publications).

Ultimately, I am glad that someone has tried to write a book bringing together different strands of protesting and partying. We have only ourselves to blame if this is the only written history we ever get. The incentive now should be to impart our beliefs and history in our words and not just to ourselves, but to the mainstream, who live, largely, ignorant of the strength of our existence. If "Senseless Acts of Beauty" inspires one 16 year old to go out and lock on, set up a sound system or live in a bus, then it has done a good job. It is just a shame that it has been done by an academic, in a verbose, uncreative style and not by ourselves.

Green Backlash

Andrew Rowell (Routledge 1996)

There is a disturbing sea change away from environmentalism spreading across America and the globe. Green Backlash is a report commissioned by Greenpeace (though not under its editorial control), to inform and alert activists to this rather nasty turn of events. This book is not a fund-raising effort, or a watered-down account for mass consumption but a thoroughly researched and highly detailed book, written to be used as a tool against the backlash. READ IT.

It describes the anti-environmental movement in the States from its roots, to the advanced stage it has reached now. The book investigates the hugely sophisticated techniques of the P.R. companies, with profiles on Burson-Marsteller, Hill & Knowlton and others, which between them have represented every earth-raping multinational and corrupt dictatorship in the world, (see 'Going Green' in DoD 5). It explains the appearance of corporate front groups with eco-friendly sounding names (e.g. Mothers Against Pollution, Citizens for Sensible Control of Acid Rain, the National Wetlands Coalition,etc) and how they have managed to confuse and influence Americans about environmentalists and the issues they campaign on. It also describes the way in which bogus anti-environmental scientists have convinced the mainstream media that there aint no ozone hole and climate change is good for you.

The scariest development of all, and one that hasn't even started to touch this country, is a real grassroots movement of active anti-greens called Wise Use. Wise Use was initially dismissed by U.S. activists as a corporate con job, but has grown into a separate and independent entity, with most local groups getting little or no direct corporate funding or instructions from high-up.



The second half of the book covers the rest of the world's anti-green activity. It's well written and informative but there is not much that will surprise you, or that you couldn't find out from other sources. Good stuff if you're interested but in terms of what you need to know for practical use, the first seven chapters will cover it.

Don't make the mistake of skipping straight to the chapter about road-protests to see if your mates are in it. There is very little in it you won't know already. The only reason to read it is to give more credibility to the rest of the book, because Rowell's account is accurate and well-informed.

We can't afford to ignore the issues raised here. The environmental movement is in danger of being reduced to a passing fashion and we can either change or die - GET THIS BOOK! At £12.99 it isn't cheap, but you could try ordering it from the library.

'Henry's Quest', By Graham Oakley

Macmillan 1986.

You might call this a 'fable of deindustrialisation'—a childrens' book that provides a refreshing antidote to David Bellamy's 'The Roadside' (see Do or Die no.5). In time-honoured fairy tale fashion, the story concerns Henry, an innocent young shepherd, who must find the mysterious substance known as 'Petrol' if he is to win the hand of the fair Princess Isolde. Her father the King believes that petrol will "bring his beautiful heirlooms [ie.cars] to life, and they [will] carry him about among the people who would all be terrified and really think he was somebody, and not just a harmless old twit."

Henry finally tracks down petrol to the last remaining city, where the emperor lives in luxury while his people riot. He is soon deposed when his petrol supply goes up in smoke, and his soldiers realise that "their future would be hard and that they would have to give up all their little luxuries" They therefore make a start "by giving up emperors, generals and ministers of state." (And this is a childrens' book!)

Unfortunately this is easier said than done - the emperor's former minstrel takes over, looking suspiciously like the old boss, except that punk is now the music of court. Henry takes the last remaining canister of petrol back to his country, whose people swiftly appreciate what a waste of time it is, abandon it, and all live happily ever after.

Graham Oakley is best known for his 'Church Mice' series, and the artwork here is of a similarly lavish and impressive standard, with lots of sly visual in-jokes thrown in. (A hint as to the demise of the previous civilisation is provided by a sign on a dilapidated Shell station - now serving as a cowshed - which reads: "One gallon only per customer - our price £152.20 per quarter gallon".) Images of dereliction, and of the recolonisation of technology by nature abound—a British Airways jet transformed into an earth-bound longhouse, pylons decked with vines, the harsh outlines of an Esso refinery softened by vegetation, and so on.

This is a wonderful book—which is perhaps why it is so hard to find. After all, we only want Bellamy's style of propaganda for our kids, don't we? Favourite quote: "He kept his eyes peeled for petrol, but all he saw was trees."

'Joining the Rainbow', Bel Mooney, Mamouth, 1997

' Kaz has a cozy life until she joins the protesters to save Twybury Hill. The decision isolates her from family and friends. But then she meets Ash, the boy whose life has been so shockingly different from hers. Joining the Rainbow changes their lives forever.'

Based largely on the Solsbury Hill campaign of 1994, the tale of this book is of a tree eviction seen through the eyes of a local 14 year old: Kaz (aka the author's daughter Kitty), who goes from Boyzone to Green man with the help of a raggle-taggle run away boy who defends her tree."We're the new Neolithic Tribe".

All the characters in her book are cheeky composites of real people from the Hill, using actual conversations and incidents plucked from the campaign. It is aimed at young teenage girls, though she does delve openly into the important issues of child abuse, police/state violence, middle class bigotry, nature and ignorance.



"Yeah, some git thinks sabotage will persuade people that this road is bad."

She unfortunately stereotypes the 'fluffies' and the 'spikies', reinforcing grown-up middle class views on sabotage and violence, forgetting childrens' books like the Famous Five who openly break things to catch the baddies. There is however a nice twist later when her 8 year old brother tries to blow up the security compound with his chemistry set.

I for one am grateful for this account, as we don't often experience this dimension. I was reminded with fondness of all the young local girls turning into hardcore digger-divers.

'Laura's Way', by Beryl Kington

Another book to reach the fiction shelves, this time aimed at 50+ bored housewives. It portrays a road campaign in the style of a Mills & Boon novel. The main character, disenchanted with her dead marriage finds love in a treehouse. Murder, passion and harnesses. Brace yourselves for an influx of romance-seeking blue rinsed babes!

Road Raging : Top Tips for Wrecking Road Building.

This book shares experiences of Nonviolent Direct Action against road building in Britain from Twyford Down in 1992 to Newbury 1996. This is not a coffee table history book, but a practical, illustrated guide for action. It covers a wide range of subjects including building a campaign from scratch, action tactics, publicity, camps, the law, training, evictions, and much more! The book is a total rewrite of "The Compleat Anti-Road Protester" which was produced in 1994. We hope that the ideas in "Road Raging" are applicable to other protest issues.

For a copy, send at least £3 payable to Road Alert! (This is cost price, including postage: If you can afford more, we can send free copies to really poor NVDA campaigns.) to -
Road Alert! PO Box 5544, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5FB.

Battle for the Trees:
Three Months of Responsible Ancestry
by Merrick,
Godhaven Press, 1997
ISBN 09529975 0 9, 132 page book £3

This book is not an attempt at a general history or analysis of Newbury. In Merrick's own words: " What I'm writing is one yeast cell's description of winemaking, a personal account of my time at Newbury in the first three months of 1996."

Some of Merrick's ideas I feel are quite reformist and unthought through, but whether or not I agree with everthing in it is beside the point. What's really good about the book is it gives you a real feeling of what it was like to be there. He really paints the picture well, getting you to understand just how surreal, joyful, depressing, life changing and plain weird campaigns (and campaigners) can be.

It's a great read and its extreamly difficult to put the book down til the end. When you finish you want to jump up and do something active. What more could you ask from a book than a few hours of cosy reading and a dose of inspiration to go and act.

Corporate Watch

"The earth is not dying, it is being killed. And those who are killing it have names and addresses" - Utah Phillips

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Lettuce to the Cabbage



Do or Die editors dig their own graves

Dear Do or Die,

I have been involved with Earth First! for several years and before that was a peace and animal rights activist. So, it is not without some consternation that I now find myself seriously doubting EF! This is not through any loss of faith in direct action, but through serious disillusionment with those who are most active in EF! - the "leaders". I know you will deny it, but there are those of you who set the agenda and write the Action Update, Do or Die or Direct Action Direct.

This leadership is drifting into the realms of Monty Python - The Life of Brian - The Peoples' Front of Judea - the bunch of black clad saddoes who huddled together spitting at the efforts of all other freedom fighters, whilst wasting time on their own internal politics and competitive political correctness. [See the outrageously sectarian piece on conservationists in this issue for further evidence of this syndrome.] They plan futile actions that if (after all the in-fighting) they ever come off are totally pointless.

The current obsession with revolution is not radical, but boring. If I wanted to join a small group obsessed with discussions on overthrowing the state, and dismissing the efforts of others outside the narrow margin of what is deemed acceptable, then I would have joined the Revolutionary Communist Party years ago.

We have to embrace other environmental groups, otherwise we will always be isolated, marginal and pathetic.

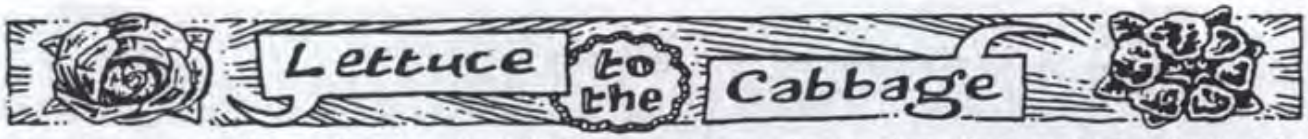
Otters' noses anyone? Blessed are the cheesemakers.

Judith Iscariot.

Memo To All Environmental Activists.

I deliberately do not use the word 'protest' or 'protesters' as it is loaded with connotations of defeat—to protest at something that is going to happen. Reality is perception. We campaign to stop something immoral. Get on the good foot.

At the moment, in my opinion, we as a movement are in danger of developing road rage. We are obsessed with the road. While attacking the roads programme is a direct attack on car culture and the very cogs of the system we aim to change, it is not the greatest threat to the environment by a long shot. We have also allowed ourselves to become regionalist. Forests in South Wales and Scotland are being felled at an alarming rate with no direct resistance. While hundreds of 'protesters' took Wisley Airfield in April 1995 (Reclaim The Land) for a week (!) hundreds of four hundred year old beech trees fell in Glasgow because the No M77 campaign was literally left out in the cold. While thousands of pounds are being spent on stopping a road in Berkshire, the free market economy is destroying Wales almost unchallenged. Opencast quarrying, sand dredging from the sea for construction, limestone quarrying, drilling for oil off the Pembrokeshire coast (killing dolphins and marine life), orimulsion being shipped to Milford Haven, Swansea Bay being dredged so bigger ships can service the expanding steel industry at Port Talbot. All this and a massive road building plan. That is the tip of the iceberg. This is not exclusive to Wales. Look around. So much to do and so few doing it. Deals are constantly being made under our noses



In order to combat this we have to start thinking on our feet. Learn from our mistakes. While building tree villages is effective in costing earth abusers money, we shouldn't kid ourselves, in the end Joe Public foots the bill, and the road goes on. Besides which, the energy involved in doing so, outweighs the return. In short it is inefficient.To sit and wait for them to come to us and call the shots is setting ourselves up as victims. We are empowered. We will take the fight to them. The idea of afinnity groups brings all manner of possibilities to light. Learn from the hunt sabs. Ten people, a van, mobile phone and a fuck them and their law attitude will have far more effect than sitting in a tree village for a year, being totally tied down and then taking six months to get over the trauma of having your home destroyed and your families' lives put at risk by employees of selfishness. This is not to say we need to get away from the lifestyle angle. In my opinion living on the land is our strength. There are plenty of beautiful pieces of land that are unlived on. Take them back. Reclaim the land does not have to be where George Monbiot says—this is DIY mate!

This is also the age of paranoia. Be paranoid. We are fighting the same people who are kiling the indigenous peoples of the earth. You only need to look at the history of Northern Ireland to see the establishment's attitude to `freedom fighters'. We have got away with a lot of things that they could have had us for. Why? They are a mighty force. Big and hard. Paranoid and testosterone fuelled, but we'll have `em! They cannot win. They do not know how to share. They are greedy and their greed has become them. Don't let them fool you, they are as untogether as we are, they've just got more cash!

In 1997 these puppets are going to get the sheep to elect some of them into office, that will see the beginning of the next millennia. How much of their electioneering will be about promotion of sustainable lifestyles/industries, about social change and health care, about environmental clean up plans? They won't answer questions they are not asked. It is up to us to force them into answering or admitting that they haven't even thought about it. There is much to be done.

L.M.

Whinging Media Tarts?

Dear Sir

I recently and belatedly read with interest the piece by Alex Donga in Do or Die number 5. He [sexist assumption] attacks the Ego Warriors attaching themselves to many protests but in one phrase shows he [sic] too is guilty of the same.

Mr Donga writes how the Donga Tribe defended Twyford Down... "we were calling out for people and publicity... it was hard enough to get local papers to cover the story."

What a load of tosh. I enclose photocopies of a tiny selection of the stories the Daily Echo printed during the building of the M3 in 1992-94.

We published probably 100+ stories. Myself and other reporters spent days on Twyford Down, from the time when the Donga Tribe was three-strong to Yellow Wednesday when the security guards evicted them. One freelance photographer, Alex McNaughton, was there for literally days on end. We did so because we knew it was an important story. None of the Dongas Tribe sought publicity from us, ever. [Highly doubtful]

My point in writing this is that too many anti-roads people including Mr [sic] Alex Donga like to see themselves as total outcasts who have to face a hostile media as well as police, road builders etc. It is egotistical, self-deluding nonsense. Most local newspapers would dearly love to have a Twyford Down, Salisbury, Oxleas Wood or Newbury in their patch.

Getting publicity for a protest is as easy as falling off a log. The anti-roads movement does not help itself by pretending otherwise. It only makes certain sad people feel a bit better about their commitment to the cause, the glamour of being an outsider. If you want publicity, reach for the phone book or directory enquiries. It's that simple.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Napier Chief Reporter Southern Daily Echo Winchester

For the Wild & the Free

Dear EF!ers,

Our movement is facing a crucial time and we must all mature and realize that we are not playing games. We are at war with a system that destroys life. A system that replaces untamed free nature with cold grey concrete, a system that imprisons and tortures animals and a system that through its workings has replaced true meaningful wild lives with ones of oppression, exploitation, domestication and monotony.

We must resist this wherever we can. We must fight back hard, not only for ourselves, but for all living things. To those involved in this fight back it should be obvious that any meaningful reform of the system is impossible. Because of this when we fight it our goal must be for nothing less than total and lasting change.

The tactics we use in resisting this system must firstly, above all other considerations, be effective. To do this we must hit leviathan on our own terms, not its. The state is

learning quicker than we are and increasingly it is becoming more and more capable of dealing with the resistance that we have been presenting it with in the last few years. Bicycle locks, tree evictions and office occupations are becoming less and less effective as time goes on. To get around this we must quickly adapt our tactics if we are to stand any chance of defeating the system.

Whilst talking of war and fights we must be careful not to glorify our roles as some heroic warrior resistance. We are not heroic, although there are many acts of individual bravery, nor are we a separate warrior caste. We are only people that will not sit back and narcotize ourselves with commodities and representations of life whilst daily all around us is destroyed.

We are not the only resistance, indeed we are not even a significant percentage of it. We are but a small part of the totality, most of which we will never hear about, save through fireside stories in the future with our children and comrades. You only have to look around to see that daily millions of acts of rebellion to, and refusal to participate in, the death camp that is civilisation occur worldwide. From stopping open cast mining in South Wales to revolutionaries in Bougainville, to ramming whaling ships on the open seas to resisting evictions in the inner cities the global resistance is growing and becoming increasingly effective.

Inevitably, as this resistance grows and becomes more effective, so we will experience increasing repression from those that defend leviathan. Whatever happens in the coming months and years we must never stop fighting, for where there is resistance there is hope. Even a cursory glance at history will show you that inevitably we will win. We are on the side of life whereas all that which we oppose is a disease, the plague of civilisation complete with all its horrors: Bhopal, The Sea Empress, war, Chernobyl and the countless other monstrosities, both spectacular tragedies and slow poisonings, that are lost in memories of all bar those directly affected by them.

We must not delay our ideals until the mythical revolution in the distant past like so many other so-called 'radical' groups. We must live now as closely as is possible to how we would wish to live in the future. This is one strength that we must use as fully as possible, the ability to create the future in the present; to create the shell of the new amongst the ruins of the old. If not you, who? If not now, when?

For the wild and free!

Neil Hist.

The concrete Hedgehogs of Cornwall.

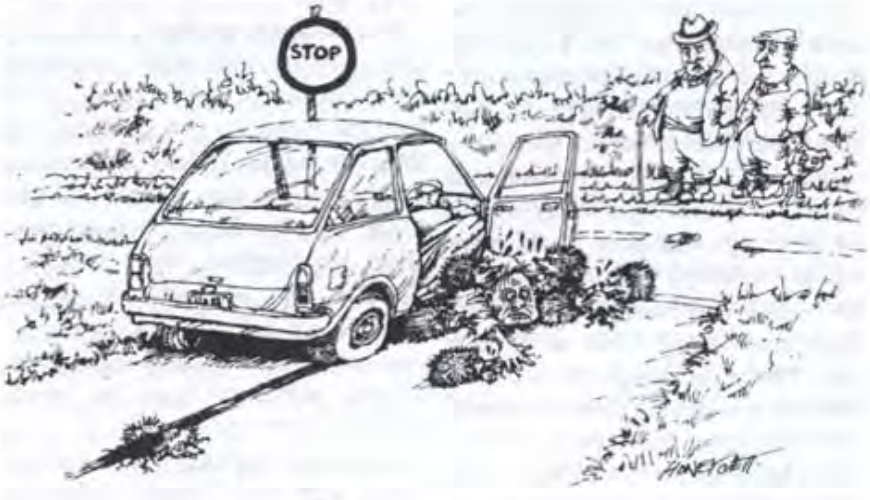
Whilst on a trip to Cornwall recently I heard that the hedgehogs down there have evolved a clever new way to deter drivers from running over them.

Apparently on a full moon a group of hedgehogs get together and perform some kind of shamanic ritual, resulting in the transformation of one of their number into something indistinguishable from a hedgehog-shaped lump of concrete studded with two-inch nails. The other members of the group then move him to a strategic point in the roadway, a couple of feet from the edge on the inside of a bend, retire to a nearby vantage point and wait.

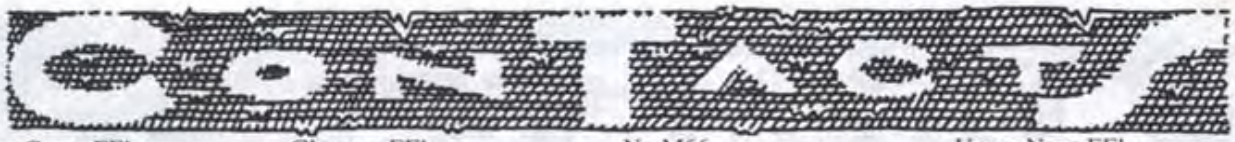
Any driver who is travelling too fast to see the hedgehog in time, or who sees the hedgehog but doesn't care, loses their front nearside tyre (at least). If the urge to shout and swear can be suppressed, the driver may hear a chuckling sound in the hedges nearby. As there is no way to distinguish the transformed hedgehogs from the normal ones without getting out to have a closer look, caution is advised when driving in Cornwall.

It seems that the hedgehogs have solved a problem that is shared by people with children in pushchairs, who are sometimes killed by careless motorists too. Perhaps the day will soon come when people and wildlife will be safe again, in Cornwall at least. I hope this is not just a pub story.

-Noddy



"I suppose there are the odd occasions when you could say that road rage was justified"



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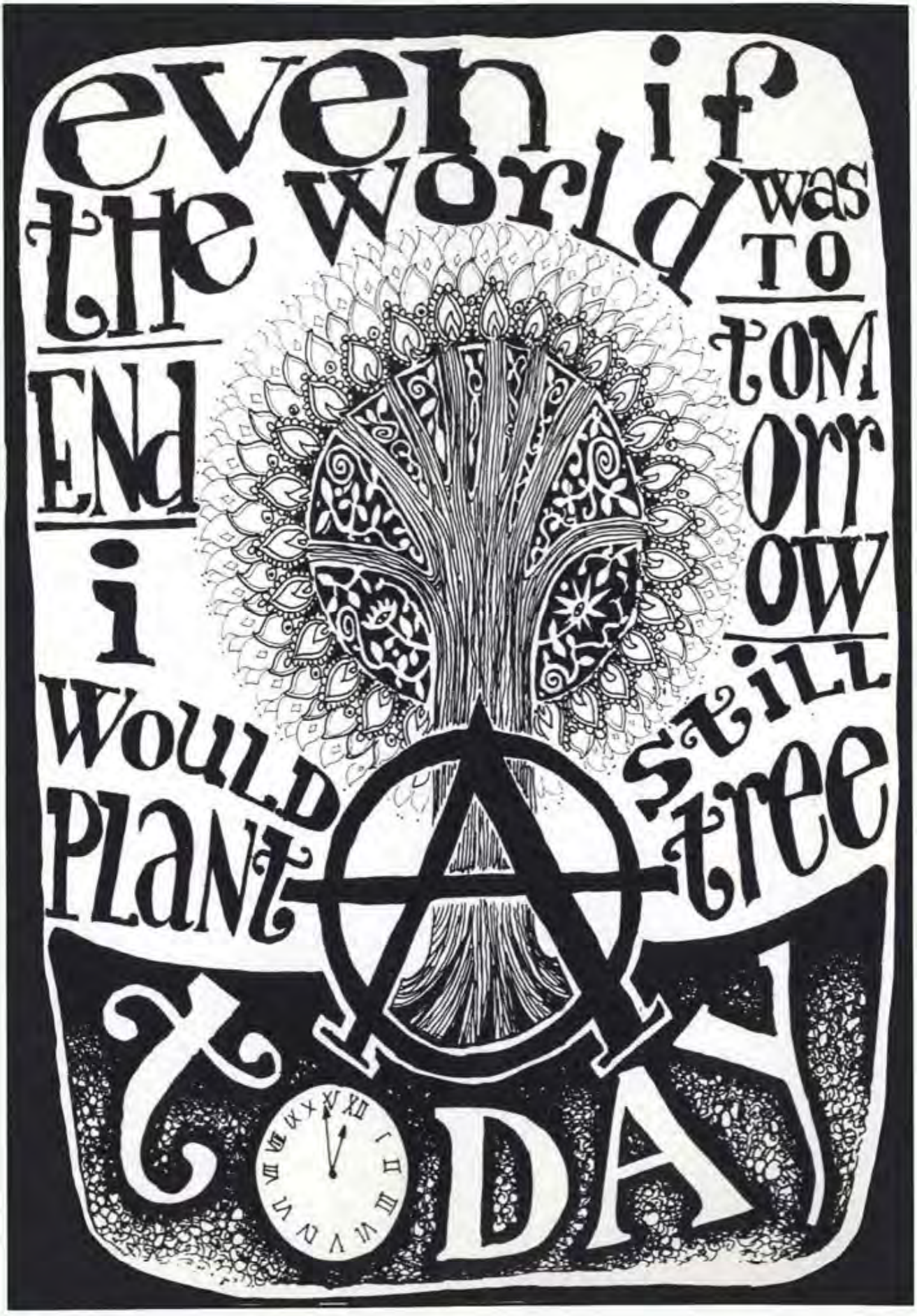
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even if the world was TO END TOMORROW
i would plant a tree
STILL
TODAY

Do or Die #6

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